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VIGOROUS COLD WAR HANDSHAKES: REVIEWING NIXON'S 1972 CHINA TRIP

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By
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VIGOROUS COLD WAR HANDSHAKES: REVIEWING NIXON'S 1972 CHINA TRIP

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to reexamine former United States (U.S.) President Richard Milhous Nixon's historic trip to the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.). Although his administration is most often remembered for its involvement in the Watergate scandal, during his first term, Nixon diverted from his previous staunchly anti-Communistic Cold War mindset to reopen diplomatic relations with Chairman Mao Zedong's nation. This narrative focuses attention on how one of the world's most powerful leaders decided to sit down with his ideological enemy to peacefully discuss their differences. Nixon's move not only lessened international tensions, but also allowed for greater economic prosperity in Asia rather than further animosity and bloodshed. In planning and carrying out this new initiative, the administration utilized a methodology that relied on secrecy.

Initial planning for this shocking diplomatic opening with the P.R.C. was conducted in secret. In 1971, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger traveled incognito to arrange an official agenda for his boss. The announcement that the president planned to make this journey into communist territory the following spring shocked many in the U.S. Nixon, until this point, had always been a strong Republican politician, who also

happened to espouse a vehemently anti-Communistic viewpoint. Reactions to his speech varied across the country and around the world. Living as they did in the Cold War era, American citizens also registered surprise because this trip occurred while the Vietnam War raged in Asia, and the Mainland Chinese supported their ideological North Vietnamese brothers' efforts. After Nixon made his announcement, diplomatic and political winds began shifting in the Pacific region. And, even before he left America in February 1972, Taiwan had already lost its seat to the P.R.C. in the United Nations the previous fall.

The following pages discuss the personalities and motivations of the major players in this early 1970s drama, namely Nixon, Kissinger, Mao, and Premier Zhou Enlai. This work also reviews: why these important world leaders diverted so sharply from their established patterns of behavior at this particular time, why these men of diametrically-opposing ideologies ultimately decided to agree to summit talks, and how they then overcame their prejudicial attitudes and took a chance at greater world peace by utilizing international diplomatic methods. The information is broken into several broad time frames, with each chapter focusing on a different stage of this event. This work might be termed not only a social history, but also a reception history, as many of the details provided were culled from media sources first appearing in 1971 and 1972, and highlight how people around the world both received and then reacted to Nixon's startling pronouncements and actions.[1] The

[1] Several suggested articles for further exploration of reception theory and the formulation of political histories would be: Martyn P. Thompson, "Reception Theory and the Interpretation of Historical Meaning," *History and Theory* 32, no. 3 (October 1993): 248-72, James Farr, "John Dewey and American Political Science," *American Journal of Political Science* 43, no. 2 (April 1999): 520-41, Fredric Jameson, "From Criticism to History," *New Literary History* 12, no. 2, Interpretation and Literary History (Winter 1981): 367-75, and Quentin Skinner, "Motives, Intentions and the Interpretation of Texts," *New Literary History* 3, no. 2, On Interpretation: I (Winter 1972): 393-408.

research necessary to complete this type of project required exploring many primary and secondary sources. The information, once gathered, was then formulated to present a narrative following a social historian's point of view. President Richard Nixon's gutsy, yet controversial decision to visit Mao Zedong's China in 1972, because it significantly altered international perceptions of the P.R.C., should be remembered as both a personal triumph of this president's political career, but more importantly, as a major turning point in world history.

National media sources were invited to cover the story that wintery week, yet journalists soon reported frustration at the lack of "hard news" being officially released about the president's diplomatic activities. Nixon wanted documentation of this important event for posterity, but only a limited number of media personnel accompanied the president's entourage. They provided live coverage of his arrival and the sumptuous banquets, but reporters soon grew frustrated as Nixon administration officials withheld details about the actual plenary session results. Domestic audiences also soon lost interest in the story, as they had their own life adventures to survive.

This American president took his first controversial, politically risky, but brave step toward reopening direct communications with the P.R.C. despite facing strong opposition to this idea from his many critics. Although the later Watergate scandal left an indelible mark on Nixon's long and distinguished public record, it is important to avoid focusing entirely upon this one single issue when assessing the worth of his presidency. The Watergate scandal had been settled for two decades by the time the former president passed away. During that time, he worked diligently to

rehabilitate his image with the American people. Upon his death, although many of his professional colleagues made speeches affirming his worth to America, some were not able to resist the temptation of mentioning Watergate in their remarks, but the overall comments remained highly favorable.

Because this essay incorporates not only information gleaned from government documents, personal papers, diary accounts, published memoirs, and interviews by Nixon or others that worked with him in his administration, but also popular press reactions from both American and foreign media sources, it offers readers a fresh perspective on Nixon's 1972 trip. By analyzing such items, Nixon soon emerges as a shy and introverted man who also happened to reach the highest U.S. political office. Because he made this controversial decision, and traveled to conduct peaceful political discussions with Mao, both the U.S. and the P.R.C. have grown richer in social and intellectual understanding. The Chinese have also experienced incredible technological and economic advancements since the reestablishment of diplomatic ties with America in 1972.

Acknowledgements

This work required not only many days of diligent effort spent either in various libraries utilizing reference materials or microfilm machines, but also considerable hours of staring into a computer screen. As I am not a traditional student, I would like to publicly thank my family: Terry, Jeanette, Teresa, and Daphne Mirll, for allowing me the personal time to accomplish this task. I love them immensely. They not only have great faith in my abilities, but, without their understanding, this feat would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Daphne Mirll for her patience and assistance while I took notes from video recordings, and Teresa Mirll for her help in proofreading my draft. Another special thank you is extended to my husband, Terry Lee Mirll. Over the past few years, he has supported my academic efforts by taking up the extra parental duties caused by my absences necessary for school, helped me handle the home-schooling paperwork for our three girls, put up with all the late-night hours of keyboard strokes while he tried to sleep, shared his valuable proofreading skills and memories of the Nixon era with me, and lent me a strong shoulder to lean on whether I was cheering or in tears throughout my renewed college career at the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO).

I would like to thank Anne Allbright for her friendship and encouragement. I enjoyed learning both with and from her while attending classes at UCO. On October 25, 2005, I had the great pleasure of traveling with her to East Central University (ECU) in Ada, Oklahoma, to hear the former Soviet Union's President Mikhail Gorbachev speak. As we managed to stand within a few feet of the former world leader at the official reception following his remarks, this experience was nothing

short of thrilling. A special note of thanks also goes out to another former classmate, Angela Bratcher. All those study sessions for our history seminars paid off handsomely, but I am also so thankful that our families have grown extremely close. I would like to thank my sister, Patsy Jean Jones, for sharing her remembrances of the Nixon trip's televised newscasts with her pesky younger sister. Granting me a personal interview while I was in Texas for her wedding weekend worked out great, and I love her dearly for it. My parents, who have offered long-distanced but constant and loving support of my educational pursuits, also granted me interviews for this project. They have both shared in my joyous successes or patiently listened while I vented frustrations over returning adult student experiences. I would also like to extend an extra thank you to them for their valuable assistance as proofreaders of this lengthy essay's initial rough draft. My parents understand only too well how my family has, and always will have, my heart.

While at UCO, I have had the pleasure of studying under many fine instructors. The Department of History and Geography is to be commended for its level of excellence regarding both professors and curriculum. My thesis director, Dr. Xiaobing Li, fired my imagination and interest in Asian studies through his wonderful courses at UCO, but has also earned my deepest respect and great gratitude for offering me both honest compliments and valuable criticisms to my work. Dr. Jessica Sheetz-Nguyen is a true scholar, and someone with whom I have spent many happy hours discussing coursework, current events, or simply general life issues over the past few years. She has taught me the value of historiography, the joy of exploring historical accounts about women and children in Georgian and Victorian England,

and of focusing my attention on global events from a social historian's point of view. She has always been an enthusiastic supporter of my scholastic endeavors, and I thank God I had the privilege of making her acquaintance while I attended UCO. Dr. James Baker not only enlightened me about the role America played in World War II and expanded my understanding of twentieth century U.S. diplomatic events, but also gave me valuable encouragement and advice. He probably does not even remember once letting me overhear him tell another colleague he believed I failed to realize just how smart I was; the important thing to note here is that I remember, and for that experience I am eternally grateful. I would also like to thank Dr. Carolyn Pool for helping me explore the fascinating field of archeology, for her hard work while serving as the department's graduate advisor, and for all her assistance as I navigated this process. After Drs. Kenny Brown and T. H. Baughman taught me the fine points of writing historical accounts, I have also written several award-winning papers, experienced great success at academic conferences, and had my work published.

An extra special note of thanks is extended to Drs. David Webb, John Osburn, and Jeff Plaks. Dr. Webb's boomingly distinctive voice always makes me smile when I hear it echoing through the Liberal Arts building's hallways. Although I ultimately followed in my own father's footsteps by earning a history degree, it was also Dr. Webb's highly enjoyable Modern World Leaders course that finally inspired me to declare history my major at UCO. Dr. John Osburn is another instructor who has earned my deepest respect. He is a true gentleman, a highly enlightened scholar, and an expert on England's historical past. I was thrilled to make the highest grade on several of his class exams, as he encourages and recognizes excellence by announcing

such test results. It is hard to know where to begin when discussing Dr. Jeff Plaks. He is not only the advisor of UCO's award-winning Phi Alpha Theta history honors group, but I also avidly attended a wide variety of his courses covering European topics, which ranged anywhere from an examination of the French Revolution to in-depth studies concerning Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany, the Holocaust, and famous twentieth century totalitarian regimes. His sessions were always well-attended and filled with lively historical discussions and debates; however, as I usually took copious notes, I have to admit I usually missed his generous "Ok, I'm grabbing my tie, so this is probably very important to know for our next test" signals. His taking the extra time to write the outlines for his upcoming daily lectures on the board for his students is a brilliant idea, and I always welcomed this study aid. He has not only vastly expanded my love for and understanding of European history, but I plan to emulate elements of his teaching style in the future. I consider any praise from him, and the opportunity to have studied history under his guidance, a great honor.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working as a UCO Graduate Assistant, as I was allowed to not only work with the historical research classes and produce independent research projects, but also to complete various editing tasks. While at UCO, as I am an extremely generous scholar, I have also spent hundreds of hours over the past few years voluntarily assisting my fellow classmates. This has been something I felt compelled to do, and I do not regret my time spent, as I watched them all learn and succeed. Recently, a student I helped in a previous semester approached me in the hallway to once again request my editing skills. He made my day by stating he came to me for assistance because, after all, I was "The Paper Guru."

It has been a great pleasure for me to study history at UCO. As a non-traditional student, I have still joined multiple honors societies, and I am proud that I will, once again, graduate with honors. I would actively encourage others to explore their own future opportunities at this historic Oklahoma institution.

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Introduction

When referring to the P.R.C. in his book, *Seize the Moment: America's Challenge in a One-Superpower World*, former United States (U.S.) President Richard Milhous Nixon reflected, "The Chinese are a great people with an incredibly rich cultural heritage. When Europe was mired in the Dark Ages, China was the most advanced nation in the world."[1] While the former American president offered this compliment in 1992, in the previous century, Napoleon Bonaparte had already recognized that nation's latent power by commenting, "China? There lies a sleeping giant. Let him sleep! For when he wakes, he will move the world."[2]

During the early twentieth century, volatile mixtures of socially driven elements, such as extreme *isolationism*, *militarism*, *nationalism*, and *racism*, all culminated to produce two world wars with catastrophic mortality rates. Edward W. Said defined one specific form of racism in the West, which affected perceptions regarding peoples then residing on the Asian continent and in the Pacific regions, as *Orientalism*; this type of behavior produced serious cultural stresses, because if one adhered to these thought patterns, he or she exhibited the inability to judge alternative cultures based on their own particular merits.[3] Following World War II, Western nations became deeply involved in a new battle against *communism*, which led to a decline in international diplomatic efforts. Cold War era governmental officials

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[1] Richard Nixon, *Seize the Moment: America's Challenge in a One-Superpower World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 183.

[2] Ibid.

[3] For a better understanding of Said's argument, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

around the world firmly locked themselves into fear-ridden ideological boxes, from which little meaningful humanistic dialogue escaped. After Mao Zedong's communist troops drove President Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists onto the small offshore island of Taiwan in 1949, and participated in the Korean War against United Nations forces from 1950-53, Mao's newly created People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) became recognized in the West as a dangerous enemy. By 1972, when Nixon visited the P.R.C., a nation slightly larger in size than his own by covering 3.7 million square miles, the country supported approximately 775 million inhabitants, over three times that of America.[4]

After China turned to communism under Mao's leadership in the mid-twentieth century, the Chairman exposed his personal isolationist tendencies by initiating the Cultural Revolution. This movement attempted to ban the detrimental effects of the West from his shores by tightly restricting activities conducted by foreigners in the country.[5] Regardless of such negative attitudes, Mao and his top advisors closely monitored American activities. After defeating his Democratic rival, Hubert H. Humphrey, Republican Richard Nixon became the thirty-seventh U.S. president in 1968, a post he retained until his early and unprecedented resignation in 1974.[6] Remembering him as vice-president in the Dwight David Eisenhower administration, the Chinese now realized this highly ambitious man, who had forged

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[4] "Pictogram: A Second-Rate Power: China Has a Long Way to Go," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 17; "A Guide to Nixon's China Journey," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 28.

[5] Colin Mackerras, *Western Images of China*, rev. ed. (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press (China) Ltd., 1999), 184.

[6] Herón Márquez, *Richard M. Nixon* (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications Company, 2003), 54, 56; Martin S. Goldman, *Richard M. Nixon: The Complex President* (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 1998), xi.

his previous career by fiercely battling the forces of communism, and who reportedly still exhibited a managerial personal manner, remained quite the politician.[7]

Nixon shocked and surprised many of his fellow citizens in the opening years of the following decade. In an ironic twist of political philosophy, he suddenly expressed a willingness to extend détente toward Mao's government. In February 1972, although the P.R.C. still remained officially unrecognized by the U.S., Nixon and Mao, two very different and powerful personalities, visited together in the Chinese leader's Beijing study.[8] That these two men of such contrary ideologies even agreed to a peaceful summit showed "that past enmity, however intense, need not block future accommodation and that existing differences, however great, need not preclude candid discussions."[9] Despite many observers around the world believing themselves witnesses to nothing short of a miracle, the talks between the Democratic West and Communist East successfully proceeded. One contributor for *Time* summed up the magnitude of the situation with the following words:

> Never, perhaps, have two men who so dramatically epitomize the conflicting forces of modern history ever sat as equals at one negotiating table: Mao, the self-styled heir of [Karl Heinrich] Marx and [Vladimir Ilyich] Lenin and revolutionary leader of China's revolutionary masses; Nixon, elected spokesman of the world's richest, most advanced capitalist society and once the archetypal Cold Warrior.[10]

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[7] Carroll C. Calkins, editor, *The Story of America* (Pleasantville, NY: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1975), 335.

[8] Richard Nixon, *Leaders* (New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1982), 223-38.

[9] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 15.

[10] "A Guide to Nixon's China Journey," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 27.

The purpose of this study is to examine how Nixon made the brave decision to drastically alter two decades of American Cold War foreign policy patterns to reestablish social ties with the communistic P.R.C. in 1972. More than simply a retelling of the official agenda, this composition offers readers a broad overview of this important event from many perspectives. The information provided is organized in the following manner: Nixon's initial surprise announcement in 1971 and preparations for the trip, the media's coverage and experiences while reporting the event in February 1972, and details about the reactions and international consequences of his journey. For those unfamiliar with either former President Nixon, his assistant, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Chairman Mao, or his Premier, Zhou Enlai, while ample discussion of their motives for accomplishing this important diplomatic breakthrough have been highlighted, and their diverse personalities have been explored, an additional emphasis has also been placed on how the American popular press described these important world leaders and responded to their words and actions.

Many primary sources contributed to the fashioning of this work. Articles found in newspapers, magazines, journals, personal diaries, penned memoirs, and personal interviews were all essential for gaining a more holistic view of this event. Toward this end, writings by persons such as Nixon, his assistants while in office, Kissinger and H.R. Haldeman, and Edgar Snow, an American journalist who befriended both Chinese leaders, have been utilized.[11] Nixon published quite a few

[11] Richard Nixon, *Beyond Peace* (New York: Random House, 1994); Richard Nixon, *In the Arena: A Memoir of Victory, Defeat, and Renewal* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990); Richard Nixon, *1999: Victory without War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988); Richard Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978); Richard Nixon, *The Real War* (New York:

books, including: *Beyond Peace*, *In the Arena: A Memoir of Victory, Defeat, and Renewal*, *Leaders*, *1999: Victory without War*, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, *Seize the Moment: America's Challenge in a One-Superpower World*, and *The Real War*. All of these are valuable for researchers, as they offer unusual insight into the president's personal thoughts, attitudes, and motives at different times in his life. These volumes also highlight his accomplishments, his regrets, and how he continued until his death to believe America and the P.R.C. needed to retain their positive political relationship. An exploration of various works by Kissinger, such as *The White House Years* and *Ending the Vietnam War: A History of America's Involvement in and Extrication from the Vietnam War*, along with Haldeman's *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House*, offer readers an intimate insider's view into the interior methodology practiced by the Nixon administration. David Gergen, another former Nixon assistant who wrote *Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership Nixon to Clinton*, also provides valuable information about the Nixon era.[12] Realizing that the former president's negatively framed legend continues after his death, Gergen resents modern critics, such as Oliver Stone, for their unfair public caricature; Gergen believes Stone:

> seized upon his [Nixon's] elusive nature to portray him as a drunken, twisted egomaniac who might have blown up the world. Those portraits are wrong and unfair. The air of mystery about him was a

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Warner Books Inc., 1980); Henry Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy*, expanded ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974); Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979); Henry Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War: A History of America's Involvement in and Extrication from the Vietnam War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003); H.R. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1994); Edgar Snow, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 183.

[12] David Gergen, *Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership Nixon to Clinton* (Thorndike, ME: G.K. Hall & Co., 2000), 21.

> strength, not a weakness. The Nixon I saw used it with considerable thought and in a way that generally strengthened prospects for long-term peace.[13]

Edgar Snow's many works remain important resources for researchers interested in the P.R.C., because this man's personal relationship with both Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou allowed him to offer his readers unusual, in-depth, and first-hand accounts about Chinese history and culture.

Nixon's official *Public Papers of the Presidents of the U.S.* from 1969 through 1972 shed considerable light on his official White House activities, thereby offering researchers a multiplicity of excellent windows for peering into a shadowy past.[14] In essence, Nixon buttresses these published governmental accounts with much the same essential underlying story in his own monographs and collections of memoirs. While perusing any of these volumes, one clearly perceives the former president's adversarial relationship with members of the media. Because of his beliefs about their general bias against him, Nixon's developed attitudes of suspicion and hate shaped how American viewers perceived the importance of both his choice to go to China and then the coverage of his 1972 journey.

Archival materials explored included works published by the U.S. Department of State, which was a governmental entity largely bypassed by Nixon and Kissinger

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[13] Ibid., 71.

[14] See Richard Nixon, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the U.S.: Richard Nixon Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President 1969* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1971); Richard Nixon, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the U.S.: Richard Nixon Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President 1970* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1971); Richard Nixon, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the U.S.: Richard Nixon Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President 1971* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1972); Richard Nixon, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the U.S.: Richard Nixon Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President 1972* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1974).

in the preparations for this groundbreaking Asian adventure. These documents, which relate to foreign policies and the P.R.C. in the early 1970s, are important as they reflect what information the government distributed to the general public at that time.[15] Another valuable source for this report is the Senate's personal collection of records in the *Memorial Services in the Congress of the United States and Tributes In Eulogy of Richard M. Nixon Late a President of the United States*.[16] The statements found in this volume proved fascinating, as even though some of Nixon's former fellows mentioned the Watergate scandal in their remarks, they publicly brushed this matter somewhat to the side to offer heartfelt condolences at the loss of a great American statesman. While Howell Heflin, a Democratic Senator from Alabama, stated, "Despite the tragedy of Watergate, I think Richard Nixon will go down in history as one of the most intriguing and successful political leaders of the twentieth century," his Republican colleague, Thad Cochran of Mississippi, also remarked, "Although Watergate was a blemish on his record, his many accomplishments and contributions to world peace made his Presidency very successful."[17]

Four personal interviews also served as excellent sources of information.[18] Patsy Jean Jones graciously agreed to share her experiences as a young girl watching

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[15] U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Foreign Policy 1969-1970*, a report of the Secretary of State Department of State, Publication 8575, General Foreign Policy, Series 254 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1971; U.S. Department of State, *Issues in United States Foreign Policy: No. 4—People's Republic of China* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1972).

[16] U.S. Congress, Senate, *Memorial Services in the Congress of the United States and Tributes In Eulogy of Richard M. Nixon Late a President of the United States*, 103d Cong., 2d sess., 1996, H. Doc. 103-341 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1996), 36.

[17] Ibid., Hon. Howell Heflin of Alabama, Monday, April 25, 1994, 38; Hon. Thad Cochran of Mississippi, Thursday, May 5, 1994, 54.

[18] Patsy Jean Jones, interview by Molly McLeod Mirll, July 7, 2007, Bay City, Texas. [Hereafter cited as Jones interview]; Rogers Patrick McLeod, former United States and Texas History teacher,

the Nixon China broadcasts, as presented on Houston, Texas, television channels. Rogers Patrick McLeod and Jean Collins McLeod, both former professional schoolteachers, also contributed to this project by explaining what the average American family, who were busily raising children and just struggling to survive, remembered about Nixon's journey and new political move. As adults at the time, they obviously offered a different perspective than Jones, as they could better grasp the greater underlying social issues involved and the later political importance of the Watergate scandal. During his interview, author Terry Mirll expressed his teenage unhappiness over the extent of the televised Watergate hearings. To understand his level of despair, modern readers who enjoy advanced viewing options, such as extensive cable connections or satellite dishes, must think about the simple aerial antenna the Mirlls had at their home. This was, after all, the early 1970s, when cable television was just being developed. While the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), and the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) all spent a considerable amount of time providing continuous live coverage of these official meetings, children and teenagers, like Jones and Mirll, who may have wanted to watch non-adult-geared programming were out of luck. At fifteen, Mirll was simply more interested in watching evening episodes of *Columbo* than he was in staring for hours at a bunch of bickering old men.

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interview by Molly McLeod Mirll, July 7, 2007, Bay City, Texas. [Hereafter cited as Pat McLeod interview]; Jean Collins McLeod, former Music teacher, interview by Molly McLeod Mirll, July 7, 2007, Bay City, Texas. [Hereafter cited as Jean McLeod interview]; Terry L. Mirll, author of *Children and Fools, A Twisted Tale of the Vienna Woods* (Oakland, OR: Elderberry Press, 2001) and *Wonderboy and the Black Hole of Nixvy Veck* (Charleston, S. C.: BookSurge, 2005), interview by Molly McLeod Mirll, October 19, 2007, Midwest City, Oklahoma. [Hereafter cited as Mirll interview].

Other primary source documents used in the construction of this essay include newspapers and magazines, such as *America*, *Business Week*, *The Christian Century*, *Christianity Today*, *Ebony*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. Reviewing and analyzing such a diverse collection of publications preserved greater objectivity for this study, as the views of more conservative or liberal writers have been better balanced against one another. Academic journals also played an important role in informing the general public about Nixon's journey that February. Many influential writers shaped public opinion, but also assisted members of their society by explaining foreign reactions to the American leader's startling diplomatic decision. Informative articles, which highlighted how foreign eyes viewed American policies in the early 1970s, examined the unraveling geopolitical puzzle by exploring how the world reacted to Nixon's surprise move, and described for domestic readers how news coverage in the P.R.C. was heavily controlled for the majority of that society, appeared in several influential domestic journals, such as the *Asian Survey*, *The China Quarterly*, and the *Journal of Peace Research*.[19] The American population's perceptions of communist China certainly needed revision before general acceptance of this momentous shift in foreign policy practices occurred; however, the same could be said for the Chinese.

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[19] The following are recommended articles from these publications: Sheldon L. Appleton, "Taiwan: The Year It Finally Happened," *Asian Survey* 12, no. 1 (January 1972): 33-5. [Hereafter cited as Appleton article]; Alan P. L. Liu, "Control of Public Information and Its Effects on China's Foreign Affairs," *Asian Survey* 14, no. 10 (October 1974): 943. [Hereafter cited as Alan Liu article]; William H. Overholt, "President Nixon's Trip to China and Its Consequences," *Asian Survey* 13, no. 7 (July 1973): 713, 715. [Hereafter cited as Overholt article]; Marek Thee, "U.S.-Chinese Rapprochement and Vietnam," *Journal of Peace Research* 9, no. 1 (1972): 66. [Hereafter cited as Thee article]; Dick Wilson, "China and the European Community," *The China Quarterly*, no. 56 (October-December 1973): 662. [Hereafter cited as Wilson article]; Henry G. Schwarz, "The T'san-K'ao Hsiao-his: How Well Informed are Chinese Officials About the Outside World?" *The China Quarterly*, no. 27 (July 1966): 78-9.

> Despite Ping-Pong cordiality, there existed a reservoir of bitterness among the Chinese. Young people…had been educated to blame the United States for helping Chiang Kai-shek in the civil war, the Korean War, defense of the Nationalist Government on Taiwan, the Vietnam War, and it would not be easy to offset these sentiments so that uninhibited relationships could develop.[20]

The creation of this thesis also relied upon biographies of Nixon, monographs, newspaper reports, and audio-visual resources. Many writers have tried to offer their readers intimate portraits of the former president, but he was a man who relished his privacy, and someone who possessed the ability to display alternate personalities under differing circumstances. Even though Nixon biographer Stephen Ambrose once gave this American leader credit for his accomplishments in foreign affairs by remarking, "I think that the opening to China…was first of all an act of political courage on Nixon's part. It was very high risk politics, and it was the product of very hard thinking," he also diminished the former president's achievement by writing, "'Because Nixon resigned, the full promise of his opening to China has not been realized."[21] Nixon had exhibited his bravery in 1971 and 1972, because "in the final analysis, it was Richard Nixon who took the real political risk in responding to Chinese overtures for *détente*."[22]

While Ambrose tinged his assessment of Nixon with a bit of a negative bias, Margaret MacMillan, who has also written about the former president's political career, recently expressed surprise at finding "herself unexpectedly sympathetic to Richard Nixon"; while a graduate student attending Oxford University she had

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[20] Alan Liu article, 943; Seymour Topping, *Journey Between Two Chinas* (New York, Harper & Row, 1972), 311.

[21] Stephen Ambrose, in *Richard Nixon: Man and President*, producer Lisa Zeff, ABC News Productions, 1996. [Hereafter cited as ABC News]; Goldman, *Richard M. Nixon*, 132.

[22] Allen S. Whiting, "Sino-American Détente," *The China Quarterly*, no. 82 (June 1980): 334-41.

believed Nixon "a man who belonged to a totally different generation, an old man," and also "an appalling man," but she freely admitted gaining more personal respect for him after she concluded her research.[23] Richard Reeves, another Nixon biographer, referenced the man's "loner" personality by remarking, "'As he himself said, he was a desperate introvert in a business of extroverts,'" and even though he excelled in a profession where "'most politicians can't stand to be alone. Richard Nixon couldn't stand to be with people.'"[24]

This work presented a challenge, as in order to offer readers a detailed analysis of the importance of Nixon's trip, many of the P.R.C.'s nearest Asian neighbors' histories also needed to be reviewed, so as to better glimpse how the journey affected them in 1972. Newspaper articles accessed through online services and audio-visual resources proved insightful and added greatly to this essay by providing further details. Each chapter discusses a different aspect relating to this story. Chapter one includes information about Nixon's surprising announcement in 1971. Chapter two delves into the secret trip Kissinger made to pave his boss's diplomatic path and explores the personalities of the powerful Chinese leaders the American president would soon encounter. The third chapter deals specifically with how representatives of the national media covered Nixon's stay in the P.R.C, and details some of their collectively reported experiences. Easily recognizable American

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[23] Rebecca Wigod, "Toronto author warms to Nixon in book about key trip to China: Margaret MacMillan discovers a softer side to the 37th U.S. president," *The Vancouver Sun* (British Columbia), November 11, 2006, F8. [Hereafter cited as Wigod article]; Pat Donnelly, "Looking back at a key week: Margaret MacMillan says her research for her latest book, Nixon in China, about the groundbreaking 1972 visit, changed her view of the former U.S. president," review of *Nixon in China* by Margaret MacMillan, Viking, Canada, *The Gazette* (Montreal), December 9, 2006, J6.

[24] Noel Holston and Andy Edelstein, "Nixon: His own worst enemy; Our 37th president was most uncomfortable with himself, as a revealing new documentary makes perfectly clear," *Newsday* (New York), February 11, 2007, C16. [Hereafter cited as Holston and Edelstein article].

personalities, such as Walter Cronkite, Barbara Walters, and Helen Thomas took part in this historic news event. Personal recollections by journalists such as these, who all worked extremely long hours that week in Beijing, offer unique insights into how the domestic networks dealt with the elusive nature of the Nixon administration; however, as many of these men and women lacked extensive knowledge about either the Chinese or their ancient culture by the time they landed in the P.R.C., the secretive conduct by the Nixon administration only further dampened their ultimate potential for providing great stories.

This essay, therefore, is an analysis of Nixon and his 1972 foray to the P.R.C. The following narrative has been constructed by carefully studying accounts drawn from both primary and secondary sources. All of these resources, when woven together, illustrate the importance of the American president's 1971 and 1972 controversial political decisions that immensely impacted many people around the globe.

Vigorous Cold War Handshakes: Reviewing Nixon's 1972 China Trip

Chapter One

The Antecedents

On July 15, 1971, according to Nixon's Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman, the president "was in good spirits and completely relaxed" before he dropped a huge political bombshell on an unsuspecting American public.[1] Nixon shocked his audience that day by suddenly announcing he had both received and accepted an invitation to visit Communist China.[2] His few short words, not only reversed several decades of national foreign policy patterns, but also became referred to as "the best-kept Presidential secret since Lyndon [Baines] Johnson's televised abdication speech."[3] Nixon, a loner by nature, skillfully utilized secrecy as part of his overarching political strategy while occupying the Oval Office in the early 1970s. This practice was used to such an extent that it soon constituted one of the distinguishing factors of his administration's methodology.

In the 1950s, Nixon's behavior patterns had been described as a kaleidoscope; as president, because he continued to display different faces for separate audiences, Haldeman praised his boss's adaptive ability, once referring to him as "a multi-faceted quartz crystal. Some facets bright and shining, others dark and mysterious";

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[1] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, xi, 319.

[2] Richard Critchfield, "Impact in Hanoi," *The Nation*, August 16, 1971, 105; Thomas A. Bailey, and David M. Kennedy, *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic*, eighth ed. (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987), 885.

[3] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 16.

Nixon's many critics, however, sensed insincerity or attempts at truth suppression.[4] While Charles "Chuck" Colson may have recalled Nixon as a visionary, John Dean, remarking on the former president's loner personality, mentioned, "He didn't seem to be very comfortable with people as a general rule."[5] When John Ehrlichman remembered Nixon, he noted, "He intentionally created compartments in the White House. He would not confide everything to everybody."[6] While his political rivals may have criticized his use of secrecy when serving as America's commander-in-chief, Nixon got results. He paid extremely close attention to his public approval ratings; as a seasoned politician, Nixon remained well aware that "high levels of approval improve a president's chances for re-election, boost the fortunes of fellow partisans in congressional elections, and increase influence in Congress."[7]

As president, Nixon clearly tried to solidify a personal reputation as a peacemaker. In his Inaugural address, he adamantly proclaimed, "I shall consecrate my office, my energies, and all the wisdom I can summon to the cause of peace among nations."[8] Around the world that spring, Chairman Mao evidently liked the new president's message, as he ordered Nixon's speech published for his citizens.[9] In 1969, the American leader spoke before a group of American Field Service Students,

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[4] David Greenberg, *Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), xxix.

[5] Chuck Colson, ABC News; John Dean, ABC News.

[6] John Ehrlichman, ABC News.

[7] Lydia Andrade and Garry Young, "Presidential Agenda Setting: Influences on the Emphasis of Foreign Policy," *Political Research Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (September 1996): 594.

[8] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1969*, 4.

[9] Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 245.

directly and succinctly informing them of his personal goal of bringing real peace to the world.[10] While in Guam a few days later, Nixon further stated he thought the Pacific area nations threatened this idea from ever occurring, but offered audience members hopeful information concerning the Vietnam War, by explaining how intelligence data indicated provided materiel allotments from Red China to the North Vietnamese had decreased from over half to only 20 percent of previous totals rendered.[11] The following September, in an address before the 24th General Assembly of the United Nations, Nixon not only declared that all national leaders bore a world mandate to bring peace to the globe, but also publicly announced, "Whenever the leaders of Communist China choose to abandon their self-imposed isolation, we are ready to talk with them."[12]

The president continued to pursue his goal, and by July 1971, the chosen strategy had evidently borne fruit, as John King Fairbank, a noted Harvard Sinologist, wrote, "Mr. Nixon's willingness to visit Peking is a personal coup for him as peacemaker, an image he will want to preserve"; Fairbank also believed the upcoming journey acted "as an incentive for him to complete the liquidation of the American intervention in Vietnam."[13] Many citizens, weary of their nation's involvement in the Indochina conflict, fervently hoped this prediction came true. Three months later, while discussing the domestic economic situation, Nixon "declared that 1972 'can be a year in which historic events will take place on the

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[10] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1969*, 533-4.

[11] Ibid., 546, 554.

[12] Ibid., 728, 730.

[13] John King Fairbank, "Mr. Nixon's Rewards," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 18.

international scene, events that could affect the peace of the world in the next generation, even in the next century.'"[14] Nixon's foreign policy decisions in 1971 and 1972 did not merely symbolize attempts to impress voters before a preeminent election, as some of his political critics quickly contended; the historical record clearly shows how the president repeatedly made such references to his personal goal of achieving greater levels of world peace throughout his first term.

During his presidency, Nixon relied heavily upon polling techniques to keep him connected with the public; while his administration conducted 223 surveys between 1969 and 1972, the polling in 1972 "was quite extensive—it significantly exceeded Johnson's total for his entire presidency."[15] There inside his White House on Pennsylvania Avenue, while Haldeman, "as the gatekeeper to the president," held the position at the top of the "hierarchical chain of command" when it came to "polling and public opinion analysis" matters, Kissinger served as "both the conduit and screen for the great bulk of information about foreign policy and foreign policy alternatives that moved from the bureaucracy upward" to Nixon.[16]

President Nixon was, in an obvious understatement, a complicated man. While his actions may have shocked many Cold War sensibilities, his gutsy moves in 1971 and 1972 signaled a monumental shift in U.S. foreign policy. While some of his most stringent critics questioned his use of secrecy in the matter, many others believed, as Nixon obviously did, that intense publicity would have foiled his

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[14] "After Saigon, Peking Ahead," *Time*, October 18, 1971, 32.

[15] Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro, "The Rise of Presidential Polling: The Nixon White House in Historical Perspective," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 59, no 2 (Summer 1995): 168.

[16] Ibid.; Harvey Starr, "The Kissinger Years: Studying Individuals and Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (December 1980): 466.

diplomatic triumph.[17] The successful adventure buttressed his subsequent re-election campaign, but, more importantly, this one decisive and risky decision finally allowed for the first major cracks to appear in the so-called civilized world's self-imposed Cold War armor.

Prior to his brief televised appearance, while Nixon had completed several days of secretive meetings with top officials, and although journalists had noted the arrival of two speechwriters to San Clemente, California, he still instructed Ronald Ziegler, his White House Press Secretary, to deny any forthcoming official message; this silencing of information continued until a few hours before airtime, when Secretary of State William P. Rogers forewarned nineteen nations' embassies of a pending presidential bulletin.[18] On Capitol Hill, national leaders received their only notification concerning the planned televised appearance shortly before the program aired.[19] That day, Nixon flew via helicopter to a Burbank, California, NBC studio; oddly enough, the same one normally used by the popular comedy program *Laugh-In*.[20] Upon his arrival, he received an enthusiastic reception by "quite a large crowd…which, of course, pleased him greatly."[21] The administration "didn't inform anybody…of what the content of the speech was going to be, until we got to the TV studio," Haldeman wrote in his diary; in the brief ninety-second segment, the president publicly declared his aim "to seek the normalization of relations" between

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[17] James C. Humes, *Nixon's Ten Commandments of Statecraft* (New York: Scribner, 1997), 64.

[18] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 18.

[19] Ibid., 18.

[20] "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 11; "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 18, Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, 320.

[21] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, 320.

America and Chairman Mao's China, and that he anticipated the opportunity would allow for the exchange of "views on questions of concern to the two sides."[22] Nixon's words greatly excited press corps members, who began showering their leader with praise; Helen Thomas, who covered the story, remembered that the surprising speech "made the room rock."[23] Following his national appearance, the president, along with his most trusted personal aides, then traveled to a fashionable local restaurant named Perino's, where a celebratory dinner included a $40 bottle of Chateau Lafite Rothschild (1961).[24] Because his desired curtain of secrecy had held, Nixon fully savored his latest political triumph.

The irony of the televised event stunned many domestic viewers. Sitting in their comfortable living rooms, they slowly realized they had just heard their commander-in-chief, a man who had diligently fashioned a prior political career on anti-Communist rhetoric, shatter two decades of foreign policy patterns toward the P.R.C. As this supposedly hostile country had been referred to for years as being the home of "a regime whose malevolent design–in the view of five U.S. Administrations, including his own–compelled Americans to fight and die in Korea and Vietnam," were average citizens now really expected to view China in a different light?[25] One writer for *The Christian Century* described the president's proclamation

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[22] Ibid., 319; "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 11.

[23] Greenberg, Nixon's Shadow, 276; Helen Thomas, *Front Row at the White House: My Life and Times* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 186.

[24] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 18; "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 11; Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, 320.

[25] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 16.

as having a "mind-boggling quality," while another *Life* magazine article also labeled the announcement as "one of the great diplomatic bombshells of recent years."[26]

Upon hearing the president's surprising news that summer day, some unhappy American citizens questioned how Nixon had developed such a seemingly crazy concept. In actuality, the idea came to fruition after many months of careful cultivation; before Nixon's plane, renamed *The Spirit of '76* for the occasion, ever landed in Beijing, his personal advisor Kissinger had successfully cleared his diplomatic path by traveling incognito to China.[27] As it turned out, the eventual historic meeting between Mao and Nixon the following spring not only signaled the beginning of a friendship etched with deep respect, but also marked a new chapter in world history.

Polar opinions concerning Nixon's statements quickly surfaced, but the next day, Haldeman noted, "the response to the speech was surprisingly favorable from all quarters, even the conservatives."[28] Summing up the situation, an article in *America* read:

> President Nixon and Chairman Mao have not yet set foot on the same diplomatic dance floor, let alone begun to tango. Still, a fascinated world follows each detail of the ritual both Chinese and Americans have entered on to bring about that encounter.[29]

While in Washington, in the District of Columbia, speculations quickly abounded, and questions surfaced regarding what role congressional seniority would

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[26] "Marco Nixon," *The Christian Century*, July 28, 1971, 898; "Peking's View of the Nixon Mission," *Life*, July 30, 1971, 20.

[27] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 14.

[28] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, 321.

[29] "It Takes Two to Tango," *America*, August 7, 1971, 50.

possible play in ensuring someone a place as an official member of the future Nixon entourage, reactions to the short speech also varied widely with viewers across the vast U.S.[30] While many astute Americans perceived their president's move as both a "bold initiative" and as a monumental turning point in world diplomacy, a majority of the general population at least viewed it as a "situation-transforming event."[31] According to one *Christianity Today* article, "The Peking talks offer a virtually unprecedented opportunity to surface the truly important issues facing those who live in the closing decades of the twentieth century."[32] While some citizens alluded to their leader's remarks as explosive in nature, the director of Harvard's East Asian Research Center believed Nixon's words signaled an "end to the *Cold War*"; however, a former U.S. ambassador to Japan, Edwin O. Reischauer, quickly referred to the whole politicized concept as "quixotic," a "grave mistake," and a "lot of play acting," which would eventually damage international relations and "injure the hopes for world peace."[33]

According to an article that appeared in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (Nevada) years later, "any Democratic leader who'd tried to cozy up to the Chinese mass murderer and dictator-for-life would have had his political head handed to him on a platter"; ironically, because Nixon had a reputation for being "a staunch anti-

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[30] "All aboard for Peking," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 13.

[31] Stewart Alsop, "The Cow Kicked Nelly," *Newsweek*, August 16, 1971, 84.

[32] "Nixon, China, and Religious Freedom," *Christianity Today*, February 4, 1972, 20.

[33] "Visit to the 'Center of the World,'" *America*, March 4, 1972, 220.

Communist, criticism from the right was sharply muted."[34] Across the nation, citizens soon expressed their astonishment that political criticisms had remained so relatively light; Nixon had actually earned both prompt and nonpartisan applause from usually diametrically opposed corners.[35] While Michael Joseph Mansfield, the Senate Democratic Leader stated, "I'm astounded, delighted and happy" after hearing the short speech, and Robert P. Griffin, the Senate Republican Whip, described the commander-in-chief's declaration as "a stunning and hopeful development," even George McGovern, Nixon's political rival and well-known persistent critic, openly declared, "I applaud the President's imagination and judgment."[36] This may have been so, but Peter Dominick, a Republican from Colorado, rapidly labeled his leader's decision a "disaster," and the Reverend Carl McIntire, who chaired the Vietnam March for Victory's committee, also "charged that Nixon 'has abandoned all moral principles—it is like God and the devil having a high-level meeting.'"[37]

Dozens of theories quickly surfaced regarding the potential political importance of the president's recent decision, but most of the speculations led to the same conclusion: if Nixon avoided an outright fiasco with his new Asian initiative, his good fortunes would continue throughout 1972.[38] Occurring when it did, while Nixon's surprise message enabled him to momentarily smother other disheartening economic and Vietnam War effort news, it also directly assisted his domestic agenda

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[34] "Will Democrats rise to the challenge?" *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (Nevada), December 14, 2006, 8B.

[35] "It Takes Two to Tango," *America*, August 7, 1971, 50.

[36] "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 16.

[37] Ibid.

[38] "It Takes Two to Tango," *America*, August 7, 1971, 50.

by knocking his critics off their collective balances.[39] Although his opponents continued to complain about the administration's blatant use of secrecy, the former president later staunchly defended his chosen methodology by stressing the "delicate negotiations with China would have collapsed" if the general public had known more specific details; he firmly believed "opponents of the new relationship in both countries would have sabotaged our moves toward a rapprochement."[40]

Noted columnists soon added their opinions into the politicized fray. "F.D.R. would have hesitated to go to Berlin to wine and dine with Adolf Hitler," William F. Buckley Jr. claimed, "but we are about to do that."[41] In the *National Review*, Frank S. Meyer questioned, "In 1938 Chamberlain brought back from Munich 'peace in our time.' In 1939 World War II erupted. What will Nixon bring back from Peking?"[42] Writing for *Newsweek*, Stewart Alsop doubted Nixon's new initiative portended any true impact for world affairs; he stated the speech had the same political punch as "the cow's kick had in my favorite heroic couplet: *The cow kicked Nelly in the belly in the barn; Didn't do her any good, didn't do her any harm.*"[43] Taking "the risk of swimming against prevailing currents" and voicing his personal suspicions, Zbigniew Brzezinski also believed "Mr. Nixon's trip to China will turn out much like a fortune

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[39] "The Twain Shall Meet," *National Review*, August 10, 1971, 845.

[40] Nixon, *In the Arena*, 326-27.

[41] "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 16.

[42] Frank S. Meyer, "Principles and Heresies: Peace in Our Time," *National Review*, August 10, 1971, 873.

[43] Stewart Alsop, "The Cow Kicked Nelly," *Newsweek*, August 16, 1971, 84.

cookie: it will be pleasant, it will hold out promise, but it will be short on tangibles and concretes."[44]

In other popular American magazines, readers discovered additional reactions to the startling news. "The basic idea, as well as its execution, deserves fervent applause," remarked William P. Bundy in *Newsweek*.[45] While a contributor to *The Christian Century* wrote the "acceptance of Premier Chou En-lai's invitation deserves approbation from all who continue to seek community among the nations," another article that appeared in *Time* stated, "Nixon acted with determination and courage," and further noted that his recent announcement had thrown diplomatic relationships into new perspective.[46] In *Newsweek*, while John Fairbank labeled the president's decision "a hopeful and creative move," and characterized the planned journey as "in itself no panacea but only a chance to seek genuine solutions instead of violent ones," he also stressed that, in Chinese political thought, Nixon's traveling to China as a guest would be translated as the American commander-in-chief's having paid that nation a great honor.[47]

Honor or not, an article in *Ebony* pointed out that black leaders in America knew "politics makes strange bedfellows and the astute…are surprised at little."[48] In fact, many in this community held the "opinion that this should have taken place a

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[44] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Fortune-Cookie Diplomacy," *Newsweek*, February 14, 1972, 46.

[45] William P. Bundy, "The President's Peking Trip," *Newsweek*, August 2, 1971, 37.

[46] "Marco Nixon," *The Christian Century*, July 28, 1971, 898; "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 11.

[47] John King Fairbank, "Mr. Nixon's Rewards," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 18.

[48] "Strange, Strange Bedfellows," *Ebony*, September 11, 1971, 142.

long time ago"; besides knowing, as the Chicago *Daily Defender* reported on August 3, 1971, that when "the late Dr. Martin Luther King…once publicly suggested that the United States should be realistic in dealing with China…he was immediately called a 'dirty nigger communist,'" another editorial that appeared on August 7, 1971, in Baltimore, Maryland's *Afro-America* newspaper, commended Nixon for "pulling the 'United States' head out of the sand with his dramatic decision to accept an invitation to go to Mainland China as a step toward normalizing this country's relations with the real China."[49] While some influential blacks remained upset by the proposed summit, and found "it hard to visualize President Nixon and the Chinese leaders doing business in the same room," others realized:

> the game of international politics is played by a peculiar set of rules–complicated rules that make it all right for the President of the nation fighting a war in South Vietnam against an enemy backed by North Vietnam which in turn is supported by Red China to meet with the premier of Red China to discuss things like world peace, the weather, admission of China to the United Nations and whether or not mini-skirts were an international fad.[50]

As American periodical subscribers found themselves bombarded from all sides by such differing opinions, they quickly realized only time would either reveal or produce any truths about the rapidly developing foreign affairs situation.

In Beijing, not having "fully recovered from its two vast upheavals–the ill-fated 'Great Leap Forward' in 1959 and the chaotic 'Cultural Revolution' of 1966-69," Mao and his top advisors, who remained "deeply alarmed by the threats of a Soviet pre-emptive nuclear strike and Russia's million-man buildup on China's

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[49] Yawsoon Sim, "Sino-American Détente: A Note on Afro-Americans' Views," *Journal of Black Studies 5*, no. 1 (September 1974): 79-80, 82.

[50] "Strange, Strange Bedfellows," *Ebony*, September 11, 1971, 142.

northern border," wanted to "improve their strategic position in relation to the U.S.S.R. [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics]."[51] Exasperation over Russia's ideals of communism and the renewal of tensions finally led Mao to contemplate reopening a dialog with the U.S.[52] On October 1, 1970, Mao invited his old friend and journalist Edgar Snow "to review the annual National Day celebration parade at the top of the Gate of Heavenly Peace"; "a picture of Snow and Mao together" soon appeared "on the front page of major Chinese newspapers," because the Chairman had decided to send his people an initial signal regarding his changing perspective toward America.[53] Later that year, he also extended his invitation to Nixon to visit his country.[54]

A writer contributing to *Newsweek* believed "the Chinese hoped that the Nixon visit and improved relations between Peking and Washington might help to offset this [Soviet] pressure."[55] "They may think the American visit will improve their standing in the 'third world,'" stated one letter in *The New Yorker*, "but one wonders how this could be so when it seems more important in the third world to be militantly anti-American than to appear to be in any way conciliatory. Peking has received no congratulations from Havana."[56] Yes, the decision to open talks with the U.S. in 1972 meant Mao's nation sacrificed "a certain amount of prestige and

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[51] "Nixon in China: Who Stands to Gain Most," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 13; "A Guide to Nixon's China Journey," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 29; Snow, *The Long Revolution*, 183.

[52] Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Rise of the Chinese Republic: From the Last Emperor to Deng Xiaoping* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1989), 303.

[53] Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 245.

[54] Witold Rodzinski, *The People's Republic of China: A Concise Political History* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 184.

[55] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 20.

[56] Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington," *The New Yorker*, August 7, 1971, 77.

influence in parts of the Communist world," but this new diplomatic move obviously seemed "well worth it to gain influence in the non-Communist world."[57]

In the eyes of the Chinese, "going to the negotiating table with the United States did not imply an abandonment of revolutionary fervor or ideological confrontation"; in fact, as Chairman Mao had [already] pointed out…"negotiation is a form of confrontation in itself: 'Sometimes, not going to negotiations is a tit-for-tat; and sometimes, going to negotiations is also tit-for-tat. We were right not to go before, and also right to go this time; in both cases we have given tit-for-tat.'"[58] Therefore, the daring political gambles undertaken by both Chairman Mao and President Nixon raised expectations in both their countries of eventual handsome diplomatic and peace dividends. While this may have been the case for leaders in the U.S. and the P.R.C., other Asian nations also soon dealt with the ramifications of the historic political decisions. "It is clear," an author wrote in *America*, "that the ripples from the pebble dropped into the pool of international relations by this U.S.-China initiative will continue to be felt on the most distant diplomatic shores for months to come."[59] As for Mao's P.R.C., in the coming years, Premier Zhou's own efforts reasserted his nation's "image of sane and responsible world power. Chinese embassies…were restaffed, and China began to search for alignments that would offset the Soviet threat."[60]

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[57] Ibid., "Letter from Washington: February 27, 1972," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 109.

[58] U.S. Department of State, *Issues in United States Foreign Policy*, 33.

[59] "It Takes Two to Tango," *America*, August 7, 1971, 50.

[60] "A Guide to Nixon's China Journey," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 29.

Nixon's travel plans elicited no immediate official response from the U.S.S.R. The leaders in Moscow, Brzezinski soon wrote in *Newsweek*, found themselves in a tricky situation; they had been "outflanked and [were] obviously concerned."[61] Since the 1950s, disagreements had worn away the strong political connections the Chinese had established with Soviet officials working inside the Kremlin. As Nixon put it:

> From 1959 to 1963, the Sino-Soviet bloc disintegrated over ideological disputes about whose brand of communism was purest and over geopolitical conflicts about whether China would move from junior to full partner in the alliance. As a result of the split with Moscow, China found itself isolated and surrounded by hostile powers by the late 1960s.[62]

Kissinger had also previously shown his concern over this particular issue, when once, only in partial jest, he "told a group of scholars that he had two nightmares: one that Moscow and Peking would make up; the other that they would fight a war."[63] Although the leadership in Moscow may have initially remained ominously silent, observant readers of the Soviet paper *Pravda* eventually noted a small mention of the American president's shocking message on one edition's fifth page.[64] While the official Soviet press provided quite limited coverage of Nixon's planned journey, the Russian national news organizations publicly criticized Beijing for its "collusion with imperialism."[65] When the leaders in Moscow finally issued a public response to the

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[61] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Substance and Style," *Newsweek*, August 9, 1971, 41.

[62] Nixon, *Seize the Moment*, 164.

[63] "After Mao: Can the Revolution Go On?" *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 55.

[64] "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 12; "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 16-17.

[65] "Hazards Along the Road to Peking," *Time*, August 2, 1971, 12.

surprising international news, their statement clearly noted "no one in the vicinity of Red Square was jumping with joy over the proposed Nixon visit."[66]

Nixon had previously tried to arrange a Soviet "summit in 1970, before the congressional elections" of that year, but, "suspecting his political motives, [the Russians had] balked, contending that much groundwork had to be laid before a meaningful meeting could be arranged"; after American officials received intelligence that Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko "went about for weeks with a black expression" on his face after learning the president planned to visit the P.R.C., it seemed to many citizens that their leader had "repaid the Russians in spectacular fashion for their previous foot-dragging."[67] Following Nixon's surprise announcement in 1971, Soviet President Podgorny visited Hanoi on October 3, where he received "a lavish welcome" and signed his name to "new, large economic and military aid agreements."[68] Regarding the triangular relationship between the U.S., the P.R.C., and the U.S.S.R., John Fairbank concluded, "neither we nor the Chinese want the Russians to be our middlemen manipulating us both from the only two-way position in the trio."[69] While Kissinger also later commented the Chinese had expressed great concern about their 'northern neighbor,' he stressed, "We are staying out of this dispute."[70] Even though the U.S. leadership officially expressed initial reluctance about meddling in *family* squabbles, after he visited with Chairman Mao in

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[66] "It Takes Two to Tango," *America*, August 7, 1971, 50.

[67] Melvin Small, *The Presidency of Richard Nixon*, 103; Arkady N. Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 200.

[68] Garver article, 455-56.

[69] John King Fairbank, "Mr. Nixon's Rewards," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 18.

[70] Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy*, 232-33.

February, President Nixon then traveled the following May for diplomatic talks in Moscow.[71]

The news of Nixon's planned journey affected more nations than simply the U.S.S.R., as many countries' leaders soon registered their own surprise at the new American diplomatic overture. Around the world, people quickly speculated whether or not the P.R.C. would earn recognition as a key player in global affairs once America's president had traveled to Beijing.[72] Responses to Nixon's short speech ranged from Rome's state-run radio describing the bulletin as *clamoroso* (sensational) to the Johannesburg, South Africa, *Star*'s article, which called the president's decision "the most needed move forward in the world's painful crawl toward assured peace."[73] In France, while the *France-Soir*'s headlining story declared, "Le Coup De Nixon," and insisted that the move both suddenly turned "the international situation topsy-turvy" and "may soon bring peace without capitulation or humiliation for anyone," the *Le Monde* ran the banner, "A Great Turning Point In World Politics."[74]

News sources located in Asian countries also published varied reactions. Nixon's move greatly surprised the Japanese.[75] While outcry against his decision saw some Japanese journalists comparing America's new foreign policy initiative to the infamous Hitler-Stalin pact, because governmental officials also feared "possible isolation as a result of a U.S.-China axis," they "stepped up a diplomatic offensive

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[71] Bailey and Kennedy, *The American Pageant*, 885.

[72] Jasper Becker, *The Chinese* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2000), 279.

[73] "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 12.

[74] Ibid.; "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 16-17.

[75] Margaret MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2007), 291.

designed to illustrate Tokyo's independence in foreign affairs."[76] Prime Minister Eisaku Sato had received only "three minutes' warning, and the American ambassador was lying in a barber's chair when he heard [the surprise announcement] on an American armed forces broadcast."[77] Sato "lost face in not being consulted by Washington about the venture; 'We too keep secrets,' he complained."[78] He "tried to put a brave face on it, but he tearfully unburdened himself…to the Australian prime minister saying, 'I have done everything they asked but they have let me down.'"[79]

Sato received some sympathetic treatment in the American press, as when a contributor writing for *Newsweek* commented that even though he understood the last-minute notification to the Japanese government resulted for reasons of secrecy, he still believed the president's methodology carried the same connotation "as if the U.S. had acted suddenly to send its President to Germany sometime in the early postwar period without telling France."[80] While W. A. C. Adie's article in the *Asian Survey*, stated, "In Japan, Sato's doom seemed near. 'He trusted Nixon,'" Zbigniew Brzezinski voiced his own unhappiness over Nixon's chosen approach to the Beijing summit meetings in *Newsweek*.[81] Taking full notice of Sato's obvious personal embarrassment, he expressed regret at witnessing the "Japanese confidence in our forthrightness shaken," as, in his opinion, the situation now required a "restoration of

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[76] "The Peking Summit as Others Saw It," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 28; "The Long, Bumpy Road to Peking," *Newsweek*, August 2, 1971, 15.

[77] MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 293, 295.

[78] "Hazards Along the Road to Peking," *Time*, August 2, 1971, 12.

[79] Ibid.

[80] William P. Bundy, "The President's Peking Trip," *Newsweek*, August 2, 1971, 37.

[81] Adie article, 366.

confidence between Washington and Tokyo"; after first remarking such a warning "notice on a development that is important to them" was "not the way to conduct alliance politics," Brzezinski then also added that even though "the result would have been less dramatic," the diplomatic difficulties which inevitably arose "could have been avoided if the initiative had involved more simultaneous consultation with our friends and less emphasis on sensation."[82] Taking a slightly less harsh tact, A. Doak Barnett, in *U.S. News & World Report*, stated, "We have already paid some price in our relationship with Japan, not from the substance of what we've done but the style in which we have done it"; although Barnett also considered Nixon's initial method of announcement "an error of judgment," he thought "the damage that has been done will not be permanent," and that eventually, "both sides are going to see the importance of maintaining and improving this relationship."[83] As a result of Nixon's foreign policy bombshell, Tokyo's leaders suddenly awakened to the realization they needed to pay renewed attention to certain vital security issues, "such as national defense, international economic competition and the web of relations among the nations of Southeast Asia."[84]

The sudden shift in America's policy direction also signaled the beginning of dramatic consequences for Formosa. For those who understood the past political history of this island's leadership, many believed the government officials there reacted appropriately to the startling bulletin. Representing Taiwanese interests,

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[82] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Substance and Style," *Newsweek*, August 9, 1971, 41.

[83] "New Shape of Asia: 'A Four-Power Balance Unlike Anything We've Had In Past,'" interview with A. Doak Barnett, *U.S. News & World Report*, March 6, 1972, 18-19.

[84] "It Takes Two to Tango," *America*, August 7, 1971, 50.

Taipei's Ambassador to the United Nations complained, "the U.S. has pulled the rug out from under our feet in the U.N…The damage to us is immeasurable"; in this diplomat's opinion, the proposed journey handed "a prestige victory to the Communists on a silver platter" and showed that "Communist intransigence pays off."[85]

Beginning in the mid-fifties, Zhou Enlai had consistently stressed, "Peking's relations with Chiang Kai-shek are Peking's business."[86] Even though Nixon promised his new move in diplomacy would not be "'at the expense of our old friends,' Nationalists immediately began 'girding for rough diplomatic sailing.'"[87] Island diplomats were in for a rocky ride that summer. Having personally received no prior notification about Nixon's planned journey, Ambassador James Shen referred to the new presidential idea as "a shabby deal," but observers on Taiwan "reported concern but no depression, panic or major demonstrations."[88] The Nationalists there, however, had been generally dismayed upon receiving official word of Nixon's anticipated trip to Beijing. Within days, "gossip in such listening centers as Hong Kong" mentioned "that money began fleeing Taiwan within days of the Nixon announcement."[89]

The following words of electronics worker, Liu Yuan, provide an example of a typically heard response from members loyal to the Nationalist cause:

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[85] "Hazards Along the Road to Peking," *Time*, August 2, 1971, 14.

[86] "Agenda in Peking," *The New Republic*, August 7 & 14, 1971, 5.

[87] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 16.

[88] Appleton article, 33-5.

[89] "It Takes Two to Tango," *America*, August 7, 1971, 50.

> This is a bad business. The Red Chinese foreign policy is masked in smiles, but they plan to defeat the U.S. The more eager Nixon is to make friends with the Communists, the more he will be disappointed. The free world will lose confidence in him and our brethren on the mainland will lose hope.[90]

Nixon had written to the Generalissimo, and pledged his country's continued support of national security matters in its previous containment-esque manner, but he never received a reply from the eighty-four-year-old leader regarding his government's possible reaction if the Beijing regime gained admittance to the U.N.[91] Although the P.R.C. controlled "over ninety-eight percent of China's national territory and population," a Taiwanese-based delegation held the coveted spot representing Chinese interests in the U.N.[92] By August 1971, an article in *The Nation* noted, "the Chinese have benefited from the headlines," as they now seemed "assured of a seat in the U.N. which should probably be theirs before the President's visit."[93] Nixon's brief announcement that he and Mao planned to meet had already caused startling international ramifications. "They will be happy to make a deal with Mr. Nixon," read one *Newsweek* article, "if the American imperialists hand over Taiwan to Peking and Saigon to Hanoi and then get the hell out of Asia. Not otherwise."[94]

In the months prior to Nixon's quiet landing reception in Beijing, the diplomatic situation for Taiwan changed dramatically. On October 25, 1971, after

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[90] Edgar Snow, "China will talk from a position of strength," *Life*, July 30, 1971, 26.

[91] Appleton article, 36; "The Long, Bumpy Road to Peking," *Newsweek*, August 2, 1971, 15; "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 16.

[92] J. Bruce Jacobs, "Taiwan 1972: Political Season," *Asian Survey* 13, no. 1 (January 1973): 102. [Hereafter cited as Jacobs article].

[93] "Peking Spectacular," *The Nation*, August 2, 1971, 67.

[94] Stewart Alsop, "The Cow Kicked Nelly," *Newsweek*, August 16, 1971, 84.

accusing his fellow members of "flagrant violations of the [U.N.] charter," Foreign Minister Chow Chu-k'ai led his unhappy delegation out of the hall before his fellow General Assembly members voted to "expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang K'ai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations."[95] Opinions about this momentous event differed. In America, *The New Yorker* printed one man's letter that stressed allowing "the People's Republic of China into the club" meant simply that "[while] the U.N. may be neither more nor less effective than before, it is at least much closer to the goal of universality espoused by the founders."[96]

Deeply enmeshed in the era's Cold War mentality, the U.S., along with sixty-two other nations, had continued to "recognize Taiwan as the legal government of China."[97] There was no doubt this particular diplomatic situation called for delicate handling, because, as an article in *Time* mentioned, while "U.S. emotional ties are strong, the Chiang government's importance in world affairs is small. The pretense that Chiang is the leader of China has long been senseless."[98] While John Fairbanks believed having Beijing represent Chinese interests to the world was "an elementary step away from chaos and Armageddon…[and that] its common sense highlights the stupidity in which our cherished ideological fixation have for so long ensnared us,"

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[95] Appleton article, 32; Chiu, *China, Seventy Years after the 1911 Hsin-Hai Revolution*, 529; Rodzinski, *The People's Republic of China*, 184.

[96] Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington: February 27," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 105.

[97] "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 15.

[98] Ibid.

the Taiwanese press strongly criticized "Henry Kissinger's presence in Peking at the very time the U.N. vote on China was taken."[99]

In Vietnam, President Nguyen Van Thieu and members of the American military first heard Nixon's startling news via Armed Forces Radio.[100] Officials in Saigon appeared delighted with the sudden turn of events; one aide there reportedly stated, "I don't see how it can be anything but favorable to us."[101] While this reaction showed a highly positive opinion in the troubled region, an article published in the Communist Party of Vietnam's official newspaper, *Nhan Dan*, soon claimed, "No matter how cunning Nixon may be, he cannot save the U.S. imperialists from total defeat in this unsubmissive and stalwart Vietnamese land," and the "*Vietnam Courier*, edited in Hanoi, emphasized…'whatever Nixon may do,' the Vietnamese and Indochinese problems 'should not be settled by tricks but by clear and precise options.'"[102] In addition to these press reports, while a Viet Cong spokesman insisted, "China has always supported our fight and our position," one writer for *Newsweek* still speculated Beijing might once again pressure the North Vietnamese into a peaceful compromise, as at the Geneva Conference in 1954.[103] In respect to this particular aspect of geopolitical affairs, an article printed in *The Nation* forwarded the

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[99] John King Fairbank, "Mr. Nixon's Rewards," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 18; Appleton article, 33-4.

[100] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 18.

[101] "Leapfrogging the Paris Talks," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 22.

[102] Thee article, 66; "Hazards Along the Road to Peking," *Time*, August 2, 1971, 11.

[103] "Leapfrogging the Paris Talks," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 22.

idea that the president's announcement surely meant "Le Duan's life expectancy as the North Vietnamese political leader is considerably shortened."[104]

As for America's major television networks, they seemed poised to ensure their domestic audiences received brilliant coverage of this groundbreaking occasion. For the first time, the opportunity presented itself for citizens to witness the society living inside this previously forbidden land.[105] In the months prior to the highly anticipated venture, media personnel not only fastidiously readied expensive and innovative equipment, but also assisted the broadcasters, those fortunate enough to have been selected to accompany the presidential party on its epic journey, with their travel preparations. As their commander-in-chief happily toured the P.R.C. in February 1972, national affiliates in both countries closely covered the event. Because the unknown territory virtually assured so-called scoops and exclusives for the American reporters, worldwide audiences soon watched highlights of the U.S. and P.R.C.'s officials attempting to establish a more peaceful geopolitical relationship via the newest in satellite technology.

Understanding their president's political record, domestic media officials hoped to attract all the viewers he had shocked when televising his intentions in mid-1971. After all, with the Cold War in full progress for more than twenty years, these concerned citizens wanted to know why he had suddenly decided to visit the communists on their own soil. Nixon's startling announcement to conduct summit talks with Red China certainly received drastically varied reactions from around the

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[104] Richard Critchfield, "Impact in Hanoi," *The Nation*, August 16, 1971, 105.

[105] Edmund Lindop, *Presidents Who Dared: Richard M. Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan* (New York: Twenty-First Century Books, 1996), 20.

globe. An article in *Newsweek* read, "We are witnessing the liquidation of two decades of a U.S. East Asian policy dominated by the ghost of John Foster Dulles."[106] The question remained—was this new course of action a prudent political move on Nixon's part? In an article entitled "Is This Trip Necessary?" the former Under Secretary of State George Ball penned the following ominous admonition: "There is nothing more dangerous than to rest the relations between states too heavily on the capricious interaction of diverse personalities."[107]

In the months immediately preceding his journey, even though President Nixon also tried to warn those in the U.S. not to get too carried away with wild speculations about possible results from the scheduled summit talks, such guesswork proved inevitable.[108] While Nixon openly declared his position on Asian matters, certain speculators continued to worry his planned visit to Red China would "put the U.S. stamp of approval on the legitimacy of the Communist regime."[109] The unresolved Taiwanese political question also caused concern. Even though Mao had defeated him in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek continued not only to receive attention as China's legitimate ruler, but also to receive aid from the U.S. government; during the previous two decades, the Generalissimo's regime had "received over $4 billion in aid and enjoyed the protection of American troops and the Seventh Fleet patrolling the Taiwan Strait."[110] For those who fully comprehended these historical truths,

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[106] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 17.

[107] "Now, in Living Color from China," *Time*, February 28, 1972, 12.

[108] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Fortune-Cookie Diplomacy," *Newsweek*, February 14, 1972, 46.

[109] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 19-20.

[110] Ibid.

Nixon's new idea of détente must have appeared ludicrous, as surely this troubled political situation complicated any possibly attempted negotiations with the Chairman to such an extent as to ensure total failure.

Nixon critics wondered how the president possibly thought such a seemingly reckless scheme had any chances of succeeding. In addition to their constantly having been "at each others throats since 1949," Mao's government had also "vilified the US as a chief 'imperialist aggressor' even after Kissinger's recent [secret diplomatic] journey."[111] John Fairbanks held less of a defeatist viewpoint. Having personally visited China himself, he remarked false imagery and a general misunderstanding of political realities had fueled hostilities between the two nations.[112] Following this reasoning, if a serious effort toward peaceful talks concerning national differences occurred, then positive results would naturally ensue. Unfortunately for Nixon, his initial efforts showed promise, but in only two years, he left office. Almost a full decade passed before Americans realized the first concrete results of the president's historic trip to China.

Discussion and debate continued throughout the fall of 1971, with certain citizens also still daring to hope that Nixon's upcoming Asian adventure possibly symbolized the welcomed "liquidation of the anti-Communist stance of the American Government."[113] In the opening years of the 1970s, Nixon's surprising decisions brought both positive and negative consequences for many of America's global

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[111] Ibid.

[112] Mackerras, *Western Images of China*, 101.

[113] Frank S. Meyer, "Principles and Heresies: Peace in Our Time," *National Review*, August 10, 1971, 873.

neighbors. The historical record clearly shows Nixon's initial efforts broke diplomatic ice that had been left to harden in place for far too long. Despite skeptics in 1971 quickly voicing opinions such as, "As far as anyone in this country can tell, there is very little that Richard Nixon can offer Peking except himself and his entourage and some rhetoric about the need for peace and understanding," the president certainly intended to try.[114] He stayed highly optimistic in the months before his journey; following his trip, while he understood many Americans still hoped for greater peace in Asia and a rapid end to the Vietnam War, he also remarked in November 1972 that the times presaged "the eve of what could be the greatest generation of peace, true peace, for the whole world, that man has ever known. This is a great goal."[115] His personal attitude surprised few who really knew him, because they realized to what extent their friend idolized former President Woodrow Wilson and his work.[116]

At heart, Nixon remained "fundamentally an internationalist who believed in working with world organizations," and stood "prepared to do the unthinkable to achieve the ultimate objective of making a safer world."[117] Speaking out against isolationist sentiments, Nixon once stated, "if America were to turn its back on the world, there would be peace that would settle over this planet, but it would be the kind of peace that suffocated freedom in Czechoslovakia."[118] "Nixon is the power

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[114] Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington," *The New Yorker*, August 7, 1971, 78.

[115] Henry H. Schulte, Jr., editor, *Facts on File Yearbook 1972: The Indexed Record of World Events XXXII*, no. 1671, November 5-11, 1972 (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1973), 882.

[116] Richard Brookhiser, "A Young Conservative Looks at Nixon and China," *National Review*, September 24, 1971, 1056.

[117] Humes, *Nixon's Ten Commandments of Statecraft*, 181; Helen Fessenden, "Bookshelf: geopolitics as high-stakes poker," interview of Margaret MacMillan, *The Hill*, March 1, 2007, 21.

broker, the man of unabashed gigantic hopes willing to cocoon himself from old allies, to offend longtime friends, to seek his objective with an iron determination," commented Hugh Sidey in *Life*.[119] Soon after his surprise announcement, one administration official also remarked that Nixon, "dedicated to this negotiating process from the beginning, against all odds, is not going to be found wanting when the whole record in pursuing avenues of peace is plain."[120]

After twenty-two long years of diplomatic silence, on February 17, 1972, with Patricia Nixon at his side, President Nixon arrived in the P.R.C. and officially reopened communications with Mao Zedong's government.[121] A writer in *Newsweek*, comparing this event to the first moon landing, wrote, "not since the first moonwalk has the world's imagination been so completely captivated by a sense of discovery, by the thought of opening up a new and forbidding frontier."[122] Television viewers around the globe watched as the startling efforts at ideological harmony unfolded, staring enthralled at color images of the presidential couple exploring the wonders of Mao's vast and fascinating country. The real importance of this journey came from Nixon's having broken the so-called diplomatic ice, which then spurred many other countries to also reopen active dialogues with the P.R.C.

Besides its political aspects, the president's 1972 Asian adventure also resulted in important cultural changes, as many American citizens altered their

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[118] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1969*, 433.

[119] Hugh Sidey, "The Secret of Lincoln's Sitting Room," *Life*, July 30, 1971, 6.

[120] "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 14-15.

[121] Thomas Leonard, Cynthia Cuppen, and Marc Aronson, *Day By Day: The Seventies Volume 1 1970-1975* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1988), 222.

[122] "The Peking Summit as Others Saw It," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 28.

collective negative attitudes about the supposedly ever-menacing Red Chinese. Innumerable Americans soon welcomed the P.R.C.'s culture; "it was once again fashionable to see good in, and even admire" China.[123] A gradual decline of blatant *Orientalism* occurred, as growing numbers of Americans actively began studying that country's alternate language and political system.[124] For many citizens, the P.R.C. no longer represented "the bogeyman of the East," and "the nightmare vision of an Oriental 'Red menace' stopped being a sufficient justification to draw the U.S. into crippling [military] adventures in Asia."[125]

Until his death, Richard Nixon remained an enigma. Whether praised or vilified by the American people, he worked hard serving his nation. His political career reflects more than simply the Watergate scandal, yet this is the most frequently conjured reference if someone discusses him or his administration. This American president made conscientious efforts to assist average Americans through domestic reforms, but he also achieved greater world peace while in office, as his daring moves in foreign affairs led to a thawing of Cold War aggressions and created cracks in the Cold War mentality held by many governmental leaders around the globe. Thus, by the later decades of the twentieth century, Nixon's bold efforts encouraged a new generation of Westerners to reevaluate the entire Chinese lifestyle.[126]

> After years of fighting each other, castigating each other, fearing each other–and just plain wondering about each other–the most powerful nation in the world and the most populous nation in the world had

[123] Mackerras, *Western Images of China*, 182.

[124] Ibid.

[125] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 15.

[126] Mackerras, *Western Images of China*, 182.

> decided to recognize each other's existence. And that alone represented a great leap forward.[127]

Regardless of rumors about possible consequences, in February 1972, Nixon stood ready to begin his adventure into the unknown. Despite unfair criticisms by some of his opponents that his planned journey merely represented a political ploy, Nixon stayed true to his convictions and focused on achieving his controversial goal. As one reads through his personal works, it becomes more easily discerned how he not only worked toward providing a better life experience for many Americans, but also set his sights on achieving higher levels of world peace. Between February 21 and 27, 1972, President Nixon met Chairman Mao and held discussions with his main representative, Premier Zhou Enlai.[128] That February, when he headed off into the unknown, even though Kissinger had worked hard to ensure his possible success, Nixon had no concrete idea of what lay ahead. Summing up this sense of excited anticipation in the general populace, *Newsweek* noted the following just prior to the presidential entourage's departure from Washington:

> Peking nudged the door ajar…. And like latter-day Marco Polos, they [the Americans] came back telling wondrous tales of 800 million Chinese working together serenely under the slogan 'Serve the people.' Next week, Richard Nixon will step through the Chinese looking glass.[129]

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[127] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 21.

[128] "The Candidate with the Built-In Edge," *Newsweek*, December 13, 1971, 22; "A Guide to Nixon's China Journey," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 27.

[129] "The China President Nixon Will See," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 34.

Chapter Two

Preparing to Visit

It seems perfectly reasonable that average Americans later questioned what steps turned their leader's miraculous plan into a diplomatic reality. Just who had been involved, and what role or roles had they played in this historic policy adventure? "Seven months before my first visit to China in 1972," Nixon wrote, "I sent Henry Kissinger on a secret mission to Peking to negotiate arrangements for it."[1] By taking two separate 1971 trips, his trusted advisor successfully arranged for the president's spring journey.[2] While trying to negotiate an end to the bloody Vietnam conflict, Kissinger, serving as an Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, had also simultaneously worked to prepare Nixon's way toward both Beijing and Moscow.[3]

By 1971, Chairman Mao, reportedly "a believer in the revolution" and a man "more anxious to make China than to make war," actively began searching for alternative ways to protect his nation's best interests.[4] A pathway to diplomatic overtures suddenly appeared that year. In a surprise move of his own, the Premier extended the Chairman's invitation to visit the P.R.C. to a group of touring American ping-pong players; by the following July, Kissinger attended important talks in

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[1] Nixon, *Leaders*, 218.

[2] Hungdah Chiu, editor, with Shao-Chuan Leng, *China, Seventy Years after the 1911 Hsin-Hai Revolution* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1984), 513.

[3] Bailey and Kennedy, *The American Pageant*, 885; Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, xvii.

[4] "Middle America to Middle Kingdom," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 8.

Beijing.[5] Though Western analysts certainly noticed that country's continued social and political struggles, President Nixon's travel plans also seemed to acknowledge the Chinese mainland's "status as a fast-growing economic power"; this, in turn, led many observers to believe the importance of the P.R.C.'s influence on geopolitical affairs would only increase during the following decade.[6]

Prior to the officially selected entourage's departure for Beijing in February 1972, Kissinger's colleagues noted his calm demeanor. To their queries regarding how "everything must have been pretty well set in advance," the top advisor simply and confidently replied, "Of course. Why else do you think I'd be as relaxed as I am?"[7] In a *U.S. News and World Report* article, Robert P. Martin wrote that Kissinger had already "sounded out Chou En-lai's attitudes on a wide range of issues that have exacerbated relations between the U.S. and China."[8] Citizens across America soon realized no one maintained "a better grasp of what may await the President in China than the Nixon Administration's own Marco Polo."[9]

To begin an explanation of how this Asian adventure occurred, one should mention that from the day Nixon assumed control of the Oval Office, "he cast a cloak of secrecy around his presidential activities."[10] Nixon himself said, "I am essentially

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[5] Rodzinski, *The People's Republic of China*, 184.

[6] "Pictogram: a Second-Rate Power: China Has a Long Way to Go," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 16.

[7] John Osborne, "Packing for Peking," *The New Republic*, February 19, 1972, 12.

[8] Robert P. Martin, "Analysis from the Scene: How the Ice was Broken in Red China–and Why," *U.S. News & World Report,* March 6, 1972, 16. [Hereafter cited as Martin article].

[9] "The Candidate with the Built-In Edge," *Newsweek*, December 13, 1971, 22.

shyer than the usually extrovert politician ought to be. This seems to be an inborn trait, which I cannot change or alter. I have a great liking for the plain people, but I feel ill at ease with the prominent."[11] Although Nixon's chosen leadership "style alienated many outside the White House," he deftly employed this methodology, which played an important role in the success of his China initiative.[12] Nixon admitted in a later interview, "We were obsessed with secrecy. I was paranoid or almost a basket case with regard to secrecy."[13] As hard as it may be to comprehend his particular arrangement in the more modern age of instantaneous information technology, at that time, only a dozen men even realized he contemplated such a bold overture with the leaders in Beijing; while Ellsworth Bunker, the Ambassador to Saigon, understood what had been planned, "among those [notables] kept in the dark were Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Vice President Spiro Agnew."[14] In Laird's case, both "Nixon and Kissinger dealt warily with" this powerful Republican, because his many years of "congressional experience made him tougher to deceive."[15] This former Wisconsin congressman, who later "became the architect of the Vietnamization plan," also earned recognition "in one poll of

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[10] *The American President: An Office and Its Powers, Episode Nine: Expanding Power: Jackson, Cleveland, T. Roosevelt, Nixon*, producers William R. Grant and Peter W. Kunhardt, PBS Home Video, 2000. [Hereafter cited as PBS].

[11] Lou Cannon, "The Story of Richard Nixon: His Life," *The Houston Chronicle*, August 9, 1974, 1.

[12] PBS; "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 17, 21.

[13] Richard Nixon, PBS.

[14] "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 12.

[15] Martin F. Nolan, "Secret service How the machinations of two unlikely allies defined-and deformed-an era," review of *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power* by Robert Dallek, Harper Collins, and *American Spy: My Secret History in the CIA, Watergate and Beyond* by E. Howard Hunt with Greg Aunapu, Wiley, *The Boston Globe*, May 6, 2007, E6.

reporters covering defense and national security issues" as "the most effective, likeable, trustworthy, strong and forthcoming Secretary of Defense."[16] "Laird often argued against excessive secrecy," but both he and Secretary of State Rogers are generally remembered as men connected with the Nixon administration who "were pragmatic and honest."[17]

Yes, Nixon deviated from patterns of behavior displayed by prior American executive officers, i.e. calling upon numerous aides for their assistance in diplomatic matters, by choosing to work and hone his strategic skills largely in private. Creating "a special world, walled away even from his own government," he initially only made Kissinger privy to his thoughts; eventually, he allowed Rogers into the closed meetings, all of which occurred in the Lincoln Sitting Room, a "Victorian parlor in the southeast corner of the White House."[18] Enlisting the service of these few select top aides, and with the help of certain discrete intermediaries in Beijing, Canada, France, Pakistan, and Rumania, the three men successfully completed the plans for the complex diplomatic initiative.[19] Rumania's president, Nicolae Ceauşescu, the only Communist chieftain both Russia and China communicated with civilly, offered Kissinger the most assistance.[20] Although Nixon's representative departed on his

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[16] Melvin R. Laird, "Melvin R. Laird," Laird Center for Medical Research, 2007, http://www.lairdcenter.org/MelvinLaird/pages/default.aspx (accessed November 11, 2007).

[17] Martin F. Nolan, "Secret service How the machinations of two unlikely allies defined-and deformed-an era," review of *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power* by Robert Dallek, Harper Collins, and *American Spy: My Secret History in the CIA, Watergate and Beyond* by E. Howard Hunt with Greg Aunapu, Wiley, *The Boston Globe*, May 6, 2007, E6.

[18] Hugh Sidey, "The Secret of Lincoln's Sitting Room," *Life*, July 30, 1971, 6.

[19] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 17, 21.

[20] "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 12.

secret mission from Pakistan, it later became known Rumania provided crucial intermediary services for negotiating the invitation.[21]

In 1969, when Nixon visited Lahore, he "had first broached the idea of an American overture to China" with President Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan; during the next few years, he successfully "used Pakistan, as well as Romania, as a secret channel through which to pass several exploratory messages to China," and he seemed to have earned valuable diplomatic dividends.[22] As is often the case in political matters, the truth behind certain events only becomes clear once one traces a monetary trail of clues. Those closely following the U.S. foreign affairs process during this time period may have noticed an article published in *Newsweek*, which stated, "as a subtle gesture of gratitude, the Administration extended Export-Import Bank credits to Rumania, with most-favored-nation trade status expected to follow."[23]

While penning his memoirs, Nixon reflected upon Kissinger's personal behavior the evening of June 2, 1971. After breathlessly bursting into the small sitting room, his personal advisor handed him a note, newly arrived from Beijing via Pakistan's leader. Described by Kissinger "as the most important communication to an American President since the end of World War II," this dispatch, an open invitation to visit China, was cause for great excitement; the two men toasted the occasion by sharing a well-aged bottle of brandy the Nixons had previously received as a Christmas present.[24] Across the Pacific, the Premier had also expressed

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[21] "The Candidate with the Built-In Edge," *Newsweek*, December 13, 1971, 22.

[22] Christopher Van Hollen, "The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon-Kissinger Geopolitics and South Asia," *Asian Survey* 20, no. 4 (April 1980): 340.

[23] "The Candidate with the Built-In Edge," *Newsweek*, December 13, 1971, 22.

enthusiasm about meeting Kissinger, as "the prospect of crossing verbal swords with such a worthy adversary" intrigued him; as it turned out, because he personally perceiving Nixon's representative as "a man who knows the language of both worlds–his own and ours," the Premier further prophesied, "With him it should be possible to talk."[25] Kissinger had achieved a reputation as someone who "could talk for a half hour without really revealing what he was thinking or giving out any information"; despite his great abilities and powerful position in Washington, he still lacked the necessary governmental authority to enter into any binding agreements, as that power remained with the president.[26] The Premier fully understood Kissinger's position; he himself needed the Chairman's express approval before he could commit the P.R.C. to any particular course of action.[27]

Following Nixon's surprise announcement, national press agencies quickly realized the truth behind Kissinger's recent journey, which had been touted as a "five-nation trip ostensibly related to the war in Viet Nam."[28] On July 9, 1971, after traveling a complex route "from Saigon to Thailand to India," and arriving at the Rawalpindi airport near Islamabad, Kissinger and three aides: Winston Lord, a special assistant, John Holdridge, a man who spoke Chinese and was considered a specialist on the Far East, and Richard Smyser, a Foreign Service officer who also exhibited extensive knowledge about Southeast Asia, all climbed aboard a Pakistani

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[24] Nixon, *In the Arena*, 16.

[25] Snow, *The Long Revolution*, 183.

[26] Emmett Dedmon, *China Journal* (Chicago, IL: Rand McNally & Company, 1973), 71; Martin article, 16.

[27] Martin article, 16-17.

[28] "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 14.

International Airlines Boeing 707 and flew to Beijing for three days of secret discussions.[29] Therefore, that particular Friday, instead of being in Nathia Gali suffering from what correspondents had labeled as "a case of common dysentery or 'Delhi belly,'" Nixon's emissary had arrived in China by noon, and then participated in four hours of talks with Premier Zhou Enlai; the following day, after touring the Forbidden City and completing another eight hours of discussions, Kissinger then attended one final business meeting on Sunday morning, before sharing a farewell lunch and leaving the country at one o'clock that afternoon.[30] During his initial secret trip, Kissinger spent more than seventeen hours in direct, far-ranging discussions with Mao's powerful representative.[31]

Upon returning to America, Kissinger immediately met with the president in San Clemente, California. As Nixon remembered it, his advisor ranked "Zhou equally with de Gaulle as 'the most impressive' foreign statesman he had ever met"; he then also added, "though given to occasional hyperbole, as we all are, Kissinger is seldom that lavish in his praise of people who are out of earshot."[32] Evidently, every issue the Chinese or Nixon may have intended to discuss in subsequent summit meetings had been explored during the recent visit.[33] Not only conferring together about Kissinger's official report, which was over one hundred pages long and denoted every word of the recent diplomatic talks, the two men also spent time reviewing an

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[29] "The Secret Voyage of Henry K.," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 13.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Nixon, *Leaders*, 218.

[32] Ibid.

[33] John Osborne, "Packing for Peking," *The New Republic*, February 19, 1972, 12.

additional forty-page account penned by Kissinger; this secondary documentation, that detailed "every nuance and impression" he had personally gained while inside the P.R.C., included notations ranging from a description of Zhou's complexion to the Premier's personal thought patterns.[34] From all their discussions, Nixon clearly understood he would soon be conducting talks with "one of the world's ablest negotiators."[35]

After the men completed several days of secretive consultations, an official press briefing then placed Kissinger "in the unaccustomed role of public spokesman to give the world a preview of the coming adventure"; this, of course, only served to buttress the impression that he was indeed emerging "as one of the stellar figures in the Administration."[36] "It isn't often in one's adult life," Kissinger remarked, "that one has the opportunity to relive the thrill and excitement that one feels as an adolescent. It's like being young all over again."[37] After noting for reporters that his meetings with the Premier had been "a very moving occasion," he also added, "It is not often one can say that he has participated in turning a new page in history."[38]

According to one White House aide, the greeting the Kissinger entourage received in China had indeed been "enormously gracious and polite," with the group being "treated extraordinarily well"; for someone who gained five pounds while reportedly suffering from indisposition, Kissinger also later joked, "A guest of the

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[34] Hugh Sidey, "The Secret of Lincoln's Sitting Room," *Life*, July 30, 1971, 6.

[35] Snow, *The Long Revolution*, 185.

[36] "The Candidate with the Built-In Edge," *Newsweek*, December 13, 1971, 22.

[37] "To the Summit in Peking," *Newsweek*, February 28, 1972, 12.

[38] "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 11.

state must have starved to death 3,000 years ago and the Chinese are determined that it will not happen again."[39] While occupying the national spotlight, Nixon's emissary also: alluded to "the difficulty of establishing even rudimentary communication" with China after so long an estrangement, discouraged speculations that his trip might achieve immediate or significant diplomatic changes, and tried to assure American allies that no deals detrimental to their national interests would be made; the diplomat further cautioned, "We are not sentimental about this…. We recognize that the People's Republic is led by highly principled men whose principles are diametrically opposed to ours."[40]

After digesting all the newest information, some speculators across the U.S. still saw reason for optimism. "If Mr. Nixon has talks with Mao–rather than just seeing him," the Australian-born Professor Ross Terrill of Harvard University stressed, "the meeting of the two leaders will be worthwhile–and historic."[41] A Western diplomat stationed in Hong Kong also commented, "Those who think this is all fluff are likely to be very surprised."[42] Now that the American public realized Kissinger greatly admired the Chinese Premier, one might have then asked what impression President Nixon had of Zhou Enlai. Though not all the information he had received had been presented in a positive light, Nixon had learned of the man's general character from several different sources other than Kissinger. While one former assistant secretary of state named Walter Robinson had mentioned, "Chou,

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[39] "The Secret Voyage of Henry K.," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 13.

[40] "The Candidate with the Built-In Edge," *Newsweek*, December 13, 1971, 22.

[41] "The Hard Bargainers Facing Nixon," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 18.

[42] "The Summit: Great Expectations," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 52.

charming as he was, had killed people with his own hands and then departed, calmly smoking a cigarette," and another foreign diplomat had also once remarked, "there was not a grain of truth in him…it is all acting," in August 1971, one contributor to the *National Review* wrote:

> Mao Tse-tung, in ways that go deeper than the Western eye can easily discern, sits in the seat of the emperors. The propaganda of Communist China reflects their ancient arrogance, and now the President of the U.S. goes hat in hand to Peking. And all Asia watches.[43]

If Kissinger's report more accurately reflected the probable impression Nixon had of the Premier before his journey, what might he have then perhaps thought of the Chairman? While it was true Kissinger had paved the way for Nixon's upcoming diplomatic sessions in the P.R.C., the president would still have no real idea of Mao's personal demeanor until he had traveled to Beijing.

By the time he visited with the Chinese leaders, the president had already been working toward establishing better relations with the P.R.C. for several years. He relaxed travel restrictions after taking office; while only 423 passports "had been processed for the entire period from April 1959 through 1968," between 1969 and 1970, "556 passports had already been validated."[44] The world's collective knowledge that Nixon would soon confer with the Chairman and Premier had also already "enhanced China's world prestige and placed its deep-rooted rivalry with the Soviet Union in a more favorable perspective for Peking."[45] Before Nixon ever left

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[43] Nixon, *In the Arena*, 12; Frank S. Meyer, "Principles and Heresies: Peace in Our Time," *National Review*, August 10, 1971, 873.

[44] U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Foreign Policy 1969-1970*, 43.

Washington, D. C., in 1972, signs appeared "that both powers were trying to be agreeable"; while Nixon announced a relaxation of trade restrictions with the P.R.C., and the United Nations Chinese delegation "held an unusual party for New York City police to express appreciation for protection provided" since their arrival that November, across the Pacific, preparations also began, as a lifted ban against the sale of works by classical Western thinkers, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith, soon created crowded bookstores in Beijing.[46]

As spring approached, and in what were perceived as genuine efforts to impress and offer a friendly welcome to the presidential party, China underwent "a great wave of repainting, face scrubbing and sign switching. Slogans referring bluntly to 'U.S. imperialists and their running dogs' [had] been replaced by blander remarks about 'the unity of the world's peoples.'"[47] As also detailed in a *U.S. News & World Report* article:

> The political slogans that formerly dominated Peking's streets were being painted out, and storefronts repainted. Street signs are now in Roman letters as well as Chinese ideographs. The capital's red and white buses are being refurbished.[48]

Taking note of the atmosphere in his own nation's capital prior to the official departure date, Hugh Sidey commented it "was as if two decades of assumptions had

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[45] "Nixon in China: Who Stands to Gain Most," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 13-14.

[46] "Now, in Living Color from China," *Time*, February 28, 1972, 12.

[47] "Chill or Cheers in Peking," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 21, 1972, 16; "A Guide to Nixon's China Journey," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 27-8.

[48] "Chill or Cheers in Peking," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 21, 1972, 16.

been ripped out and thrown away and we were beginning again. A singular spell lay over the city in the days before Nixon left."[49]

On February 14, after hearing an analysis of the evolving international situation by André Malraux, a man known as "France's grand old man of literature," President Nixon invited the famous writer to Washington for a private briefing.[50] That evening, after Malraux remarked, "Nobody will know whether you're successful for 50 years," Nixon reportedly replied, "I know that. The American people and I can be patient too"; the following day, when reiterating his belief that Mao had lately been more interested in raising his country's standard of living than continuing efforts toward revolution, Malraux referred to the Nixon overture as "'noble,' 'courageous,' and 'vitally important to world peace.'"[51] The influential Frenchman also declared:

> In this particular historical phase of American history, I find it courageous that a President of the U.S., who cannot be unaware of the fact that the Chinese will be using his visit, is nonetheless able to see beyond this and to overlook this because this is one of the very finest things that the U.S. has done among many of the things that it has done.[52]

By early February 1972, while many citizens simply decided to adopt a stance of wait and see, an article printed in *Life* reflected upon how Nixon "offered contradictory instructions as to how we were to regard the trip as a watershed, an event comparable to going to the moon, and as something from which great things

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[49] Hugh Sidey, "Making History in Peking," *Life*, February 25, 1972, 4.

[50] "Now, in Living Color from China," *Time*, February 28, 1972, 12; "What Malraux Told the President: Massive U.S. Aid is 'The Real Issue,'" *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 20.

[51] "Now, in Living Color from China," *Time*, February 28, 1972, 12.

[52] "What Malraux Told the President: Massive U.S. Aid is 'The Real Issue,'" *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 20.

were not to be expected."[53] Though such mixed signals emanated from the Oval Office, on the eve of his boss's historic journey, Kissinger aimed to accomplish a major objective. For all his previous diplomatic efforts to end in success, he still needed to help ensure that Nixon, Mao, and Zhou took appropriate "measure of each other and establish[ed] some common base"; believing that these important leaders just needed to discover how "each [was] an essentially reliable man," and, therefore, capable of forging a new understanding and solid relationship, once Nixon's entourage landed in China, Kissinger perceived reasons for hope, because, "for the first time, the two cultures and two societies [were] meeting on a level of equality."[54] The president, like his favored advisor, also remained highly optimistic about his diplomatic mission. As for the American viewing public, however, they could do little else than simply wait for the event's coverage to appear on their living room television sets.

By 1971, President Nixon had made a decision and then worked to develop the appropriate strategy to ensure a journey to the P.R.C. became a reality. His excessive use of secrecy when devising this overture remains captivating. In a world which now features faxes, cell phones, internet connections, and an extremely pushy and intrusive paparazzi, global citizens are often kept appraised about the activities of important people on a twenty-four hour basis. In the early 1970s, however, due to Nixon's careful planning and Kissinger's excellent performance as a diplomatic representative, the president's trip to the P.R.C. the following spring progressed smoothly. The Democratic West once again literally sat down to eat at the same table

[53] "The Peking feast," *Life*, March 3, 1972, 32.

[54] Ibid.; Hugh Sidey, "Making History in Peking," *Life*, February 25, 1972, 4.

with the Communistic West. Reportedly, the president's "own inhibitions seemed to relax more agreeably at Peking's great banquet hall; [even still,] no one would expect Richard Nixon to be easily seduced by Communists, even when savoring the biggest moment of his life."[55]

When considering the summit talks that took place in February 1972, it is important to realize the decision for the U.S. and P.R.C. to negotiate their political relationship "was Mao's initiative as much as Nixon's."[56] As high levels of rancor had existed over two decades between their countries, why in the world, modern readers may ask, had the president ever thought the Chinese leader would welcome him within his borders? Other questions posed might include the following: who were Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai, what might Nixon have hoped to accomplish by visiting these two Communist revolutionaries, who had been isolated from larger geopolitical affairs for years, was Nixon suddenly not the same dangerous capitalist constantly facing denigration in Asian newspapers, and was his being the leader of a country currently at war with one of the P.R.C.'s allies simply ignored? After having decided their nation stood ready for positive changes, Mao and Zhou believed a summit with the American would achieve results, because "if you do not talk with the head, who else should you talk with? If you talk with people of second or third rank, instead of the head, the issues cannot be solved."[57]

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[55] "The Peking feast," *Life*, March 3, 1972, 32.

[56] Jon Halliday, "Review: History: Charm offensive: Nixon's meeting with Mao was an exercise in realpolitik, says Jon Halliday: Seize the Hour: When Nixon Met Mao by Margaret MacMillan," *The Guardian* (London), November 18, 2006, 9.

[57] "Nixon and Zhou Enlai: Two Views of the Peking Summit," from an interview with British historian Neville Maxwell in London's *The Sunday Times*, December 5, 1971, *U.S. News & World Report*, February 14, 1972, 26.

In 1971, at age seventy-seven, Chairman Mao had "not chosen to stand in the way of his country's slow move toward moderation."[58] Isolationist policies which developed inside his country stemmed from that nation's citizens having been historically "preyed upon by foreign powers, [ranging] from Britain to Japan"; it seemed to some observers that "China feared foreigners because it had good reasons for fearing foreigners, not because insularity is a feature of the Chinese character."[59] The man who agreed to meet with President Nixon in 1972 was already not only "one of the 20th century's major leaders," but also "an iconic figure approaching the stature of Buddha as a symbol in China"; Mao's decision "to open relations with the United States marked a sharp turn from his fanatical leftism and his ultra-isolationist foreign policy."[60]

In 1949, two singular events occurred which heightened worldwide anxieties about communism—"the Soviets exploded their first atomic bomb," and the rebels under Mao Zedong's leadership created the P.R.C. after forcing Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's regime onto nearby Taiwan, a region thereafter considered "a renegade province."[61] The P.R.C. developed and detonated its own nuclear device in 1964, but this technological advancement came at a terrible price. Critics of Chairman

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[58] "Nobody Here But Us Moderates," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 15.

[59] Louis Menand, "Chaos under Heaven: What was Nixon's trip to China all about?" *The New Yorker*, March 12, 2007, 76.

[60] Bob Hoover, "Tearing Down the Great Wall; Historian Restores Luster to Nixon's China Mission," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World* by Margaret MacMillan, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (Pennsylvania), March 4, 2007, E-6. [Hereafter cited as Hoover article]; Seth Faison, review of *The Odd Couple; Nixon and Mao The Week That Changed the World* by Margaret MacMillan, *Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 2007, 8. [Hereafter cited as Faison review].

[61] Goldman, *Richard M. Nixon*, 27; David J. Lynch, "A trip that changed history; Book chronicles Nixon's seminal visit to China," a review of Margaret MacMillan's *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World*, *USA TODAY*, March 12, 2007, 4B.

Mao have since asserted "he did as much damage to mankind as [Adolf] Hitler and [Joseph] Stalin," due to more than 70 million Chinese dying in peacetime under his leadership.[62] In response to negative reports regarding deteriorating social conditions within his country, Mao reportedly simply remarked, "Educate the peasants to eat less," and "Death has benefits. They can fertilize the land."[63]

As the book written by the Chairman's former personal physician, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, explained, "Mao had no close friends and he rarely interacted with other members of the top leadership except at formal meetings and conferences"; although he might have listened "to properly stated criticisms of policy (but not of himself)," as no one desired being "cast out of the inner circle" or falling "subject to disciplinary punishment," few dared speak of such matters.[64] The Chinese leader rarely ventured into public view, but on those rare occasions, "the party faithful would wave the little red book; the collection of Mao quotations everyone in China was ordered to carry and never to question."[65] For many Western observers, therefore, Chairman Mao resembled "a mob boss, appearing to be totally in charge but perpetually at work to keep his captains off-balance, lest one challenge him."[66] It certainly seemed that under his watchful eye, the P.R.C. had turned "into an isolated,

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[62] Anchor Charles Osgood, and Reporter Martha Teichner, "The Chairman; New book about Mao Tse-Tung taking a harsh look at his Legacy," interviewing Ms. Jung Chang and Jon Halliday about their book, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, CBS News Transcripts, January 28, 2007. [Hereafter cited as CBS News Transcripts].

[63] CBS News Transcripts.

[64] David Bachman, "Li Zhisui, Mao Zedong, and Chinese Elite Politics," *The China Journal*, no. 35 (January 1996), 1996): 116. [Hereafter cited as Bachman article]; See Zhisui Li, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao: The Memoirs of Mao's Personal Physician* (New York: Random House, 1994).

[65] Reporter Martha Teichner, CBS News Transcripts.

[66] Faison review, 8.

exhausted, unpredictable state run by an apparent madman–[even worse,] one armed with nuclear weapons."[67] At the time of their meeting that spring, however, Mao still remained "the potentate at whose word all trembled as bevies of young ladies chosen by his aides ministered to his wants."[68]

As the 1960s drew to a close, and "overruling the hesitancies and objections of his subordinates," the Chairman decided his country "had nothing to gain by persisting in its self-imposed isolation and much to hope for from a show of cordial relations with the United States."[69] Often saying that "good can come out of bad and that bad people can be made good–by experience and right teaching," the Chairman believed the Vietnam experience "had made Nixon relatively 'good'"; the Chinese leader also once stressed "'Nixon might be deceitful…but perhaps a little bit less so than some others.'"[70] Mao's impression of Kissinger was less favorable; however, in the long run, it made little difference whether or not he believed Nixon's top advisor was "just a funny little man…shuddering all over with nerves."[71] Regardless of whether or not the Americans obviously represented monopoly capitalism, it seems Mao must have decided reconciliation with the foreigners represented the key to his nation achieving its larger goal of international accountability, because he declared he "would be happy to talk with him [Nixon], either as a tourist or as President"; he

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[67] John Lewis Gaddis, "Great Leap Forward," a review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World*, *The New York Times*, February 25, 2007, 14.

[68] Jonathan Fenby, "The real Nixon in China: Nixon's seminal 1972 visit to China had consequences its key players could barely imagine," review of Margaret MacMillan's *When Nixon Met Mao*, *The Observer* (England), November 19, 2006, 22.

[69] Ibid.; Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76.

[70] Snow, *The Long Revolution*, 179-80.

[71] Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76.

clearly understood "the current problems between his country and America would have to be resolved by Nixon."[72]

In his book, *The Real War*, Nixon magnanimously credited this powerful communist for the success of his historic visit, as the Chairman took "the revolutionary step of reaching out to the United States and fundamentally altered the balance of power in the world."[73] Of course, Mao had also astutely gambled that his drastic move would positively affect relations with the U.S.S.R. In the past, he and Stalin had enjoyed an amicable working relationship, perhaps because the Soviet Premier had "spotted Mao as probably the guy in the Chinese Communist Party who was most like himself…[with] long range vision."[74] However, Stalin had been dead since 1953. A "major dogmatic rift over the idea of 'permanent revolution'" still caused diplomatic difficulties, and, as recent escalations in border troubles had also increased national security concerns, the Chairman agreed to follow a path leading toward rapprochement with the Americans; the P.R.C. now "wanted to make the Soviet Union nervous," and the leadership in Moscow less self-assured when conducting international affairs.[75]

In mid-1971, the news concerning Nixon's upcoming journey spread like wildfire around the world. In America, most citizens knew their leader planned to travel to Red China, but as spring arrived, their questions about just who and what he

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[72] Snow, *The Long Revolution*, 171-172.

[73] Nixon, *The Real War*, 141.

[74] CBS News Transcripts.

[75] Lester Pimentel, "Book Review: How Nixon opened China," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World* by Margaret MacMillan, *The Star Ledger* (Newark, New Jersey), February 25, 2007, 6; Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76.

would likely encounter in the P.R.C. still remained to a large extent unanswered by White House officials. As one former U.S. Army member warned, "China's Communist leaders operate like old-style shopkeepers who considered anyone a fool who agreed to the first price without bargaining. They operate strictly on the principle of *caveat emptor*—let the buyer, or negotiator, beware."[76] As *Time* pointed out in February 1972, Nixon would not be dealing with young men once he entered into discussions with the communists; meeting the Chairman and Premier, aged seventy-eight and seventy-three respectfully, the president faced "negotiations with a two-man gerontocracy whose days must be numbered, actuarially if not necessarily in political terms."[77] Any slighting of the Chinese leaders' abilities to maneuver tricky diplomatic situations based solely on their advanced ages, however, should not have been believed in this instance, because, as one contributor to *U.S. News and World Report* later noted, Nixon certainly met with "two of the toughest–and most ruthless–Communist revolutionaries of this century" while he was in Beijing.[78] André Malraux had already informed the American leader he would "be meeting with a colossus, but a colossus facing death"; Mao had been further described as a man who had experienced "a fantastic destiny and who believes that he is acting out the last act of his lifetime."[79] Nixon had also been cautioned that the Chairman failed to operate "within a rational framework"; there was "something of the sorcerer in him," Malraux

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[76] Quote by Brigadier General Frank Dorn, U.S. Army (Retired), in "The Hard Bargainers Facing Nixon," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 20.

[77] "Chou: The Man in Charge," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 30.

[78] "The Hard Bargainers Facing Nixon," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 18.

[79] Nixon, *In the Arena*, 13.

had insisted. "He is a man inhabited by a vision, possessed by it."[80] Disregarding such vivid and mystical characterizations, Nixon later reflected that upon personally meeting Mao, he had clearly understood the Chinese leader's "strong sense of his own mortality…. He wanted to be sure that the directions he had set China on would last, and he also wanted China to be secure enough so that they could last."[81]

Whether the popular press labeled Mao as a powerful sorcerer or as a dangerous communist revolutionary notwithstanding, an article in *Time* commented that "the regime's suave spokesman and negotiator," Premier Zhou Enlai, a man recognized as "a brilliant, subtle, ruthless and endlessly flexible statesman…at the apex of his extraordinary career," would most likely "deal with the President on the issues."[82] After reading such colorful descriptions of Zhou, many Americans also understood he was "a builder, not a poet."[83] According to Eric Chou, a "former editor of a Chinese Communist newspaper and close associate" of Mao and the Premier, Zhou excelled at negotiations and always rendered "Communist ideology and ideas into a plain language less repulsive to the Western ear"; while this may have been true, the former newsman also added, "But this does not mean he [Zhou] will depart from the line firmly laid down by Chairman Mao."[84] Upon hearing Nixon's plans, journalist Edgar Snow welcomed the idea. As not "merely an old and trusted friend" to both Chinese leaders, Snow had also proven himself "one of the few Westerners

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[80] "Chou: The Man in Charge," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 32; Nixon, *In the Arena*, 13.

[81] Nixon, *The Real War*, 141.

[82] "Chou: The Man in Charge," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 30-1.

[83] "Why Nixon Is Relatively Good," *Time*, August 2, 1971, 13.

[84] "The Hard Bargainers Facing Nixon," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 18.

visiting China with a real background of knowledge of the country."[85] Offering an analysis of the future situation in Beijing, Snow remarked the Premier would "probably do the nitty-gritty work," with his boss remaining "behind the scenes. But the final decisions will be Mao's."[86]

Over several decades, this powerful duo had constructed the P.R.C. In his book, *The Long Revolution*, Snow described the Chinese leaders' professional relationship as a successful symbiosis; however, he also stressed, despite their strikingly different styles and personalities, "Mao and Chou complement each other as a tandem based on thirty-seven years of trust and interdependence"; Zhou, working as "a master of policy implementation with an infinite capacity for detail," counterbalanced the Chairman's powerful position, thereby serving as "Mao's indispensable alter ego."[87] Eric Chou succinctly described their successful partnership when he simply stated, "Mao is the brain and Chou is the mouth."[88]

Just who was this Zhou Enlai who welcomed Kissinger into the P.R.C.? By July 1971, a *Time* article noted, "Mao may still be the Chairman, but Chou has emerged as China's unquestioned chief executive officer, ruling the country through what amounts to a working coalition of old-line- and old-aged- party bureaucrats and army officers."[89] No definitive definition of character ever appeared when American

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[85] John S. Service, "Edgar Snow: Some Personal Reminiscences," *The China Quarterly*, no. 50 (April-June 1972): 217.

[86] Edgar Snow, "China will talk from a position of strength," *Life*, July 30, 1971, 26.

[87] Snow, *The Long Revolution*, 186-90.

[88] "The Hard Bargainers Facing Nixon," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 18.

[89] "Nobody Here But Us Moderates," *Time*, July 26, 1971, 15.

media sources tried to describe the Chinese Premier. According to one *Time* article, few people hated him; however, a U.S. diplomat, who remembered Zhou from the 1940s, reflected, "he was 'the smoothest liar I ever met. Whether what he told you was the straight truth or an out-and-out lie, he always projected total sincerity. And yet he was impossible to dislike.'"[90] In *Leaders*, Nixon offered a much nicer characterization when he labeled Zhou as "a Communist revolutionary and a Confucian gentleman, a devoted ideologue and a calculating realist, a political infighter and a grand conciliator."[91] The former American president then also added:

> *Enlai* translates as 'coming of grace,' a name that succinctly captured his presence and disposition. Zhou was unassuming but quietly strong. He conveyed immense charm and poise through his graceful movements and erect, easy stance. He faithfully observed the old Chinese rule in personal and political relations of never 'breaking the surface.'[92]

By 1970, average Americans had already seen Zhou's name accompanied by quite a variety of adjectives; articles described Mao's cohort as not only "a political thug and a professional assassin," but also someone who had "killed men with his own hands, a ruthless intriguer, a conscienceless liar, [and] a saber-toothed political assassin."[93] In July 1971, while reporting that past references to the Premier had included the terms: "brilliant, arrogant, suave, skillful, calculating, resilient, persuasive, ruthless and devious," *Newsweek* also noted Beijing's "'indispensable

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[90] "Chou: The Man in Charge," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 32.

[91] Nixon, *Leaders*, 218.

[92] Ibid., 220. By offering readers a description of a "sophisticated intellectual, pragmatic Marxist, able political leader, and skillful diplomatic negotiator" in his book, *Zhou Enlai: The Early Years*, Chae-Jin Lee supported Nixon's earlier and favorable opinion about the Chinese Premier. See Chae-Jin Lee, *Zhou Enlai: The Early Years* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 1.

[93] "The Spook," *The New Republic*, August 21 & 28, 1971, 6.

man' still gazed out at events through alert and intense eyes."[94] Though Zhou may have received some credit for his "charm and diplomatic skill," many of his critics still believed he "had a dark side as a ruthless killer dating back to the 1920s and [remained a man] who had been the rabbit in Mao's headlights for four decades."[95] After learning of the lengthy negotiation sessions Kissinger had attended while paving his boss's path to China, Edgar Snow expressed no great surprise. This mild reaction occurred due to the dedicated Premier having once told Snow he "had taken one vacation–a week when he was ill–in ten years."[96]

As a consummate diplomat, Zhou remained loyal to not only Mao, but also to his job and the preservation of the P.R.C. One Kuomintang official in Taiwan obviously recognized the Premier's prowess as a statesman, because he openly admitted, "If we had only had Zhou on *our* side in the civil war, today it might be Mao who was in exile in Taiwan–and *we* would be in Peking."[97] As Nixon's departure date neared, some citizens may have wondered to themselves if their president would be either prudent or safe in attempting any type of diplomatic talks with this man. What would happen if the Premier possessed the determined, and quite possibly lethal, personality they had either read or heard described in the past? Whether the P.R.C. appeared as "a terrifying monolith of world revolution or an insular irrelevance" to those perusing American popular press accounts, Mao and

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[94] "Peking's Indispensable Man," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 19.

[95] Jonathan Fenby, "The real Nixon in China: Nixon's seminal 1972 visit to China had consequences its key players could barely imagine," review of Margaret MacMillan's *When Nixon Met Mao*, *The Observer* (England), November 19, 2006, 22.

[96] Snow, *The Long Revolution*, 186.

[97] Nixon, *Leaders*, 236.

Zhou both ultimately desired recognition as serious statesmen; President Nixon seemed "the man to help them, because that's what Nixon wanted for himself."[98]

During his visit to Beijing that spring, Nixon "met with Zhou for over fifteen hours of formal one-to-one negotiations," thereby coming "to know him well and to respect him greatly."[99] While speaking to Zhou's wife when once again visiting the P.R.C. in 1976, Nixon spoke highly of her husband by stating, "he was always firm but courteous…. He never felt it necessary, as the Russian leaders so obviously did, to prove his manhood before his aides"; in rather "stark contrast to the antics of [Nikita Sergeyevich] Khrushchev and the theatrics of [Leonid Ilyich] Brezhnev…Zhou never raised his voice, never pounded the table, never threatened to break off talks in order to force a concession."[100]

Kissinger's positive opinion about Zhou only continued to improve after he returned to the P.R.C. with Nixon in February 1972. Though he once likened the Premier "to a cobra that sits quietly, poised to strike, and then springs at the opportune moment," he also later freely admitted his admiration of Zhou's personal diplomatic skills.[101] While many who met with Mao's top advisor "invariably found him immensely civilized, reasonably cosmopolitan and statesmanlike," Kissinger also insisted, "he is not a petty man. He has large views."[102] Marveling at Zhou's ability to be "equally at home in philosophy, reminiscence, historical analysis, tactical probes,

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[98] Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76.

[99] Nixon, *Leaders*, 220-21.

[100] Ibid., 235.

[101] Ibid., 221.

[102] "Chou: The Man in Charge" *Time*, February 21, 1972, 32.

[and] humorous repartee," the former emissary unabashedly expressed his high personal regard for "Chou Enlai, [who]…was one of the two or three most impressive men I have ever met."[103] Nixon's eventual successor, Gerald Rudolph Ford, Jr., while recalling Zhou's pleasantness as he conducted official conversations, also later commented, "I never had a more interesting political discussion"; taking active note of the Premier's probing nature, Ford had also quickly realized Zhou was "very well informed about domestic as well as foreign policies of the United States," and proved himself "imposing in his intelligence and his knowledge, and fluent in discussing issues."[104]

Nixon's planned springtime odyssey certainly captured the attention of millions, as people all around the globe considered not only the complex and fascinating personalities expected to participate in the proposed summit meetings, but also the event's possible contributions toward peace in Asia. Alluding to yet another modern leap into the unknown, Nixon repeatedly compared his upcoming journey with the groundbreaking Apollo 11 moon flight, as no one could be exactly sure what would transpire in China.[105] Even before he left Washington D. C., the president attempted to stem the escalating levels of speculation by clearly stating, "I go to Peking without illusions."[106] By early February 1972, this presidential adventure

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[103] Kissinger, *The White House Years*, 743-45; Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy*, from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearings on the Nomination of Henry A. Kissinger to be Secretary of State, Washington, September, 1973, 232.

[104] James Cannon, *Time and Chance: Gerald Ford's Appointment With History* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994), 121-2.

[105] "Now, in Living Color from China," *Time*, February 28, 1972, 11.

[106] John Osborne, "Packing for Peking," *The New Republic*, February 19, 1972, 11.

stood poised to "go down as a pivotal event of history," and, as one writer explained the situation:

> The Peking talks offer a virtually unprecedented opportunity to surface the truly important issues facing those who live in the closing decades of the twentieth century. There are so many disagreements between the two countries that the adoption of an agenda can in itself be counted as no small marvel.[107]

With all the diplomatic preparations taken care of, the world waited to see if these statesmen, who displayed very different personality traits, would be able to conduct peaceful summit talks. As the spring arrived, the media also worked frantically to finalize their own preparations, so that details of the Nixon journey could be successfully beamed back to American audiences via satellite. In only a few short weeks, if everything went as planned, Nixon would enjoy another personal political triumph. In February 1972, history would also be made when President Nixon and Chairman Mao Zedong met in Beijing.[108]

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[107] "Nixon, China, and Religious Freedom," *Christianity Today*, February 4, 1972, 20.

[108] Julia Lovell, *The Great Wall: China Against the World 1000 BC-AD 2000* (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 326.

Chapter Three

Televising the Historic Week

> It was perhaps inevitable that America's perceptions of China would spin full circle…it is not so much China that has changed, but the mind and the mood of the U.S.[1]

In the 1950s and 1960s, many people in the U.S. thought they understood the Chinese, and their attitudes about those living under the Chairman's rule remained highly negative. These citizens knew full well any and all of those *Commie Bastards*, no matter where they lived, spelled nothing but trouble.[2] While this posture prevailed during the Cold War's heyday, the decline of the P.R.C.'s Cultural Revolution invited renewed study of the communistic lifestyle. As the 1960s progressed, further advances in technology also meant an ever-increasing number of households all across the U.S. began receiving televised broadcast programming. By the early 1970s, "TV became the medium of social discourse in America as important as music had been in the 60s. Throughout the decade television was the medium through which America looked at itself."[3]

Nixon knew how important such coverage had become for modern politicians. Even though he fully understood this, he still despised most journalists for being liberal-biased 'clowns' who hated him.[4] After backing "President Truman's Marshall

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[1] "The China President Nixon Will See," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 34.

[2] An American black comedy classic film, which offers excellent examples of the aforementioned Cold War mentality, is *Dr. Strangelove, Or, How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Love The Bomb*, producer and director Stanley Kubrick, Columbia Pictures, 1964.

[3] *The 20th Century: The 1970s: Power Plays*, producer Marty Callaghan, writer Roger Munter, MPI Teleproductions, MPI Home Video, 2000. [Hereafter cited as Power Plays video].

Plan and prosecuting [Alger] Hiss made his political career," Nixon insisted his actions had "set liberals and the liberal press forever against him."[5] He remained firmly convinced his enemies constantly schemed against him, resented his levels of popularity with voters, and wished for his ultimate downfall.[6] By 1968, when Nixon arrived in Washington D. C., "with rare exceptions he regarded the press as if not a monolithic enemy at least 95% opposed to him."[7] During his presidency, "the press gave Richard Nixon very little credit for anything," a fact which continuously frustrated him, but "in diplomacy, images are weapons. They trigger sentiments and alter minds."[8] By 1972, although he retained his deep distrust of the media, Nixon also realized he needed favorable coverage of his Beijing visit; his belief that the television camera had bested print sources in efficiency led Kissinger to once rather unkindly comment: "Television in front of the President is like alcohol in front of an alcoholic."[9]

Because his upcoming journey seemed imbued with mammoth importance, Nixon believed it therefore absolutely necessitated such exposure; however, network executives soon wondered just how much access their people would have to the planned events, and then how much of the president's scheduled agenda they could realistically expect to film. Realizing Nixon had intentionally limited his traveling

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[4] Margaret MacMillan, "Don't Drink the Mao-Tai," *Washingtonian*, February 2007, 41-7. [Hereafter cited as MacMillan Mao-Tai article].

[5] Jack Smith, ABC News.

[6] Rachel Barron, *Richard Nixon: American Politician* (Greensboro, NC: Morgan Reynolds Inc., 1999), 80.

[7] Tom Wicker, ABC News.

[8] John Ehrlichman, ABC News; Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76.

[9] MacMillan Mao-Tai article.

party to thirty-seven persons, so as not to overwhelm his Chinese hosts, questions also arose concerning how many of their personnel they should expect to accompany Nixon.[10] Just as the issues of seniority and inclusion quickly surfaced among lawmakers on Capitol Hill, speculation and debates now also raged about who should be granted coveted White House clearances. Touting the upcoming journey as "the most newsworthy presidential excursion abroad since World War II," *Time* magazine informed its readers, "The number of newsmen along to report it will be tightly restricted."[11] Regardless of whether the trip's highlights eventually unfolded on television, radio, or on the printed page, one columnist noted, "The White House will now have to make the tough decisions on who will and will not go and Ziegler is sure to be damned by the disappointed."[12]

As the administration received over 2,000 applications for a seat aboard the press plane, Nixon handpicked the journalists; he heavily favored the television networks, and quite enjoyed refusing places for his major critics' personnel, such as those at *The New York Times*.[13] Because the president sat "in the White House going over the manifest of the reporters who [were] going on the trip, crossing off some bureau chief because he wrote a nasty story about him during the [1962 California] gubernatorial race," complaints were heard regarding his choices.[14] With such a

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[10] "A Guide to Nixon's China Journey," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 28; "To the Summit in Peking," *Newsweek*, February 28, 1972, 12.

[11] "The Peking Pool," *Time*, January 24, 1972, 42.

[12] Ibid.

[13] "A High-Priced Stakeout," *Newsweek*, January 24, 1972, 43; MacMillan Mao-Tai article; Greenberg, *Nixon's Shadow*, 276.

[14] Holston and Edelstein article.

diverse field of candidates and competing interests, Nixon's press secretary astutely surmised he personally would face criticism once the administration released a finalized list.

Although the Premier "had suggested to Kissinger…that ten journalists might be the right number to accompany Nixon," after successful negotiations, the distribution of available seats occurred in the following way: twenty-two for daily newspapers, eighteen for television and radio personalities, six for wire services, and an additional six for major national magazines; complaints arose, however, because the television networks and daily newspapers had each expected approximately thirty spots, and the national magazines and wire services each desired another twenty.[15] "The People's Republic," Ziegler stated, "proposed limiting the U.S. press contingent to a far lower figure than 80–which is eight times bigger than any press group previously allowed to visit Red China"; bearing this information in mind, it scarcely seems unreasonable that he also later commented, "I think…we should all be very pleased with that figure."[16] One *Time* magazine contributor obviously recognized and appreciated Ziegler's tricky position when he wrote the Nixon administration "sought the widest possible audience in selecting 24 newspaper correspondents who represent 119 dailies," but he then also charged that certain invited persons, namely "William Buckley, Joseph Kraft and Richard Wilson…could analyze just as well from afar."[17]

While some eliminated from participation either claimed a clear bias against the print media, or speculated accusingly that the Nixon White House was quietly

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[15] MacMillan Mao-Tai article; "The Peking Pool," *Time*, January 24, 1972, 42.

[16] "A High-Priced Stakeout," *Newsweek*, January 24, 1972, 43.

[17] "Peking Protest," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 64.

attempting to manage the news, other disgruntled correspondents also claimed Ziegler had violated an earlier pledge, which supposedly guaranteed weighted preferences to those organizations that regularly monitored White House events.[18] When *Newsday* editor David Laventhol heard the official numbers, because his publication consistently provided this type of coverage, and also had a circulation larger than six of the dailies awarded seats, he complained at the unfair allotments; his attitude was not without sympathy from his competitors, as CBS News president Richard Salant stated, "'I don't understand why the print medium is being so short-changed. I'd be very displeased if I were they.'"[19] While his boss expressed doubts about the finalized list, Walter Cronkite saw nothing wrong with the Nixon administration's decisions. "'Television is a cumbersome medium,' declared Cronkite.… 'It takes about four TV people to every one reporter to cover such a story.'"[20] Ziegler, echoing Cronkite's sentiments, pragmatically commented that "broadcast journalism requires more people," and, addressing *United Press International*'s (UPI) Helen Thomas, he reiterated, "after all, it is a picture story"; despite statements such as these, negative dispositions persisted once it became commonly known twelve of the seventeen so-called television technicians making the official list were actually ABC, CBS, and NBC executives.[21]

These sorts of contentions aside, financial aspects also featured prominently in the minds of top media executives, as the Chinese stipulations included the request

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[18] "A High-Priced Stakeout," *Newsweek*, January 24, 1972, 43; "Peking Protest," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 64.

[19] "Made for Television," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 100.

[20] Ibid.

[21] "Peking Protest," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 64.

that any expenses incurred by attending Americans be taken care of before the presidential party or accompanying newsmen left the country. To satisfy these arrangements, a government spokesman announced a State Department official would be serving as a bagman, carrying "$6-million in cash to China to cover the anticipated costs of the trip."[22] Obviously worried about justifying the $1 million adventure his group planned, Salant at CBS remarked if it all amounted "'to nothing but people getting in and out of cars, it won't be worth it…but we have to take the chance. This is one very grand, very remote and very expensive stake-out.'"[23]

Aside from such monetary considerations, possible technical difficulties also caused concerns, because sending the crews' live reports over such great distances certainly opened the door to a myriad of possible transmission problems. As only five telephone lines then connected the P.R.C. to the outside world, Ziegler informed network representatives "that the Chinese had agreed to install a ground station in Peking for satellite transmission of Teletype messages, wire photos, voice broadcasts and live color TV"; company executives welcomed this information, because then, like the actors on the popular science fiction show *Star Trek*, their top anchors could be beamed directly into America's cozy living rooms from their field positions in wintry Beijing.[24] Recognizing the selected news personnel's arrival date as February 20, the day before President Nixon's scheduled landing, Ziegler promised "interviews with Chinese, tours of schools and communes, comfortable hotel rooms and invitations to state banquets—a rosy picture for the few fortunate enough to make the

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[22] "Bringing the picture home from Peking," *Business Week*, February 19, 1972, 21.

[23] "A High-Priced Stakeout," *Newsweek*, January 24, 1972, 43.

[24] Ibid.

trip."[25] While also explaining the Chinese planned no censorship of the Americans' collective works, he further noted the journalists' abilities to conduct man-on-the-street interviews if they wished; in reality, the language barrier for many of the chosen television personalities greatly diminished the value of this particular freedom.[26] Regardless of the eventual results achieved by the various news outlets' representatives, everyone involved realized "Nixon's visit at least opened a chink in Mao's Bamboo Curtain."[27]

After having their names culled from the initial group of 2,000, the media personnel chosen had been extremely fortunate. Now, they all just needed to learn more about their mysterious destination. Max Frankel, Washington bureau chief for *The New York Times* freely confessed, "'I know nothing about China…. I can't even keep the names straight. How to prepare for what we'll see is a complete bafflement.'"[28] These singularly frank remarks summed up the frightening reality for many inside Washington in the weeks prior to Nixon's flight. According to Frankel, the P.R.C. was considered "virgin territory as far as reporting is concerned. Every time you turn around there's something fresh and different and new."[29] While Helen Thomas noticed "some of her colleagues gave up drinking and immersed themselves

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[25] "The Peking Pool," *Time*, January 24, 1972, 42.

[26] "A High-Priced Stakeout," *Newsweek*, January 24, 1972, 43.

[27] Lovell, *The Great Wall*, 326.

[28] "Made for Television," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 100.

[29] "China Meets the Press," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26.

in books and papers on China," she also mentioned, "'this is the first time I've seen correspondents hit the books.'"[30]

Reflecting this sudden flurry of activity, while Columbia University's Professor Donald Klein admitted he personally gave at least thirty journalists private briefings on Chinese history and culture, local library workers also reported many eager patrons scouring the shelves for any items concerning that country. Once the media personnel learned more about Beijing's weather, others hurriedly invested in heavy winter wear.[31] While ABC executives provided Tom Jarriel and his entire crew with "elaborate winter-weather gear, including down-filled ski jackets, water-proof boots and bandit-style stocking masks," and NBC's Barbara Walters decided to include several lengthy skirts in her ensemble, author Theodore White, who thought such frantic fussing over incidentals pure silliness, commented, "'All we'll need is a toothbrush, a razor and some long underwear…. Peking in the wintertime is no worse than New Hampshire at primary time.'"[32]

While the media crews prepared to face their various assignment duties, they still wondered about a precise agenda. Jack Otter, head of sales for NBC, stated his reporters would be covering the presidential couple's arrival in the Chinese capital, but he could only speculate on when, or even if, the American public might be treated to televised images of famous sites, such as the Forbidden City or the Great Wall.[33] Because the administration had provided no prior information about either the

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[30] "Made for Television," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 100; MacMillan Mao-Tai article.

[31] Ibid.

[32] "Made for Television," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 100.

[33] "Bringing the picture home from Peking," *Business Week*, February 19, 1972, 21.

Nixons' accommodations or the locations for the planned negotiation sessions, the press corps could only look at their flight schedules and ponder an achievable shooting schedule. The official itinerary showed that after the President and First Lady departed Washington, D. C. on the morning of February 17, they would then experience stopovers in Hawaii, Guam, and Shanghai, where they would refuel, pick up a Chinese navigator, an interpreter, and an additional radio operator, before completing the last 710 miles to the Beijing airport.[34]

Members of the national press speculated for weeks about Nixon's reception in Beijing. With his trip deemed an official state visit, programmers thought the president would receive the Chinese welcome usually extended to heads of state; because this naturally implied considerable pomp and circumstance, they expected to capture footage of him descending the plane's steps to the cacophonous sounds of crashing cymbals, gongs, and drums.[35] In hindsight, these assumptions about the initial Chinese welcome are interesting, as no established diplomatic relations existed at that time between the U.S. and the P.R.C. Having also been informed the Chinese Premier would attend the President's arrival ceremony, network personnel believed that, after Nixon and Zhou had officially greeted one another, the entire group would then most probably drive past the Gate of Heavenly Peace, the site where Mao had proclaimed the P.R.C.'s birth in 1949.[36] The Nixons were scheduled to spend several days in Beijing, and then another in Hangchow, due to that ancient city's historical

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[34] Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington: February 27, 1972," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 105.

[35] "A Guide to Nixon's China Journey," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 27; "The Summit: Great Expectations," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 53.

[36] Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington: February 27, 1972," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 105.

significance.[37] After a day of sightseeing, the Nixons would then depart on February 27 from Shanghai and head, via an Alaskan route, back to Washington, D. C.[38] By utilizing their most experienced anchors for the story, the networks fervently hoped to provide an unforgettable media experience for their viewers.[39] This planned journey had already been deemed "one of the most daring diplomatic exploits of modern times."[40] While some of those fastidiously planning this entire affair initially expressed great optimism at its outcome, China had been considered an ideologically estranged enemy for over two decades. "'I understand the Chinese people regard us as Martians,' mused NBC's John Chancellor. 'Just wait until they see all those journalists with all those lights and cameras staggering off the plane.'"[41]

For an occasion of such world import, each of the major networks sent their "biggest guns in news"; ABC chose Harry Reasoner, CBS sent the powerful duo of Cronkite and Eric Sevareid, while NBC executives decided on Chancellor and Walters.[42] Fully intending to furnish "a half-hour nightly summary of each day's events" for the American public to digest with their dinners, programmers also realized that any prior notice about the daily montage beaming via the new Intelsat IV satellite, a $19.5 million cylinder launched into space the month before, depended upon whether the Chinese provided media representatives with an advance agenda,

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[37] "Chill or Cheers in Peking," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 21, 1972, 18; "Chou: The Man in Charge," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 30.

[38] "A Guide to Nixon's China Journey," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 27.

[39] Joseph Morgenstern, "TV: An Eyeful of China, A Thimbleful of Insight," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26.

[40] "Nixon, China, and Religious Freedom," *Christianity Today*, February 4, 1972, 20.

[41] "A High-Priced Stakeout," *Newsweek*, January 24, 1972, 43.

[42] "Bringing the picture home from Peking," *Business Week*, February 19, 1972, 21.

and whether the television personnel themselves experienced any significant technical difficulties.[43] Crews carefully packed over 100 videotape reels, and planned to process any captured footage through the newly constructed twenty-ton broadcast facility located at Beijing airport, where approximately forty tons of electronic equipment and seventy-three U.S. technicians would already be awaiting their arrival; network executives had an option to utilize all this new technology for exclusive reports by their particular anchors, but they understood each hour would cost them $8,300.[44]

Over "one hundred reporters, news executives, and cameramen and other technicians" were eventually handpicked to attend; while "seven pool correspondents and photographers" would be flying with the president on *Air Force One*, "a full press plane, a Pan American Airways charter, was ahead, scheduled to land first, as always, to witness presidential landings."[45] The *Today* show's Walters expressed some annoyance at her place aboard the so-called Zoo Plane, which carried all the technicians and photographers.[46] While in transit, "the journalists practiced using chopsticks…[and] played cards for the Chinese currency they had been issued," before they disembarked on January 20 at the Beijing airport; their Chinese hosts treated the tired correspondents to a welcoming reception in the Palace of Nationalities. The press corps, "housed near Tiananmen Square, in the cavernous Soviet-style Minzu Hotel," received a friendly greeting from You Zhong-jing, who

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[43] Ibid.

[44] "Now, in Living Color from China," *Time*, February 28, 1972, 12.

[45] Richard Reeves, *President Nixon: Alone in the White House* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 434-35.

[46] MacMillan Mao-Tai article.

provided them with details concerning their accommodation's amenities.[47] Inside their rooms, the Americans discovered "candy, fruit, tea, and stamps had been laid out," but their toilets featured freshly lacquered wooden toilet seats; "unfortunately, the extract of sumac in the lacquer caused painful boils on those who were allergic to it. The advance party had already encountered what they'd nicknamed 'baboon bottom.'"[48]

While the new Beijing media facilities featured twenty-two tables with forty-four microphones, an additional twenty-five telephone and teleprinter channels also stood available for their use; their Chinese hosts informed them they might also freely enjoy the ten provided broadcast booths, but if they wished to use the pressroom, they were respectfully asked to first discuss this with "the information office of the foreign ministry."[49] Reporters soon discovered that although the press center came "equipped with a basketball court, a bowling alley and dozens of pigtailed waitresses dispensing cups of green tea," the P.R.C.'s media personnel were generally unprepared to "get stories out fast," and lacked the capability to either ship "film quickly out of the country" or to "transmit to satellites"; the senior Chinese journalist at the time later expressed his great astonishment at the speed with which the foreigners worked, and once these guests realized the Chinese fascination with their Xerox copier, because their hosts routinely copied every document by hand, the Americans arranged to leave their machine in the country after they departed.[50]

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 8.

[50] "China Meets the Press," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26; MacMillan Mao-Tai article.

The television crewmembers then prepared themselves to follow Nixon's every move during his stay in China. Because the networks planned to beam the ceremonial festivities live via satellite to a worldwide audience, they realized they had the unprecedented opportunity to reach approximately 600 million viewers.[51] The trip's official agenda listed Beijing's Great Hall of the People as the location for two state dinners, with the one hosted by the U.S. featuring American champagne and cigarettes.[52] Although they understood the Premier would conduct the summit's daily work sessions, speculators also expected the president to meet the Chairman and attend other social events. Unfortunately for interested viewers, "not a single network seat on the press planes [had gone] to a specialist in Chinese languages or Chinese culture."[53] Despite this, according to press releases of February 1972, President Nixon scored a personal triumph that week in the P.R.C. He not only knew about, and took full advantage of "all the television camera positions on the Great Wall," but he even quoted from "Mao Tse-tung's poetry at the opening banquet and greeted Chou before one [plenary] session with a lusty *Ni hau* ('How are you?')."[54]

On the eve of his departure from Washington, D. C., Nixon's political critics and rivals still pondered his ultimate intentions.[55] While some of his detractors described the event as merely a politically motivated "visit-to-Peking ploy," they also

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[51] "A Guide to Nixon's China Journey," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 27.

[52] "Now, in Living Color from China," *Time*, February 28, 1972, 11-12.

[53] Joseph Morgenstern, "TV: An Eyeful of China, A Thimbleful of Insight," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26.

[54] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 15.

[55] John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 7; Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington: February 27, 1972," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 105.

faced the stark truth that the president had "recaptured the propaganda initiative."[56] Even if it were, as some surmised, just an election-year stunt, they were dependent upon the press to provide fair coverage; as an article in *Newsweek* pointed out, Nixon would receive a media-driven head start at precisely the moment his 1972 re-election campaign slipped into gear.[57] Nixon had actually "invested immense political capital in achieving something of substance in Peking."[58] No politician with any experience at all would have turned down such an alluring opportunity for personal exposure. For the moment, whether his opponents liked it or not, Nixon had stolen their collective thunder by traveling to Beijing.

As this important event occurred under a president known for heartily desiring ample space and privacy, one might justifiably question just how journalists had ever succeeded in adequately covering his visit. Their job had certainly not been simple. Before Nixon's arrival, an advance group of twenty-five media representatives had "set up a satellite ground station at Peking airport"; however, upon their return to the states, they released few details about what they saw or planned to do in the future.[59] "'The lid's still on,' demurred one network spokesman. 'We're kind of wrapped up,' explained a TV technician.'"[60] Despite their secrecy, once Nixon's plane landed, Western audiences watched the extended broadcasts, remaining "fascinated by the

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[56] "Peking Spectacular," *The Nation*, August 2, 1971, 66.

[57] "The Summit: Great Expectations," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 52.

[58] "The Long, Bumpy Road to Peking," *Newsweek*, August 2, 1971, 14.

[59] "The Peking Pool," *Time*, January 24, 1972, 42.

[60] "A High-Priced Stakeout," *Newsweek*, January 24, 1972, 43.

spectacle of America's staunchly anti-Communist president fraternizing behind the Bamboo Curtain."[61] As Russell Baker, of *The New York Times*, commented:

> We already knew that a President could make it very difficult for anyone else to get attention on television…but until the Peking trip we did not realize that he had the power to pack the entire television industry into an airplane and transport it lock, stock and Sevareid out of the country.[62]

During the Nixons' stay, the large press contingency shadowed their every move, but many Americans soon believed themselves short-changed. Even though the journey to the P.R.C. surely marked an important turning point in world history, some citizens thought the national media's coverage lacked credibility and substance, because the best explanations of details in the captured footage often came from Sinologists sitting in New York studios. Those watching from home quickly realized most of the anchors reporting the breaking news possessed little working knowledge about either the ancient nation's history or its colorful customs. Although Nixon and Kissinger had laboriously prepared for the summit meetings, media cultural preparedness had been virtually ignored. Viewers were not alone in sensing something amiss. In fact, once their crews landed on the ground inside China, network representatives also began expressing dissatisfaction with the administration's finalized arrangements. Enduring extremely long working hours, these professionals soon vented their own frustrations about the difficulties in successfully following Nixon's movements.

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[61] Lovell, *The Great Wall*, 11.

[62] "Made for Television," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 100.

On February 21, 1972, when President Nixon began his 11,510-mile odyssey, those following the story in Washington noted the president's personal exhilaration; the American leader laughed easily and poked officials good-naturedly in their ribs before boarding his helicopter.[63] He addressed an 8,000-member audience, carefully describing his important current mission for peace and fellowship to China, and told his listeners that although many political differences existed between the U.S. and the P.R.C., "what we must do is to find a way to see that we can have differences without being enemies in war."[64] As far as achieving peace in his own country, President Nixon experienced some success, because "even the Democrats in Congress signed a unanimous resolution wishing him well."[65]

Following the formal ceremonies, Nixon "seemed to be in great spirits on the chopper going over to Andrews [Air Force Base]," believing "the whole thing had gone well."[66] This, however, did not mean his critics had nothing further to say. In what some perceived as "partisan craftiness–or recklessness–the Democratic National Committee's weekly newsletter suggested that Nixon may be planning another smashing surprise by settling the Viet Nam War while he is in Peking"; they "envisioned 'a secret summit of leaders from the Asian Communist nations' meeting with Nixon."[67] On the other side of the aisle, some Republicans thought "the Democrats seemed to be building up expectations, presumably hoping to benefit from

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[63] Reeves, *President Nixon*, 432; "Now, in Living Color from China," *Time*, February 28, 1972, 11.

[64] Ibid.; Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington: February 27, 1972," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 105.

[65] "To the Summit in Peking," *Newsweek*, February 28, 1972, 12.

[66] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Thursday, February 17, 1972, 411.

[67] "Now, in Living Color from China," *Time*, February 28, 1972, 12.

the disappointment if no such settlement occurs."[68] Though some Nixon detractors, such as George Ball, may have criticized the President for the way he approached the Chinese summit talks, one writer for *Newsweek* emphatically stated, "at this historic juncture, all the hoopla, ceremony and television coverage were perhaps necessary to symbolize the staggering dimensions of the task and the equally significant stakes."[69]

Once underway, the president "knew he was taking a big risk. If the trip failed, he could be blamed for making a colossal blunder."[70] He believed, however, a warm welcome by millions of Chinese would be "worth a hundred times the effect of the communiqué," and that he "must have some chance for pictures with the people"; toward this end, Mrs. Nixon accompanied him on his journey. Emphasizing "the need for close discipline on the press during the week," Nixon also wanted to make absolutely sure everyone understood they were not "to talk to the press"; that was, as Haldeman remembered, "unless we decide to do so, that we've got to create the impression that this is a very tough bargaining session, not all peaches and cream."[71] The president's plane landed "in Shanghai to board Chinese navigators" before then "heading toward Peking's Capital Airport"; at the P.R.C's absolute insistence, these pilots flew the Air Force 707 for the last segment of Nixon's flight into Beijing, but because the men "could not understand the American airliner's navigation system,

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[68] Ibid.

[69] "To the Summit in Peking," *Newsweek*, February 28, 1972, 12.

[70] Faison review, 8.

[71] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Thursday, February 17, 1972, 411.

[they utilized their] eyesight and hand signals instead."[72] As the aircraft made its final approach, a U.S. agent contacted a security officer on the ground, requesting an update on the crowds below. When he received the reply that no spectators had gathered, the Secret Service man radioed again, but received the same answer.[73] Despite the seeming insincerity of his remarks, Press Secretary Ziegler later said the official welcome had been "exactly what we expected."[74]

The networks had their personnel in place to provide live coverage of the important presidential arrival.[75] When Kissinger traveled to the P.R.C. the previous fall, he had warned his hosts "that the requirements of a presidential visit would… require 'several battalions' of technical people."[76] While the Chinese expected an advance media team, the amount of planning amazed them; "the Americans worked out the best place for Nixon's plane to land so that it would stop at the right distance and angle for good shots of his descent toward the reception party. The runway was measured and marked up with paint."[77]

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[72] Reeves, *President Nixon*, 436; Dick Herman, "'Nixon and Mao' a detailed narrative of world-changing trip to China," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World* by Margaret MacMillan, *Lincoln Journal Star* (Nebraska), May 6, 2007, 3. [Hereafter cited as Herman review]; Jonathan Fenby, "The real Nixon in China: Nixon's seminal 1972 visit to China had consequences its key players could barely imagine," review of Margaret MacMillan's *When Nixon Met Mao*, *The Observer* (England), November 19, 2006, 22.

[73] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 14.

[74] John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 8.

[75] David J. Lynch, "A trip that changed history; Book chronicles Nixon's seminal visit to China," review of Margaret MacMillan's *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World*, *USA TODAY*, March 12, 2007, 4B.

[76] Robert Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 331-32.

[77] Ibid.

That Monday, the surrounding airport buildings were quiet, and the temperature stood at thirty-four degrees.[78] Classifying the welcome as eerie, one American reporter noted the following: no onlookers had been allowed to attend the plane's arrival, the Chinese greeters, which included "Zhou Enlai, two dozen officials and some of their assistants, a 350-man honor guard, and an army band that played the national anthems," had marched onto the field only moments before the landing, and the U.S. and Chinese flags flew on two flagpoles, while fifteen other poles stood bare.[79] After the president's plane taxied to a stop, and his jet's door had opened, he stepped out into the bitter cold morning air. He had finally arrived in the P.R.C. With Patricia at his side, a woman he referred to as "a superb goodwill ambassador," "the most widely traveled First Lady," and someone who "deeply believed in the importance of personal diplomacy," he was ready to begin his new adventure.[80] Although she had been informed only Chinese prostitutes routinely wore the color, Mrs. Nixon insisted on wearing her red coat for the occasion.[81] Below the couple on the tarmac, the Chinese Premier, attired in a dark suit and grey overcoat, stood waiting, unsmilingly accompanied by seventeen senior officials and twenty-five additional junior party dignitaries.[82] From their positions thirty yards away, media personnel soon overheard the President greet his Chinese hosts.[83] The grand send-off

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[78] Reeves, *President Nixon*, 436-37.

[79] Ibid., 437; John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 8.

[80] Nixon, *In the Arena*, 235.

[81] Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76.

[82] John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 8.

[83] Hugh Sidey, "A President wrapped in an enigma," *Life*, March 3, 1972, 12.

the Nixons had experienced in America contrasted sharply with this quiet ceremony, as no gongs rang out happy greetings, nor did any Chinese children present the First Lady with flowers.[84] From the CBS studios in New York, Charles Collingwood asked his colleague, "'Is there an air of excitement in Peking today?' No, Walter Cronkite couldn't say there was"; appearing before NBC's cameras, Barbara Walters reported an "air of disappointment," at the lack of "cymbal players to greet President Nixon."[85] Marching past the honor guard, the dignitaries departed the airport in black limousines and green sedans, thus ending a mere five minutes of ceremony before the American viewing public watched President and Mrs. Nixon disappear into the heart of China.[86]

The journalists on site failed to realize, however, that small, subtle gestures, such as the presence of an honor guard, which had been discontinued for several years, and an appearance by almost all of the P.R.C.'s party leaders, both symbolized extensions of respect by Chairman Mao.[87] In an article appearing in *Newsweek*, Sydney Liu stated, "to a China watcher like myself, the airport reception seemed downright friendly"; he pointed out while the couple's welcome upon their "arrival in Peking…must have seemed frosty indeed," it was actually quite warm, once one considered that during the previous year, the Beijing leadership had called Nixon "the

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[84] Sydney Liu, "The Little Things That Count," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 28. [Hereafter cited as Sydney Liu article].

[85] Joseph Morgenstern, "TV: An Eyeful of China, A Thimbleful of Insight," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26.

[86] John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 8-9.

[87] Sydney Liu article, 28.

most ferocious and cruel chieftain of imperialism."[88] While it remained common knowledge that thousands greeted the rulers of Ethiopia and Romania when they visited the P.R.C., interpreters carefully explained to the foreign reporters that the kind of welcome extended to the Nixons had been extremely "proper, polite and appropriate—all they said, that the chief of a government that didn't recognize the People's Republic could expect."[89]

When Nixon and Zhou met that day on the tarmac, they shook hands. As the former president recalled:

> As I came down the ramp, Zhou began to applaud. I returned the gesture, and then, as I reached the bottom step, I stretched out my hand to Zhou. When he took it, it was more than a handshake. We both knew that it marked a turning point in history.[90]

Though many viewers may have considered this act merely a mundane courtesy, it actually meant a great deal to the Premier. At the 1954 Geneva Conference, the U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had deeply offended Zhou by refusing to shake his hand.[91] Now in 1972, the Premier told Nixon, "Your handshake came over the vastest ocean in the world—twenty-five years of no communication."[92] After seven long months of national anticipation, "the doors had swung open on a new policy of dialogue between China and the U.S."[93]

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[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Nixon, *The Real War*, 136-37.

[91] Nixon, *Leaders*, 234-35.

[92] Nixon, *In the Arena*, 11-12.

[93] "Now, in Living Color from China," *Time*, February 28, 1972, 11.

The New York Times ran a banner announcing: "Nixon Arrives In Peking To Begin An 8-Day Visit; Met By Chou At Airport," and Max Frankel's report, "A Quiet Greeting," notified readers that the president's presence in the communists' capital not only marked "the end of a generation of hostility between the United States and China," but also the beginning of "a new and still undefined relationship between the most powerful and the most populous of nations."[94] President Nixon had arrived in Mao's country, but he also later reflected in his memoirs, "it was an eerie ride from the airport to the government guest house in Beijing," as he "could see that except for a lonely sentry stationed every few hundred yards, the streets were totally deserted."[95] The Russian-made Zil limousines drove fifteen miles to reach the city, and the foreigners noticed on "each block there might be one person on a bicycle and a family walking along, but not one looked up and some of the Americans guessed, correctly, that they were props, actors."[96] Howard Tuckner, an ABC News correspondent, witnessed the procession from inside Tiananmen Square. He reported:

> Foreign diplomats here who watched with us told us that the Chinese leadership has orchestrated the size of crowds to indicate their attitudes towards heads of state…since the Chinese have no formal relationship with the United States, the Chinese must have decided to turn out no crowd at all rather than one too small or too large.[97]

Before the motorcade entered the area, an interpreter had already informed Tuckner, "this was an ordinary day here, nothing special, that it was not a holiday"; therefore,

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[94] Max Frankel, "A Quiet Greeting," *The New York Times*, February 21, 1972, 1.

[95] Nixon, *In the Arena*, 11.

[96] Reeves, *President Nixon*, 437.

[97] Anchor Bianna Golodryga, and Reporter Howard Tuckner (Peking, China), "Motorcade; No Crowds at President Nixon's Motorcade," report by Howard Tuckner, *ABC News Now*, February 21, 2007.

as Nixon passed, "there was no cheering, no waving, no emotion. Hardly a head turned."[98] The guests had just arrived at their accommodations, located on Beijing's western outskirts near the Jade Abyss Pool, when the telephone rang; a polite voice stated, "Chairman Mao Tse-tung…would be pleased to receive the President of the U.S. at his residence, at Mr. Nixon's convenience."[99] This was highly unusual, as Mao usually saw dignitaries only at the conclusions of their stays in his country; therefore, while the American newscasters "huddled on the steps of the Great Hall of the People in the late afternoon cold, a surrealistic tableau of the press in search of a President," Nixon unexpectedly met with the mysterious Chinese leader in his warm and cozy personal study.[100] The Chairman's invitation had surprised the president, yet their speaking so soon signaled "to the people of China that the anti-American signs which still graced the walls on Tien an men Square no longer meant much."[101] Nixon also quickly realized his cool reception at the airport would not set the tone for his entire visit, as "in the inner councils of the Chinese leadership a decision had been reached to throw the full weight of the official Government, party and army behind the arduous negotiations with the U.S."[102] That afternoon, "in his yellow-roofed and modest home in a corner of the old Forbidden City," when the "rotund and

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[98] Ibid.

[99] John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 8; "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 14.

[100] Sydney Liu article, 28; Hugh Sidey, "A President wrapped in an enigma," *Life*, March 3, 1972, 12.

[101] John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 9.

[102] Martin article, 17.

jovial…the great revolutionary" welcomed him, Nixon finally came face to face with Mao Zedong.[103]

For his meeting with the American leader, "Mao put on a new suit and a new pair of shoes. His hair was freshly cut and his face cleanly shaved."[104] Nixon later recalled in his memoirs that when the two men greeted each other, Mao had "stretched out his hand. So did I. He shook my hand for as long as about one minute."[105] Nixon had also noticed the Chairman's office had been "cluttered with books—not for show, but for reading," and that his skin had "no wrinkles, but its sallowness made it seem almost waxen."[106] Although "enfeebled by age and ill health," Mao's mind, the former president later wrote, "was sharp…there was no question that he was in command on the Chinese side"; definitely "taking my measure, as I was taking his," Nixon remarked, "he was trying to discern whether American affluence had made us soft and whether our troubles in Vietnam had sapped our strength of will."[107] Despite the Chairman's obvious health issues, Nixon also reported the Chinese leader "was still treated with enormous respect by his aides and attendants and was sharp in his repartee."[108]

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[103] "Nixon's Great Leap into China," *Life*, March 3, 1972, 4; John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 9.

[104] He Di, "The Most Respected Enemy: Mao Zedong's Perception of the United States," *The China Quarterly*, no. 137 (March 1994): 144.

[105] Nixon, *RN*, 557-58, 560.

[106] Nixon, *In the Arena*, 13; Nixon, *Leaders*, 238.

[107] Nixon, *The Real War*, 133.

[108] Nixon, *In the Arena*, 13, 360.

While presenting "his visitors with inscribed copies of his collected poems, Mao affected the posture of father of his country," and in answer to the American leader's comment that his works had "moved a nation and changed the world," he simply responded, "I haven't been able to change it. I've only been able to change a few places in the vicinity of Peking."[109] Mao had also insisted, "I discuss the philosophical questions."[110] As he talked with Nixon, Mao realized "just how friendless and vulnerable China was in the world, in part because of his own disastrous policies," but the man sitting across from him was also "well aware of the damage that the Vietnam War had done at home and abroad."[111] Because Nixon needed "to deliver on his campaign promise to end the Vietnam War and with Mao fearful of the militarily superior Soviet Union, each leader could offer something the other needed."[112] During their short talk, Mao, smiling broadly, told Nixon, "I voted for you during your last elections," and that he liked "rightists…I am comparatively happy when these people on the right come into power"; to this, Nixon responded, "I think the most important thing to note is that in America, at least at this time, those on the right can do what those on the left can only talk about."[113] As the two men parted, Nixon told Mao that, although they had both started their lives from humble origins,

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[109] Ibid., 204; Nixon, *1999*, 247.

[110] Nixon, *Leaders*, 238; Nixon, *1999*, 247.

[111] Helen Fessenden, "Bookshelf: geopolitics as high-stakes poker," interview of Margaret MacMillan, *The Hill*, March 1, 2007, 21.

[112] Lester Pimentel, "Book Review: How Nixon opened China," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World* by Margaret MacMillan, *The Star Ledger* (Newark, New Jersey), February 25, 2007, 6.

[113] Nixon, *In the Arena*, 13; Nixon, *Leaders*, 238.

they had now become leaders of powerful nations.[114] This historic meeting had been scheduled to last fifteen minutes, but ended after a full hour; the Chairman had become "thoroughly captivated by the discussion," and Nixon remembered noticing that "Zhou glanced at his watch with increasing frequency as Mao began to tire."[115]

Because the networks had planned to cover Nixon's movements that day, the press pool had traveled to the guesthouse; however, as the scheduled plenary session, originally set to begin at 4:30 that afternoon had been delayed, Haldeman wrote, "We just kept the press waiting, saying the thing had been postponed"; as for Nixon, he "was especially pleased that the Chinese film cameras had managed to cover" his meeting with Mao, and "had agreed to make the film and their still photos available."[116] For those who had wondered just how secretive Nixon would remain while in the P.R.C., they received an answer that first afternoon. As ABC correspondent Tom Jarriel reported, "The first talks with Mao seemed to fall into the category described by the President when he recently said, 'there will be considerable discussion not necessarily made public, but useful in exploring the common ground.'"[117] The American reporters had not been happy with Ziegler, when he deflected questions about the surprise meeting by stating, "The President and Chairman Mao met this afternoon for one hour."[118]

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[114] Barron, *Richard Nixon*, 78.

[115] Nixon, *Leaders*, 238.

[116] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Monday, February 21, 1972, 414, 416.

[117] Anchor Bianna Golodryga, with Reporter Tom Jarriel (Peking, China), "Meeting in China; President Nixon Talks with China," *ABC News Now*, February 21, 2007.

[118] Ibid., with Ronald Zeigler, White House Press Secretary.

As far as diplomatic matters between Nixon and Zhou were concerned, their first meeting went well.[119] General Ye Jian-ying attended many of the top-level discussions; his presence signified that publicly "the Chinese Army…[was] squarely on the side of the effort by the two countries to reach an accommodation."[120] Charles Freeman's "ability to read Chinese upside down made him useful on the American side of the negotiating table," and another person who became "familiar to millions of American television viewers" during that long week of negotiations was translator Nancy Tang, "a slim, bespectacled young Chinese woman [who] was present to help them bridge the language gap."[121]

That evening, one reporter noted, "I could feel the change in atmosphere that same night at Chou En-lai's state dinner for Mr. Nixon."[122] The entire affair "was very impressive and quite overwhelming, even to the cynical members of the press corps."[123] The foreign guests "made their way up a grand staircase for photographs, [and] then were ushered into a somber hall filled with round tables and decorated with Chinese and American flags"; while the Beijing revolutionary committee's representatives came that evening, no members of the Chinese radical faction attended.[124] The President, First Lady, and other top administration officials "sat with

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[119] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 16.

[120] Martin article, 17.

[121] Adam R. Seipp, "Shaking things up; Margaret MacMillan gives lively account of maneuverings that brought Cold Warriors together," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World*, *The Houston Chronicle*, February 11, 2007, 16; "The Girl From West 11th St.," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 23.

[122] Martin article, 17.

[123] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Monday, February 21, 1972, 415.

[124] MacMillan Mao-Tai article.

Zhou Enlai at a table for 20; everyone else was at tables of ten. Each person had an ivory place card embossed in gold English and Chinese characters and chopsticks engraved with his or her name"; polite dinner conversation was accomplished with interpreter assistance.[125] Waiters delivered a bountiful meal, and when Nixon complimented the Premier on the beauty of the PLA band's rendition of *America the Beautiful*, he "murmured, 'that was the song they played at your inaugural. I thought you would like it for tonight.'"[126] The musical selections proved interesting to China watchers, as all so-called bourgeois, or decadent, music had been banned in recent years.[127] As the "lazy Susans spun, laden with duck slices with pineapple, three-colored eggs, carp, chicken, prawns, shark fin, dumplings, sweet rice cake, fried rice, and in a nod toward Western tastes, bread and butter," each person present also "had three glasses: one for water or orange juice, one for wine, [and] one for China's famous Mao-tai–'white lightning' to American journalists or, as CBS's Dan Rather put it, 'liquid razor blades.'"[128] The Mao-tai, which enjoyed purity protection from the Premier, because "all industry was banned from 100 kilometers upstream of the river used" in its production by Kweichow Moutai, had an "alcohol level of more than 50 percent," and it "had been famous since the San Francisco World's Fair of 1915"; the Premier, who was known as the "'father of Maotai' for his support of the company," told Nixon the drink had been used for medicinal purposes during the Long March, even taking "a match to his cup, saying, 'Mr. Nixon, please take a look.

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[125] Ibid.

[126] Hugh Sidey, "A President wrapped in an enigma," *Life*, March 3, 1972, 12.

[127] Sydney Liu article, 28.

[128] MacMillan Mao-Tai article.

It can indeed catch fire.'"[129] Voicing his hopes for a successful week, the Premier also remarked, "We hope that through a frank exchange of views between our two sides to gain a clearer notion of our differences and make efforts to find common ground, a new start can be made in the relations between our two countries"; in his own speech that evening, Nixon replied to such sentiments by stating, "What brings us together is that we have common interests, which transcend those differences."[130]

At that first banquet, "the two former enemies celebrated a new relationship and the American networks covered it live for four hours."[131] After anchor Howard K. Smith told his viewing audience, "A new page in history was written today in Peking. And my colleague Harry Reasoner is there," Reasoner, reporting on "Richard Nixon and Chou En-lai 'both contending that the world can change and should,'" also stated, "'No one had expected that much candor, and that much warmth…from a leader whose party is not all that committed to friendship with America.'"[132] Smith further remarked, "'A year ago, the possibility that we'd ever see anything like this picture seemed more remote than Neil Armstrong's first footstep on the moon.'"[133] Recording the evening's highlights "from their tables at the far end of the hall," the American journalists "stood on chairs and used field glasses to see the historic scene. Nixon had wanted them there, just as he had wanted live television coverage, because

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[129] Ibid.; "Moutai Eyes Globe from Remote Base," *Wire Business Daily Update Source: Financial Times Information Limited-Asia Intelligence Wire,* March 22, 2007, Lexis Nexis (accessed May 12, 2007).

[130] Anchor Bianna Golodryga, with Reporter Harry Reasoner (Peking, China), *ABC News Now*, February 21, 2007.

[131] MacMillan Mao-Tai article.

[132] Anchor Bianna Golodryga, with Reporter Harry Reasoner (Peking, China), *ABC News Now*, February 21, 2007.

[133] Ibid, with Reporter Howard K. Smith.

he understood their power."[134] While John Holdridge, who later recalled, "'the atmosphere in the Great Hall was electric,'" soon found himself "playing an old drinking game of counting fingers" with the Chinese minister of electric power, in which the "loser had to drain his glass to a shout of 'Ganbei!'" not all of those present were so enamored with the glitzy proceedings. Haldeman, a teetotaler, thought himself quite out of place that evening, and the more cynical William F. Buckley later wrote the spectacle "was if Sir Hartley Shawcross had suddenly risen from the prosecutor's stand at Nuremberg and descended to embrace Goering and Goebbels and Doenitz and Hess, begging them to join with him in the making of a better world."[135] Standing alongside "Teddy White and…Buckley at the back of Beijing's Great Hall of the People as Nixon drank champagne with Zhou Enlai," Hugh Sidey recalled, "No moment in my judgment…has been as significant.'"[136] While the evening seemed to go well, the correspondents wondered just how many of the auspicious occasion's details would reach the P.R.C.'s general population via the nationally controlled media.[137] After the last course, according to Chinese tradition, the banquet abruptly ended, the "guests hurried to the cars, and journalists rushed to file their stories," but one lucky Canadian journalist named John Burns left the event with "Nixon's chopsticks as a souvenir. Although a New York dealer sent a cable with an offer of $10,000, Burns kept them."[138]

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[134] MacMillan Mao-Tai article.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Greenberg, *Nixon's Shadow*, 289.

[137] John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 9.

[138] MacMillan Mao-Tai article.

Later that night, when Nixon expressed concern over how the day's media coverage may have played with American audiences, Haldeman reported it "had been extremely good, and he [Nixon] was very pleased with that"; also noting since he had received word "the networks handled it exactly the way the P [Nixon] wanted," Haldeman believed "there was no need for us to put out any further line."[139] Of course, because the event had been scripted to impress adults, the spectacular's political fine points were lost on certain American viewers. One citizen of Bay City, Texas, recalled her experience while watching the broadcasts with her family. "The president looked so different next to the Chinese…big teeth, big nose, big ears...and he constantly had a big smile on his face," she remembered, before then adding, "and Pat always looked so pretty."[140] Oblivious to such domestic perceptions, Haldeman's diary entry the following day once again commented on the "almost euphoric reporting of the banquet…[noting it had been] very impressive."[141] Having "scripted the China trip down to the last camera angle," he now began to sense that his efforts were, "from a public-relations point of view, a success."[142]

The next day, while her husband met with the Premier, Mrs. Nixon "visited the kitchen of the Peking Hotel," before then spending the afternoon exploring the Summer Palace and Beijing Zoo, where she viewed the pandas.[143] That evening, she traveled via motorcade with her husband to the Great Hall of the People, where the

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[139] Reeves, *President Nixon*, 437; Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Monday, February 21, 1972, 413, 415.

[140] Jones interview.

[141] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Tuesday, February 22, 1972, 416.

[142] Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76.

[143] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1972*, 365-66.

couple then joined the Chairman's wife, Jiang Qing, at a ballet performance of *The Red Detachment of Women*.[144] While the Premier may have been described as Mao's constant political partner and faithful comrade, "Madame Mao, Jiang Qing, Mao's fourth wife," had been described as "his attack dog."[145] There had been some internal disagreement about the wisdom of inviting Nixon to the P.R.C. While Madame Mao believed "China's U.S. policy was both unnecessary and too conciliatory," she also insisted "although we do not have 'white friends,' 'big friends' and 'wealthy friends,' we are not isolated."[146] Her position by marriage caused people to kowtow "before her—not because they respected or liked her or even wanted to serve her but because she was the Chairman's wife."[147] Despite her attitude about politics, the Nixons enjoyed themselves at the provided entertainment, but according to Haldeman, the ballet "was just as we had been led to believe, a complete propaganda operation."[148]

As the American reporters had followed Mrs. Nixon that day, they also noticed, with some surprise, how the Chinese had definitely awakened to their leaders' enthusiasm regarding the president's visit. Like the Americans, many members of the Chinese media covered the week's events, and quite adeptly used their own domestic press to alert citizens to the country's shift in foreign policy.[149] Even those in the smallest villages heard announcements discussing the historic

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[144] MacMillan Mao-Tai article; Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Tuesday, February 22, 1972, 416; Hugh Sidey, "A President wrapped in an enigma," *Life*, March 3, 1972, 12.

[145] Reporter Martha Teichner, CBS News Transcripts.

[146] Robert S. Ross, "International Bargaining and Domestic Politics: U.S.-China Relations since 1972," *World Politics* 38, no. 2 (January 1986), 267-68.

[147] Bachman article, 114.

[148] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Tuesday, February 22, 1972, 417.

[149] MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 274-75.

meeting, as people gathered before loudspeakers and radios to hear the reports.[150] *Hsinhua*, the P.R.C's official press agency, sent dispatches to publications across the country, while the *People's Daily*, Beijing's paper, splashed information and photographs of the previous day's activities across two of its four pages.[151] The *People's Daily* printed that the presidential visit "had the total blessing of Chairman Mao and that they should expect good and great things for the People's Republic to flow from it."[152] This press coverage was extraordinary, as not even Khrushchev had garnered such attention.[153] "You have an extensive press in China. You have also the radio in China," an article in *U.S. News & World Report* had cautioned its readers. "Don't forget that they have the radio in every single village of China. And they will be presenting the arrival of the President as a victory for China."[154]

Evidently, prior to Nixon's visit, "Chinese curiosity about America was far less than American curiosity about China."[155] While he toured the country, *U.S. News & World Report*'s Robert Martin discovered "there had been no great previous debate in China on President Nixon's trip," but the various "Chinese officials and newsmen, who were essentially employees of the government," he spoke with "seemed to be seized by the idea that the United States alone was at fault for years of conflict and

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[150] Sydney Liu article, 28.

[151] "To the Summit in Peking," *Newsweek*, February 28, 1972, 14; Martin article, 17.

[152] John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 9.

[153] Sydney Liu article, 28.

[154] "The Hard Bargainers Facing Nixon," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 20.

[155] Ross Terrill, "US-China Relations," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 3 (January 1980): 104. [Hereafter cited as Terrill article].

confrontation."[156] Since the P.R.C.'s creation in 1949, it had remained a well-known fact that public media sources, such as the *People's Daily*, commonly portrayed "the U.S. as the chief enemy of all Chinese and Third World people," and often provided readers with descriptions of America as "a land of sharp class antagonisms, decadence and in the throes of a proletarian revolution."[157] Although overtly negative views about America may have been somewhat temporarily suppressed in preparation for Nixon's historic visit, such ideas still graced local newspapers. As a writer for *Newsweek* noted upon the president's return to America:

> While Peking's propagandists have not recently used some of their more vicious epithets for Mr. Nixon–'god of plague,' for example, has temporarily gone out of use–the official press agency, *Hsinhua*, last week charged again that 'the foreign policy of U.S. imperialism remains one of global aggression and power politics.'[158]

Mrs. Nixon remained ignorant of any overt animosity as she continued her sightseeing tour of the P.R.C. on Wednesday, February 23, 1972. While Nixon and Zhou met at the guest house that afternoon to conduct their discussions, the First Lady "visited the Evergreen People's Commune on the west edge of Peking," and also "talked with workers making glass flowers and animals" at the Beijing Glassware Factory.[159] That evening, the Nixons watched a "public exhibition of gymnastics, badminton, and table tennis at the Capital Gymnasium"; over 20,000 people attended that performance.[160] It soon became clear that the Nixon

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[156] Martin article, 17.

[157] Alan Liu article, 936-37.

[158] "To the Summit in Peking," *Newsweek*, February 28, 1972, 14.

[159] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1972*, 366.

administration was not the only governmental entity participating in activities to further their cause through public relations efforts. While the event's seating "had been by areas of persons dressed in similar uniforms or sweat suits," the lighting system in the facility enabled the Chinese hosts "to turn on sections of overhead lights for the television cameras, and as each section was lighted from time to time, the people in it would all automatically start cheering for the camera."[161]

As the weekdays passed, and the initial excitement wore down, diplomatic progress continued to develop in a positive manner. The American media personnel, however, also began to become frustrated over the secrecy surrounding Nixon's work in the P.R.C., after they heard Ronald Ziegler announce, "I'm not prepared to give you any information about the meetings at this time."[162] The Nixon administration also faced some criticism after Americans noticed that Secretary of State Rogers had "accompanied the President, but…his role was smaller by far than that of Henry Kissinger"; Rogers had not been "involved in any of the important meetings, and was being kept out of things," which led, according to Haldeman, to his being "obviously uptight" and making "the point that if there's any other meeting with Mao, he wanted to be sure that he is included."[163] Despite these sorts of internal administrative troubles, the afternoon's political sessions went well.

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[160] Ibid.; Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Wednesday, February 23, 1972, 418; Lovell, *The Great Wall*, 323; John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 9.

[161] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Wednesday, February 23, 1972, 418.

[162] Anchor Bianna Golodryga, and Ronald Zeigler, White House Press Secretary, "Meeting in China; President Nixon Talks with China," *ABC News Now*, February 21, 2007.

[163] Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington: February 27," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 109; Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Wednesday, February 23, 1972, 418.

That important week in China, "attention to detail and symbolism were hallmarks of Nixon's visit for both the Chinese and the Americans."[164] The networks continued their coverage of the event, as "a gaggle of U.S. reporters followed Nixon to scenic spots and his meeting with China's happy workers and smiling schoolchildren."[165] On February 24, "a bright, sunny, 20-degrees" Thursday, the Nixons made the forty-mile trip to see the tombs of the Ming Dynasty's Emperors, before then also touring the Great Wall of China.[166] At their first destination, the couple witnessed "children, with touches of rouge on their faces, skipping; families dressed in bright new clothes having picnics and listening to revolutionary songs on their transistor radios; groups of friends playing cards, apparently oblivious to the bitter cold."[167] That morning, the press "got their first exclusives by figuring out that the families and children posing for pictures with the President-along with everyone else at the tombs-were props bused in by local revolutionary committees"; as Ted Koppel later remembered:

> I told my camera crew that we were going to wait until all the other Americans had left. And sure enough, a couple of open trucks pulled up. Someone collected all the radios and cameras, and the cast of the Potemkin village that had been assembled for us was trucked off.[168]

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[164] Repps Hudson, "'Nixon and Mao' recalls a dramatic foreign-policy gambit that worked," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed The World* by Margaret MacMillan, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Missouri), February 18, 2007, F10.

[165] Faison review, 8.

[166] Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76; Reeves, *President Nixon*, 450-51.

[167] MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 275; Erik Spanberg, "'Nixon and Mao': the handshake felt round the world," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World* by Margaret MacMillan, *Christian Science Monitor*, March 27, 2007, 13.

Oblivious to what had just been discovered, the Nixons continued their tour, and next happily stood together atop the Badaling Great Wall.[169] This famous landmark, which "stands about 23 feet high and dates back to the third century BC" proved a breathtaking sight for all the foreign visitors; the wall "stretches about 4,000 miles-the distance from London to Chicago-from the Bay of Bohai on the Yellow Sea to Jiayguan in the Gobi desert"; while touring the area, Nixon reportedly commented, "Such a great people with such a great wall will surely have a great future."[170] This particular presidential outing elicited different responses from journalists, as Walter Cronkite reported receiving a shock when his "electric socks shorted out," and Harry "Reasoner, describing the wall, said: "It's…uh…it's one of the two or three darnedest things I ever saw."[171] By this point on the diplomatic front, Henry Kissinger remained optimistic some form of an agreement would eventually be reached; the administration "ended up agreeing to do the communiqué release on Sunday night," but American newsmen, tired of delays in receiving concrete information to report, were "becoming rather restless."[172]

On Friday morning, February 24, the Nixons visited the Forbidden City, but as Kissinger reported continued difficulties with finalizing the communiqué, that

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[168] Reeves, *President Nixon*, 451; Renee Montagne and Steve Inskeep, "When Nixon Went to China, Cameras Went Along," *National Public Radio* (NPR), February 21, 2007; Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76; MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 275.

[169] Lovell, *The Great Wall*, 323; John Osborne, "Mission to China," *The New Republic*, March 4, 1972, 9.

[170] Claire Wrathall, "The Shape of Things to Come," *The Compact Traveller*, February 18, 2007, 4.

[171] Steven Rosen, "How the world changed in the course of one week," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World* by Margaret MacMillan, *The Denver Post*, March 4, 2007, F-16; Joseph Morgenstern, "TV: An Eyeful of China, A Thimbleful of Insight," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26.

[172] Ibid.

afternoon's discussions, which had been previously scheduled to begin at 3:00, actually started over an hour late; reaching no agreement, the Premier suggested they meet again at the airport before Nixon and most of the American party flew off to the lake resort city of Hangchow, south of Peking" the next day; despite worries over the semantical problems involved in designing the new American-Chinese document, the banquet hosted by the Nixons that evening went well.[173] The next day, Zhou told Nixon he regretted discovering that during the Nixon's official tour, "'people got some young children there to prettify the tombs, and it was putting up a false appearance. Your press correspondents have pointed this out, and we admit that this was wrong. We do not want to cover up the mistake…. We have criticized those who did this.'"[174] Meeting with Secretary of State Rogers that same day, Nixon made a point of telling him he expected cooperation in regards to the document Henry Kissinger had worked so hard to fashion.[175] In fact, there at the "Ching Kiana Guest House" on West Lake, when Rogers expressed his unhappiness, Nixon said, "quite coldly: 'Now, I expect the State Department to stay behind this 100 percent.'"[176] That evening, the Nixons were entertained "at a banquet given by the Chekiang Province Revolutionary Committee."[177] On Sunday, the Nixons flew from Hangchow to spend the day in Shanghai, where the president capped off his official visit by attending that city's Industrial Exhibition, and the First Lady "visited the Shanghai Municipal

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[173] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1972*, 366; Reeves, *President Nixon*, 453; Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Friday, February 25, 1972, 420-21.

[174] Reeves, *President Nixon*, 454; MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 275.

[175] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Saturday, February 26, 1972, 421.

[176] Reeves, *President Nixon*, 455.

[177] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1972*, 366.

Children's Palace, where "her guide was Chang Hong, a fifth-grade student."[178] That evening, after attending their final formal banquet in the P.R.C., which was hosted by the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee, "Premier Chou and Committee Chairman Chang Ch'un-ch'iao then accompanied the President and Mrs. Nixon to a cultural program of acrobatics in the Exhibition Hall."[179]

After officials from both countries formally announced the communiqué's completion, Ziegler then briefed Nixon about early wire reports, which showed American media sources "treating it on a pretty straight basis not overly enthusiastic."[180] As a reminder "of how complex and perhaps necessary an endeavor such a diplomatic solution might be," the new document's creation had taken many hours of negotiations, with Kissinger and Qiao Guan-hua "working together far into the nights"; however, while "crafting the text was an ordeal" for Kissinger, Zhou, and their staffs, "Nixon and Mao were presented with drafts and simply signed off on them."[181] At the banquet held on the last evening of the president's visit, the Premier promised to continue work toward improving relations between the two countries.[182] "This magnificent banquet marks the end of our stay in the People's Republic of

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[178] Ibid.; Reeves, *President Nixon*, 455.

[179] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1972*, 366.

[180] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Sunday, February 27, 1972, 422.

[181] Reeves, *President Nixon*, 451; Adam R. Seipp, "Shaking things up; Margaret MacMillan gives lively account of maneuverings that brought Cold Warriors together," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World*, *The Houston Chronicle*, February 11, 2007, 16; Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76.

[182] Sydney Liu article, 28.

China," Nixon said in his toast that night. "'We have been here a week. This was the week that changed the world.'"[183] Before concluding his remarks, he also added:

> The joint communique which we have issued today summarizes the results of our talks. That communique will make headlines around the world tomorrow. But what we have said in that communique is not nearly as important as what we will do in the years ahead to build a bridge across 16,000 miles and 22 years of hostility which have divided us in the past.[184]

Before leaving the P.R.C., Nixon presented his hosts with official gifts from America; these included: "a pair of musk oxen and two large redwood trees from California," an assortment of "silver bowls, cigarette lighters, or cuff links with the presidential seal," and "ceramic models of American birds."[185] In reciprocation, the Americans were to expect two pandas, a traditional gift from the Chinese rulers "meant to signal a peaceful relationship."[186] An interesting aspect of this entire affair from a diplomatic and geopolitical standpoint would be to consider that at the same time that the administration provided the American press corps members with "details about Milton and Mathilda, the pair of musk oxen" Nixon presented his new friends, "Kissinger was quietly giving the Chinese the fruits of American intelligence," providing "classified information on Soviet military operations" and "about the state of discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union."[187] As the world at large perceived the situation, however, the Nixons had charmed their hosts and the

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[183] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1972*, 379; Reeves, *President Nixon*, 455.

[184] Ibid., 380; Ibid.

[185] MacMillan Mao-Tai article.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Wigod article, F8; Hoover article, E-6.

televised images of their sightseeing tours had captivated audiences around the globe.[188]

By approving and signing the Shanghai Communiqué, "Mao had publicly approved a Chinese dialogue with the United States, or a pledge of continuing negotiations with a country he had long castigated as the 'imperialistic' enemy of 'peoples of the world.'"[189] America's allies expressed "almost unbridled glee. The trip was covered extensively on European television and in the press, and both journalists and government officials made no bones about their enthusiasm over the developments in Peking."[190] That week had been an excellent example of "terrific theater…it was mesmerizing. No one cared the visit was largely symbolic and light on content. It was great symbolism at play."[191] As the president headed back to America via Anchorage, Alaska, from Shanghai, "Nixon became concerned about the conservative reaction" to his recent work "after he saw a negative press report in the [*Washington*] *Post*, which made 'a big point of the sellout of Taiwan'"; further study of later reports, according to Haldeman, showed "the general press was not playing it that way, and that we were really in very good shape."[192] Those against the idea of association with the communists, such as Patrick Buchanan, remained "very negative on the whole thing"; even though Kissinger tried his best to sway Buchanan's position, Haldeman wrote, "it didn't apparently do any good, since Pat stayed

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[188] Betsy Ochester, *Richard M. Nixon* (New York: Scholastic Inc., 2005), 67-9.

[189] Martin article, 17.

[190] "The Peking Summit as Others Saw It," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 28.

[191] Faison review, 8.

[192] Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, entry dated Monday, February 28, 1972, 423.

negative."[193] Regardless of such reactions, the trip had been a resounding success, which led not only to "the establishment of a U.S. mission in China," but also paved the way six years later, under the James Earl Carter administration, for fully established diplomatic relations between the two countries.[194] In the coming decades, Nixon's opening with the P.R.C. that spring in 1972 would subsequently become known as one of his finest accomplishments.[195]

On February 28, 1972, President Nixon landed at Andrews Air Force Base, officially ending his historic trip.[196] He had earned a seven-point gain in his overall approval rating, but after the Nixon administration's media spectacular concluded, average American families quickly resumed their own life adventures.[197] As most citizens had little time to ponder the possible long-term consequences of their leader's recent foreign affairs venture, they soon simply focused their attention back on their own personal struggles and/or on the next big news story the networks beamed into their homes.[198] In the following weeks, however, Nixon's advisors began making predictions that by "November 'the statesmanlike glow left over from Peking,' if accompanied by an end of the war, would carry Nixon to reelection."[199]

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[193] Ibid.

[194] David J. Lynch, "A trip that changed history; Book chronicles Nixon's seminal visit to China," a review of Margaret MacMillan's *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World*, *USA TODAY*, March 12, 2007, 4B; Humes, *Nixon's Ten Commandments of Statecraft*, 38; Ochester, *Richard M. Nixon*, 67-9.

[195] Ibid.

[196] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1972*, 367; Reeves, *President Nixon*, 458.

[197] Greenberg, *Nixon's Shadow*, 276-77; Pat McLeod interview; Jean McLeod interview.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Greenberg, *Nixon's Shadow*, 277; "After the Moscow Primary," *Newsweek*, June 12, 1972, 21.

With his successful visit to the P.R.C. thus ended, one might conceivable ask what the media executives who had invested so much time and effort in this venture thought at the conclusion of the president's fantastic journey. All the preparations had "been carefully tailored by the White House to keep the spotlight on the principals and away from any diversions"; an offer by the State Department to supply the entourage with an expert on Chinese culture had been spurned, and Nixon had chosen to forego extending invitations to either Senator Mansfield or Republican Leader Hugh Scott to accompany him, both of whom had studied Chinese culture. However, what many had already commented on stayed a proven fact—multiple network executives had been labeled as technicians for the journey, with NBC's press contingent including "a London-based news producer, a news vice president, a Tokyo radio production manager and a New York producer."[200]

Other factors played into the quality and substance of footage captured for the viewing pleasure of the domestic audiences. When the newsmen filmed "at factories, managers made prepared speeches filled with impressive statistics and praise for Chairman Mao's thought," [yet they] "were suddenly shy when it came to answering questions."[201] "People spoke in shades of gray," Ted Koppel remarked. "Nobody dared admit to a personal goal or aspiration. It was all about serving the country."[202] As Press Secretary Ziegler also continuously reiterated that information discussed between Nixon and the Chinese leadership remained restricted, high profile

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[200] "Now, in Living Color from China," *Time*, February 28, 1972, 12.

[201] MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 275.

[202] "Pre-Nixon China was drab copy of today's economic power," *East Valley Tribune* (Mesa, Arizona), March 6, 2007.

newscasters like Cronkite and Walters found themselves filling valuable airtime with simplistic humanistic stories, ranging from schoolchildren to acupuncture techniques. NBC's John Chancellor complained about the lack of adequate transportation for foreign correspondents, but CBS's Dan Rather, wandering along the public streets, managed to complete a good report concerning Chinese women.[203] The vagueness of such stories was not long lost on the American population. At CBS's New York studio, Ross Terrill, a young China scholar, quickly answered specific cultural or historical questions, with quite clear and easily understood explanations, while the celebrity anchors in the field looked both foolishly unprepared and embarrassingly uninformed. By Thursday, Richard Salant voted against airing a live broadcast of the Forbidden City tour, because as he stated, "I just thought…we'd had enough picture postcards the previous day from the Great Wall."[204]

Due to the secrecy of the actual summit talks, the national media's reporters had either been forced to formulate their own news, or had opted to follow Mrs. Nixon around Beijing as she conducted her various sightseeing adventures.[205] Koppel, who later served as a senior news analyst for *National Public Radio* (NPR), remembered, "It was, in those days, a profoundly depressing country. Except for the occasional splash of red provided by the Chinese national flag, everything else seemed to be a dirty, dull gray."[206] After also delving into the local culture, Reasoner

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[203] Joseph Morgenstern, "TV: An Eyeful of China, A Thimbleful of Insight," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Hugh Sidey, "A President wrapped in an enigma," *Life*, March 3, 1972, 12.

[206] Renee Montagne and Steve Inskeep, "When Nixon Went to China, Cameras Went Along," *National Public Radio* (NPR), February 21, 2007.

deemed the country "puritanical" after he discovered no X-rated movies existed in China, and Cronkite, when viewing a display of the impressive 40-mm rocket's power by members of the PLA, commented, "that display has a particular poignancy for some of us here at CBS…because it was that weapon that killed George Syvertsen and Jerry Miller, our colleagues, in Cambodia…that very weapon."[207]

Regardless of its uniqueness and majesty, interest in the President's historic journey to the P.R.C. soon waned.[208] After a few days, despite revealing instances of Potemkin-esque touches by the Chinese hosts, the viewing public had simply digested all the information it was going to absorb about Nixon's adventure inside the P.R.C. And, regarding the upcoming election cycle, as an article in *The New Yorker* concluded, "the payoff in American political terms appears to have been made in the first few days."[209] While viewers may have watched and enjoyed the President and First Lady's exploits from afar, the journalists on assignment had worked themselves into a state of frustrated fatigue.[210] Max Frankel, of *The New York Times*, who spoke on several radio programs, in addition to supplying his paper's lead stories in a column entitled "A Reporter's Notebook," averaged only two and a half hours of sleep a night. He, "who wore two watches, one for Peking time and one for New York," explained, "'the only trip I can remember that was as grueling as this one…was LBJ's round-the-world swing in 1967.'"[211] "As the relentless pace of

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[207] "China Meets the Press," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26.

[208] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 15.

[209] Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington: February 27, 1972," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 105.

[210] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 15.

sightseeing went on," the Americans began to exhaust themselves, and their collective "reports, especially those of conservatives such as William Buckley, took on a sardonic edge."[212] The top network personnel, "who had gotten themselves listed as ordinary reporters, found themselves pressed into service to carry lights," and while "Dirck Halstead…found that he was managing on bourbon and about one hour of sleep a night," he soon also heard his despairing Chinese assistant plead, "'Please, Mr. Dirck, you must get some sleep! You will die if you don't!'"[213] Due to Mao's government having graciously provided one interpreter to guide and assist each pair of journalists, the language barrier had been somewhat alleviated for the hardworking news crews; however, while this was fine with most of the press corps members, more independently minded reporters disliked these arrangements; Theodore White was overheard grumbling, "It's like having a possessive wife."[214]

Only a few days into the coverage, "there began to develop a certain feeling that the form outweighed the substance…[and] the U.S. press contingency soon began to complain about the lack of 'hard news.'"[215] As the Nixon administration failed to provide "daily press briefings and there was virtually no hard news about what was taking place in the high-level discussions," this prompted NBC's John Chancellor to state, "Never before had an American President traveled abroad in

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[211] "China Meets the Press," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26; Hugh Sidey, "A President wrapped in an enigma," *Life*, March 3, 1972, 12.

[212] MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 275.

[213] Ibid., 275-76.

[214] "China Meets the Press," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26.

[215] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 15.

peacetime under such a cloak of secrecy."[216] To some observers, this reflected, "a symptom of the administration's paranoid and dismissive attitude toward a media corps it nonetheless monitored with a gimlet eye."[217] A somewhat disgruntled representative of *Newsweek* replied, "Here we are at one of the most critical junctures in postwar history…and the American people are getting no idea of what is likely to happen or even what is being discussed."[218] Reporters had no choice but to continue their vigils, waiting "for hard news to seep out of the closed-door meetings."[219] After covering Mrs. Nixon's kitchen tour, one reporter fumed that "instead of meat and potatoes, we're getting a few hors d'oeuvres," and John Chancellor publicly voiced his own frustrations during a prime-time appearance by remarking, "The American people…are getting no real information at all."[220] While the president's recent diplomatic actions inside Red China eventually got reported in a favorable light by the press, Patricia Nixon also left an excellent public impression as a "First Lady who talked to every Chinese she met as an equal and showed an intense interest in learning about China"; she "was a big hit everywhere she went."[221]

The adventure had been an excellent opportunity to study cultural differences. On one occasion, the Premier asked Nixon, "Don't you think we eat soup?" after he

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[216] Erik Spanberg, "'Nixon and Mao': the handshake felt round the world," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World* by Margaret MacMillan, *Christian Science Monitor*, March 27, 2007, 13; MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 274.

[217] Ibid.

[218] "China Meets the Press," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26.

[219] Greenberg, *Nixon's Shadow*, 276-77.

[220] "China Meets the Press," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26.

[221] Sydney Liu article, 28; "China Meets the Press," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26; Barron, *Richard Nixon*, 78-9.

noted Nixon's surprise that the "Chinese used spoons as well as chopsticks."[222] Before February 1972, many Americans thought "China was a sort of outlaw among nations, she snarled at the rest of the world and evinced such contempt for it that many who spoke of the desirability of bringing her back into 'the family of nations' began almost to dread the day when this might happen."[223] Like Nixon, the foreign journalists covering this weeklong adventure had been learning about this alternate society; their impressions soon appeared in popular magazines, such as the article printed in *Time*, which noted, "the emphasis on the work ethic points up one of the key realities of life in the land of Mao. Despite the social upheaval created by the revolution, there still is much of the old Middle Kingdom in China today."[224] A contributor to *U.S. News and World Report* also remarked, "China at the present time has arrived at a stage, as Chairman Mao calls it, of the remarkable result of the people now having a bowl of rice a day. In other words, there is no longer famine in China, but nonetheless the standard of living is still exceedingly low."[225]

As both countries began expressing interest in renewing "officially sponsored people-to-people contacts," one U.S. official explained the importance of such cultural exchange programs by stating, "The Chinese have a distorted view of America. Some of the leaders may have knowledge of this country, gained from intensive briefings, but they seem to have little understanding of what makes the U.S.

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[222] Herman review, 3.

[223] Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington: February 27," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 105.

[224] "Life in the Middle Kingdom," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 32.

[225] "The Hard Bargainers Facing Nixon," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 21.

tick. Continuing visits by many Chinese would help correct this."[226] By 1972, while some Americans suspected the Chinese had started to outgrow "their xenophobia and their paranoia," one contributor to *The New Yorker* believed his fellow citizens had also begun to change their own belief systems, by "casting aside the myths that have cost us so dear over recent decades."[227] While the recent visitors to the P.R.C. gleaned revealing cultural insights from their stay, the Chinese people themselves had gotten their own lessons in cultural awareness from this historical event. Before Mao's decision to invite Nixon, Chinese society had been quite Xenophobic; "She bred a paranoid generation, renounced much of her past, tossed much of her culture on the trash heap, and disposed of those who showed even the least sign of remorse about all this"; however, the Chinese had "done a remarkable job of nation building since 1949."[228]

After February 1972, major alterations to presumably solid worldviews became clearly evident. Nixon's journey had ended, but newly opened diplomatic ties eventually led to a better understanding between the two formally bitter enemies. Although the Nixon administration remained secretive about the official content of the plenary sessions while the president had been in the P.R.C., colorful televised broadcasts had still enlightened the average Americans as to what life was like behind that bamboo curtain. Working within their restricted circumstances, the journalists, despite a lack of extensive prior knowledge of the Chinese, produced viable segments for the viewing pleasure of their domestic audiences back home. A sort of Asian

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[226] "What Nixon will find in China," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 14, 1972, 24-5.

[227] Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington: February 27," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 105.

[228] Ibid., 109.

mania soon took over in the U.S. It suddenly became quite fashionable to eat food prepared in woks, and/or for average American citizens to emulate the dress and other cultural elements of the Chinese they had seen reflected in their television sets.[229] Over time, more citizens from both nations journeyed around the world for their own first-hand looks at the other mysterious society. Nixon's journey to Beijing proved a major step toward the development of "full diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China," and the results are clearly visible "absolutely everywhere today."[230]

[229] Alex Chadwick and Madeleine Brand, with Julia Mitric, "A Visit with San Francisco's 'Wok Lady,'" interviewing Ms. Ting Chan, *National Public Radio* (NPR), February 22, 2007.

[230] Ibid.

Conclusion

"Surely the trip is one of the most daring diplomatic exploits of modern times," *Christianity Today* reported.[1] The entire world watched as President Nixon's February 1972 odyssey unfolded. His journey to the People's Republic of China "was one of those rare political coups that seemed utterly impossible beforehand and unavoidably logical afterward."[2] As one journalist put it, "For more than a century America's relations with China have veered sharply between feelings of love and hate–with hate being the dominant emotion since the Communists seized the mainland in 1949."[3] Nixon received the expected amount of "press criticism and complaints from the right that he had sold out Taiwan, but the more universal reaction to the Summit was enthusiastic approval."[4] His supporters stood by their man, however, as they "trusted him as they would nobody else on the subject of China. If Nixon said it was all right on this one you know it's gotta be alright."[5] While a Louis Harris survey soon provided proof of the average citizen's loyalty and faith by showing "that 73 per cent of the American people approved of the trip," the venture even earned the President positive treatment from the Democratic-controlled Congress, as members "granted Mr. Nixon a ten-day grace period on his return to

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[1] "Nixon, China, and Religious Freedom," *Christianity Today*, February 4, 1972, 20.

[2] Faison review, 8.

[3] "Nixon: I Will Go to China," *Newsweek*, July 26, 1971, 17.

[4] Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*, 368.

[5] William Safire, ABC News.

consider new legislation."[6] In the month following his historic journey, it became clear at least one of Nixon's fellow citizens appreciated his overseas attempts toward achieving greater world peace. The letter printed in *The New Yorker* read:

> If things go sour, Nixon will be in a fair position to disown responsibility. No one will be able to say that he failed to walk the extra mile; he flew twenty thousand miles, talked peace and brotherhood for a solid week, and conducted what must have been the most spectacular effort in personal diplomacy in history.[7]

On the conservative front, while Pat Buchanan still wanted to resign his position, as he "did not agree with the Shanghai Communiqué" and thought his boss "had sold out to the communists in China–a theme that dominated conservative journalism and comment as soon as the trip ended," William F. Buckley, who had written "'Veni, Vidi, Victus'–we came, we saw, we were conquered" in the *National Review*, was also busily "organizing conservatives to 'suspend support' of Nixon because of his recent China trip."[8] By August 1972, "a number of conservative businessmen close to California Governor Ronald Reagan signed a public statement expressing great concern about Nixon's détente policies."[9] Even though his discontented "conservative allies criticized him for abandoning his principles," Nixon, having fully realized "the *Cold War* would get colder without talks," had followed through with his original plans and accomplished the politically

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[6] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 15.

[7] Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington: February 27, 1972," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 105.

[8] Reeves, *President Nixon*, 433, 459.

[9] Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*, 303.

controversial diplomatic journey.[10] Congressional Democrats expressed "somewhat grudgingly praise [for] the way Mr. Nixon handled himself on his trip"; one of his top political foes remarked, "Somehow at that distance he looked different. When he was over there he was 'one of ours' and we have to admit that he did darn well."[11] As for his opponents then "campaigning in the New Hampshire and Florida primaries, they found themselves almost entirely upstaged by the President's activities.… In short," as *Newsweek* reported, "everyone's attention was focused on China."[12]

When taking into account the timing and importance of this historic event, one might easily question the possible ramifications Nixon's decision had brought home for China's nearest neighbors. It is only natural that modern readers would wonder just how officials in these nations reacted to his journey. An important fact to remember, *as U.S. News & World Report* mentioned at the time, is that there was a new "awareness, spreading all across the Far East, that a new kind of Asia is being shaped by events flowing out of Peking—and that every country in that big, important area is bound to be affected."[13] This highly publicized Nixon decision, most probably his crowning achievement while in office, played well across international lines. Most of America's allies approved of his new geopolitical work and seemed "to recognize the intelligent preparation the presidential party made; sumptuous banqueting in public was not inconsistent with plain talk in private."[14]

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[10] Andrew Halcro, "Palin should follow Nixon's example," *Anchorage Daily News* (Alaska), April 22, 2007, J2.

[11] "Washington Whispers," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 6, 1972, 10.

[12] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 15.

[13] "After Peking Talks-New Shape of Asia," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 6, 1972, 16.

Reactions to media coverage captured that week quickly materialized from around the world. While one French newscaster urged his countrymen to "watch these scenes carefully…for they will figure in your grandchildren's history books," a writer for Frankfurter, Germany's *Allgemeine Zeitung* insisted the "structure of international affairs is being reshaped…. The switching of the center of conflict from Europe to Asia represents the true end of the second world war"; while further to the East, the "Scinteia, the independent-minded Rumanians" located in Bucharest, called Nixon's trip "an important, positive act," one Israeli diplomat also happily remarked, "For the first time in twenty years…the U.S. has outmaneuvered Moscow–and in a big way, too."[15] Other responses to the Nixon media spectacular ranged anywhere "from Albania's outrage to Canada's approval"; "South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, New Zealand, and Australia," who all enjoyed "defense treaties with the United States…wondered what the [new] American commitment now meant."[16] South Koreans feared "the U.S. might make a deal resulting in removal of U.S. military forces" then protecting their sovereignty, but inside Pakistan, a country recently "humbled by India in war and torn by internal unrest," officials, wishing for no additional troubles, simply wanted to ensure their citizens received "renewed aid from China and the U.S."[17]

A former French Premier named Edgar Faure reacted to Nixon's startling move by stating, "It is not possible to envisage an equilibrium limited to three

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[14] "The Peking feast," *Life*, March 3, 1972, 32.

[15] "The Peking Summit as Others Saw It," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 28.

[16] MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 288.

[17] "After Peking Talks-New Shape of Asia," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 6, 1972, 16.

countries of which two are Communist"; he also remarked, "there is also Japan, perhaps India, and then above all Europe. It becomes urgent to organize a genuine European diplomacy."[18] As for Great Britain, one American diplomat reported, because the president's decision had hurt Prime Minister Edward Heath's sensibilities so severely that "'he never really recovered' from Nixon's not informing him on such major policy," he subsequently turned his attentions toward "improving Britain's relationship with the European Union."[19] Great Britain reopened full diplomatic communications with the P.R.C. on March 13, 1972.[20]

In Indochina, official comments by the South Vietnamese on the American president's recent diplomatic move were "restrained, but coffee shops in the capital were abuzz with talk that the U.S. might, in effect, be willing to sell South Vietnam down the river in order to strike a deal with China."[21] Various other allies of the P.R.C., "such as North Korea and North Vietnam," countries where national leaders tended to lean "toward the Soviet camp" for guidance, "watched with alarm but muted their criticisms for fear of alienating their giant neighbor."[22] On the same day Nixon arrived in Beijing, the North Korean government located at Pyongyang "announced the departure of its Foreign Minister for high-level talks in Moscow."[23]

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[18] Wilson article, 662.

[19] MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 288.

[20] Leonard, Cuppen, and Aronson, *Day By Day*, 230.

[21] "The Peking Summit as Others Saw It," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 28.

[22] MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 288.

[23] "The Peking Summit as Others Saw It," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 28.

Many people around the globe also waited to see how Taiwan would officially react to this rapidly altering geopolitical situation.

When Mao personally discussed Chiang with Nixon in 1972, he told the American president, "The history of our friendship with him is much longer than the history of your friendship with him."[24] That relationship had certainly proven itself difficult and fear-ridden. In fact, by 1965, the Mainland Chinese had already waited sixteen long years, constantly on guard, because they believed Chiang and his new U.S. allies planned to attack them. Marshal Zhen Yi reportedly "told the international press 'my hair has turned grey in waiting.' But World War III never came."[25] While Nixon visited the mainland, "except for angry pronouncements from various government organs, life in Taiwan went on quite normally."[26] In only a few weeks, the Generalissimo "received '99.9 percent of the votes,' [and] won re-election to the presidency of Nationalist China for "his fifth consecutive six-year term," which "solaced the conservatives by symbolizing stability and continuity amidst the vast changes" occurring abroad.[27]

On February 21, the first day of Nixon's stay in the P.R.C., the Assembly of Nationalist China "voted to express criticism of his visit."[28] While Secretary of State William Rogers hurriedly assured leaders in Taiwan "that the U.S. will stand by its

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[24] Nixon, *Leaders*, 241.

[25] W. A. C. Adie, "'One World' Restored? Sino-American Relations on a New Footing," *Asian Survey* 12, no. 5 (May 1972): 372. [Hereafter cited as Adie article].

[26] Jacobs article, 103.

[27] Leonard, Cuppen, and Aronson, *Day By Day*, 234; Jacobs article, 105.

[28] Leonard, Cuppen, and Aronson, *Day By Day*, 222.

commitments to defend the island against any mainland attack," in a *Newsweek* article, Zbigniew Brzezinski predicted the situation would "certainly prompt [the Nationalist government's] international isolation, if not fall."[29] Although *The New Yorker* printed Robert Shaplen's "Letter from Hong Kong," which stipulated, "The Chinese Nationalists in Taipei have, of course, protested loudly against the American move toward Peking," relations between that nation and the U.S. continued to appear solid.[30] "Government leaders and the wealthy were clearly worried" by Nixon's recent trip; however, according to sources on the island, the mood in the country "appeared to be one of anxiety but not outright alarm…only one demonstrator carrying a hand-scrawled placard reading 'Nixon–the Traitor' showed up to protest in front of the American Embassy."[31] While Foreign Minister Chow Shu-gai publicly remarked, "The United States has assured us there will be no deals at our expense, and we must take Washington at its word," *U.S. News & World Report* also informed its readers there remained "a measure of despair in Taipei—aggravated by frustration. Yet the lid has been clamped on any public expression of anti-Americanism."[32]

In the first few years of his presidency, although Nixon sought to lessen tensions between the U.S. and the P.R.C., to the extent of even ending patrols by the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Straits, his official visit certainly marked "a low point in

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[29] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Substance and Style," *Newsweek*, August 9, 1971, 41; "Hazards Along the Road to Peking," *Time*, August 2, 1971, 14.

[30] Robert Shaplen, "Letter from Hong Kong," *The New Yorker*, July 31, 1971, 63.

[31] Jacobs, 102-3; "The Peking Summit as Others Saw It," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 28.

[32] "Deepening Gloom in the 'Other China,'" *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 22.

the falling diplomatic fortunes of the Taiwan Nationalists."[33] The political tide had "risen against the Nationalist regime," as evidenced by their first losing "their seat in the United Nations to the Chinese Communists," and then, over subsequent months, officials there watched as "country after country…shifted diplomatic ties from Taipei to Peking."[34] "American support of Taiwan has been and will continue to be a bone in the throat of Peking," wrote William J. Richardson in *America*, "and must either be swallowed or coughed up before any real working agreement can be reached between the United States and the People's Republic."[35] Even though Mao's government had "repeatedly declared the issue a Chinese affair, and that no foreign intervention into the matter would be tolerated," Kissinger later reported he had told "the Chairman: I do not believe that this [the Taiwan issue] is a fundamental obstacle at this time to the normalization of our relationship."[36] Zhou Enlai certainly had "his eyes always on the main issue—[he] knew that the new relationship with the United States was more important than prevailing on the issue of Taiwan."[37] The subsequent joint release of the Shanghai Communiqué signaled for the entire world "the start of a new level of

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[33] Snow, *The Long Revolution*, 181; Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington," *The New Yorker*, August 7, 1971, 78; "Deepening Gloom in the 'Other China,'" *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 22.

[34] "Deepening Gloom in the 'Other China,'" *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 22; Chiu, *China, Seventy Years after the 1911 Hsin-Hai Revolution*, 529-30. According to Chiu, both Chinese nations received approximately equal support in 1971, but the number of positive allies began to deteriorate after Nixon visited Mainland China. Chou reported that by February 1973, while 85 countries recognized the leadership in Peking, Taipei only retained the support of 39 countries; by 1981, the P.R.C. had firmly established relations with 122 nations, while the ROC remained supported by only 22 fellow nations.

[35] William J. Richardson, "President Nixon's China Trip," *America*, August 21, 1971, 85.

[36] Ibid., 87; Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy*, from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearings on the Nomination of Henry A. Kissinger to be Secretary of State, Washington, September, 1973, 232.

[37] Nixon, *Leaders*, 235.

Sino-U.S. relations and saw the U.S. indicating a withdrawal from Taiwan would eventually occur."[38]

Following the important U.N. vote of 1971, many nations altered their diplomatic practices regarding Taiwan and Beijing. According to *Life* magazine, "The real success or failure of the Peking mission may not be visible for months or years, when it will be manifest in responses to events yet unforeseen. A long march has indeed begun."[39] However, "the shifts in the international kaleidoscope are only beginning," commented W. A. C. Adie in his May 1972 *Asian Survey* article.[40] An earlier edition of *U.S. News and World Report* had also already mentioned, "The shape of all Asia, influenced in large measure by the U.S. ever since World War II, is being changed in ways that will have profound effect on every major power for years to come."[41]

The relationship between Taiwan's Nationalists and the Japanese soon came into question; even though Japan was "its most important supporter and trading partner after the U.S.," a Foreign Ministry senior official told newsmen because many in his country now believed Chiang's government's only authority rested on Taiwan, his nation would most likely soon shift official recognition to Beijing.[42] On January 7, 1972, Sato stated, "I have not been able to trust fully the United States since the

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[38] Leonard, Cuppen, and Aronson, *Day By Day*, 224.

[39] "The Peking feast," *Life* 72, no. 8 (March 3, 1972), 32.

[40] Adie article, 366.

[41] "After Peking Talks-New Shape of Asia," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 6, 1972, 14.

[42] Appleton article, 33.

sudden announcement of the President's plan to visit China."[43] Unhappy with their prime minister's policies, "the Japan Communist Party (JCP)…demanded his resignation as well as Japan's immediate recognition of the People's Republic."[44] "Even if the U.S. remains firmly behind the Nationalists," a senior Japanese diplomat commented, "there is a very great danger that Japan will recognize Peking."[45] Members of the Parliament's lower house soon favored the establishment of formal relations with Beijing, and normal trade became disrupted, as "all but one of the Japanese shipping companies involved in the lucrative Taiwan trade canceled their regular schedules."[46] "It would be a strange bargain to lose Japan (having just recently jeopardized our relations with India) for the sake of initiating a dialogue with Peking," noted *Newsweek*'s Brzezinski.[47]

Because his authority had been so publicly undermined, Prime Minister Sato ultimately "resigned in the summer of 1972 and was replaced by Tanaka Kaknei, who moved rapidly to open up Japan's relations with the People's Republic of China."[48] After this major shift in leadership occurred, the nation's new U.S./China foreign policy was summed up "in one sentence: Japan would proceed with normalization of Sino-Japanese relations 'at its own discretion' while keeping the United States

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[43] Gene T. Hsiao, "The Sino-Japanese Rapprochement: A Relationship of Ambivalence," *The China Quarterly,* no. 57 (January–March 1974): 107. [Hereafter cited as Hsiao article].

[44] Ibid., 102-03.

[45] "Deepening Gloom in the 'Other China,'" *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 22.

[46] "The Long, Bumpy Road to Peking," *Newsweek*, August 2, 1971, 15.

[47] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Fortune-Cookie Diplomacy," *Newsweek*, February 14, 1972, 46.

[48] MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 295-96.

appropriately informed."[49] Japan not only soon "sent missions to Hanoi and to Pyongyang and invited Brezhnev to Tokyo," but Nixon's trip had created such antagonism between Japan and Taiwan "that Japan Air Lines soon felt it necessary to take special precautions against sabotage on every flight to and from Taiwan."[50] After Tanaka's government officially recognized "China's sovereignty on Taiwan" by renewing ties with Beijing and severing those with the Nationalists in September 1972, this allowed the new "bilateral relations to flourish in subsequent years."[51]

In India, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi reacted to Nixon's foreign policy designs by emphasizing her government would "not allow China and America to decide what should happen in Asia."[52] Gandhi, a Soviet ally, considered Mao Zedong and his government the enemy, and "openly expressed the fear that the Peking summit was designed 'to forge some sort of a new power group'"; her stern admonishment: "India will not be bound by any decision which seeks to dictate terms to Asian countries," clearly reflected her deep concern.[53] Historically, there had been no love lost between Nixon and Gandhi. He had disliked her since he concluded "she had not treated him with proper respect during a trip to the subcontinent before he became president."[54] In fact, Kissinger noted that some of his boss's "comments about Indira Gandhi were 'not always printable,'" as Nixon personally "despised her,

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[49] Hsiao article, 112.

[50] Overholt article, 713, 715.

[51] Qingxin Ken Wang, "Taiwan in Japan's Relations with China and the United States after the Cold War," *Pacific Affairs* 73, no. 3 (Autumn 2000): 353, 355.

[52] "After Peking Talks-New Shape of Asia," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 6, 1972, 16.

[53] "The Peking Summit as Others Saw It," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 28.

[54] Melvin Small, *The Presidency of Richard Nixon* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 107.

and he distrusted Indian policy statements."[55] Because the renewed cooperation represented a possible threat to "India's new status as the major power in South Asia," India's leader warned both "the United States and China not to think they could collude in South Asia."[56] When questioned about "where Indo-U.S. relations went wrong after the talk all those years of an American desire to rely on India as a counterpoise in Asia to China," Gandhi answered she supposed "U.S policy towards India changed when 'U.S. policy towards China changed.'"[57] Many people soon suspected the new India-Soviet friendship treaty, formerly "announced on August 8, 1971, [came] as a partial response to Nixon's [own] announcement of Chinese-American rapprochement the previous month."[58]

Gandhi's Russian allies certainly disapproved of the American commander-in-chief's ambitious diplomatic activities. "The…sight of President Nixon and of Chairman Mao conferring together should give the Kremlin leaders food for thought––and the food may be spicier than a fortune cookie," remarked *Newsweek*'s Brzezinski.[59] As the P.R.C.'s newest favorite enemy, the Soviets expressed unhappiness about the recent geopolitical affairs. While Kremlin officials "branded the Peking talks as part of an 'anti-Soviet conspiracy by the U.S. and China and took the occasion to focus fresh attention on the heavy American bombing in Indochina,'"

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[55] Anthony Summers, with Robbyn Swan, *The Arrogance of Power: The Secret World of Richard Nixon* (New York: Viking, 2000), 163.

[56] Ibid.; MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 288.

[57] Overholt article, 709.

[58] Small, *The Presidency of Richard Nixon*, 107.

[59] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Fortune-Cookie Diplomacy," *Newsweek*, February 14, 1972, 46.

it is also interesting to note that one *Newsweek* article reported, "some Soviet diplomats in the West hinted that the trip had sparked a review of the Kremlin's own China policy," and that "a few leaders close to Communist Party boss Brezhnev had begun to urge him to take a softer line toward Peking."[60] *Izvestia*, a Russian government newspaper, covered the Beijing arrival in two sentences, and evening news programming out of Moscow only "devoted about 30 seconds to the President's meeting with Chou En-lai."[61]

The Cold War mentality of the West included the assumption that Mao's "China was an obedient underling to the Soviet Union"; if Nixon reached a rapprochement with the Chairman, he also then "effectively weakened the Soviet position in the global play."[62] In actuality, the Russians had been experiencing difficulties with their southern *brothers* since the official Sino-Soviet split in 1961; by 1969, as they "claimed that the Chinese [had already] invaded their border regions on at least ninety occasions," leading to "periodic armed conflict" and "skirmishes that resulted in scores of casualties," the Soviets understandably expressed concern in 1971 when they learned their "uneasy Marxist ally…with a population of almost a billion" had openly welcomed the American leader.[63] The hostile activity along the P.R.C.'s northern border meant that by "1970, China actually feared a Soviet invasion

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[60] "The Peking Summit as Others Saw It," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 28.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Peter Moreira, "Nixon's diplomacy in China: History," a review of *Nixon In China: A Week that Changed the World* by Margaret MacMillan, *National Post* (Canada), November 11, 2006, WP20.

[63] Small, *The Presidency of Richard Nixon*, 100; Adam R. Seipp, "Shaking things up; Margaret MacMillan gives lively account of maneuverings that brought Cold Warriors together," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World*, *The Houston Chronicle*, February 11, 2007, 16; Humes, *Nixon's Ten Commandments of Statecraft*, 37.

and was ready to end its isolation."[64] During Nixon's visit, the Premier told him that "tension between China and the Soviet Union…had reached the point that the Chinese were requiring families to dig underground shelters and the government was linking them together in a network to survive Soviet bombing."[65]

Bearing this information in mind, one understands how Mao believed he "desperately needed advanced western technology for his dilapidated military industry," and how the Chairman's own surprising diplomatic move seems to have met an end by serving as "a means of chilling Soviet designs in Asia."[66] Because both Nixon and Kissinger also believed any further elevations of Soviet power in Asia represented "far more of a threat to U.S. security than Mao's gospel of a people's war," while Nixon continued to withdraw "U.S. forces to the rim of Asia, [he also remained]…convinced that the key to peace in the region [lay] in an understanding with China."[67] After Nixon concluded his visit to the P.R.C., Brezhnev accused the Chinese of approving "an immoral foreign policy and cited the Shanghai Communiqué…as supporting evidence; in his view, because each party had stated its own position without defining a common stand [this] made the whole document unprincipled."[68]

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[64] Norman Rowlinson, "First full account of Nixon's entree to China," review of Macmillan book, *The Buffalo News* (New York), March 18, 2007, G4.

[65] Reeves, *President Nixon*, 453.

[66] Jon Halliday, "Review: History: Charm offensive: Nixon's meeting with Mao was an exercise in realpolitik, says Jon Halliday: Seize the Hour: When Nixon Met Mao by Margaret MacMillan," *The Guardian* (London), November 18, 2006, 9; Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76.

[67] "The Summit: Great Expectations," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 52.

[68] Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War*, 290.

When one remembers Nixon's historic trip occurred while American military personnel were engaged in combat in Asia, one might ask how this visit and relations between the U.S., P.R.C., and U.S.S.R. governments all related to that troubling situation. In late December 1971, the U.S. had "bombed supply complexes in North Vietnam south of the 20th parallel for two days, to editorial and Congressional outrage," but Kissinger later wrote, "No reply was received from China cautioning us—in itself a significant sign of dissociation by what had been considered until then the capital of world revolution."[69] Because American officials realized that "during the 1950s and early 1960, China [had been] Hanoi's most enthusiastic backer," they interpreted this muted response from the P.R.C. as meaning that nation's leadership now remained "far more concerned over Soviet expansion into South Asia than it is fearful about the U.S. cranking up the war in Vietnam."[70]

In formal discussions that February 1972, Zhou informed Nixon and Kissinger that China continued to sympathize and support the North Vietnamese efforts, but he also implied his nation "would not take sides in the continuing negotiations" or "intervene militarily in the conflict."[71] Because support from the P.R.C. had already been marginalized due to limited resources, Kissinger later noted Mao's government had "rejected any effort to 'enmesh' it in Indochina. Beijing was in effect washing its hands of the whole affair; Hanoi was on its own."[72] After Mao became "impatient

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[69] Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War*, 229.

[70] "What Nixon will find in China," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 14, 1972, 25; John W. Garver, "Sino-Vietnamese Conflict and the Sino-American Rapproachment," *Political Science Quarterly* 96, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 447. [Hereafter cited as Garver article].

[71] Ibid., 459.

[72] Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War*, 238.

with Hanoi," he "tossed its leaders a simple suggestion: Sign a peace treaty, regroup until after most Americans have left and then roll in."[73] As Nixon's journey concluded, a *U.S. News and World Report* article stated the president remained hopeful that a friendlier P.R.C. might "use its influence to speed release of American prisoners in North Vietnam"; regardless of changes in policies emanating from within the P.R.C., the Soviets in Moscow persisted in their support of "Hanoi's position but without fervor."[74] Though they initially supported Hanoi's efforts, as time passed, the leaders in both Beijing and Moscow became increasingly restless on the entire issue, but "neither wanted to be perceived as derelict in its duty to its North Vietnamese ally, lest it lose support in the rivalry within the Communist world"; even though the P.R.C. and the U.S.S.R. had offered the regime patronage in previous years, by 1972, both of these nations appeared "more than ready to make America an ally."[75]

The Nixon administration continued its involvement in Indochina, but because the president's recent "trip frightened the Russians and the North Vietnamese," this triggered fears in Hanoi that "they were in severe danger of being sold out by their larger allies."[76] The North Vietnamese, in their official comments, "flashed anti-Peking signals…. While not specifically accusing China of collusion with the U.S., Hanoi declared that Washington was guilty of 'dark plotting to carry out continued

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[73] Faison review, 8.

[74] "Nixon in China: Who Stands to Gain Most," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 14; Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War*, 239.

[75] Jack Smith, ABC News; Menand, "Chaos under Heaven," 76; Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War*, 238.

[76] Overholt article, 709.

neocolonialist war.'"[77] In fact, leaders there reportedly "turned apoplectic at the sight of their main enemy shaking hands with their supposed patron in the north."[78] Nixon's venture prompted angry rebuttals in both "the Hanoi party paper *Nhan Dan* and in the central organ of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front, *Gia Phong*"; while *Nhan Dan* "warned that Nixon 'has gone to the wrong place…. The time when the imperialists lord it over the world is definitely gone. The time when the big powers browbeat smaller countries is ended for good,'" contributors to "*Gia Phong* added: 'The destiny of Vietnam must be decided by the Vietnamese people themselves.'"[79]

At the time Nixon initially took office, this Vietnam conflict had already "claimed the lives of 30,000 U.S. soldiers and more than one million Vietnamese"; by 1970, the struggle had also "become the longest military engagement in American history."[80] In June 1972, although Nixon publicly announced that "no new draftees would be sent to Vietnam" and began troop withdrawals, he remained "the sworn enemy of antiwar protesters."[81] By the time of his re-election that November, although "half a million U.S. troops" had been involved in Indochina, all the efforts still showed "no light at the end of the tunnel"; by 1972, those involved had "dwindled 'to just 16,000 non-combatant "advisers" active in Vietnam.'"[82] While the

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[77] "The Peking Summit as Others Saw It," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 28.

[78] Faison review, 8.

[79] Thee article, 66.

[80] Power Plays video; Márquez, *Richard M. Nixon*, 60.

[81] Barron, *Richard Nixon*, 79; Power Plays video.

[82] Anatole Kaletsky, "For Nixon, read Bush. For China, read Iran. It could change the world

region ultimately fell a few short years later to the communist insurgents, the domestically destructive Watergate scandal ended Nixon's official concerns about such foreign affairs issues.

Believing the major China initiative represented "old news," the three major American networks soon became obsessed with providing continuous live coverage of the Watergate scandal's lengthy and tedious proceedings. For children and teenagers accustomed to viewing after school and early evening programming, this was a terrible situation. "I remember watching all those old men, with their buzz haircuts and dark suits, on our family's black and white television set," Patsy Jones recalled.[83] She added, "They just sat around asking questions for hours."[84] "I was still a bit too young to appreciate the political implications, but I remember how it interfered with my TV viewing," author Terry Mirll commented. "Those were the days before most folks had cable, and so there wasn't a lot to choose from—three or four TV channels, tops. So for weeks on end, there was nothing on any of the channels except Watergate hearings, Watergate hearings, and more Watergate hearings. Who cared about E. Howard Hunt, G. Gordon Liddy, or John Dean III? I wanted *Columbo*!"[85]

This domestic debacle not only left disgruntled viewers in its wake, but also assured Nixon a page in every future American history book discussing important events of the late twentieth century. Incredibly, after all the anti-war protest activities

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Again," *The Times* (London), November 16, 2006, 25; Gergen, *Eyewitness To Power*, 90.

[83] Jones interview.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Mirll interview.

and national social bickering that had occurred regarding the American involvement in Indochina, this particular news story actually had the power to mute "public response to the news that at long last America was leaving Vietnam."[86] Although the U.S. maintained "an interest in the independence of Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, and it would continue to hold a protective nuclear shield over Japan as well as retaining close economic relations with that country," an article in *U.S. News and World Report* stated, "The hope is, however, that the vital American interests in Asia could be preserved at far less cost and with much less intense commitment, financially and militarily."[87] People around the world soon realized: "China did not pressure North Vietnam to make major concessions to end the Vietnam War on terms favorable to the United States," the U.S. did not openly advocate the abandonment of Taiwan's ruling government or suggest a forced "return to mainland Chinese rule," but the powerful U.S.S.R. of 1972 did eventually disintegrate.[88]

As shown in the previous examples, President Nixon's gutsy but controversial decisions of 1971 and 1972 caused major changes to occur in many nations. As a member of the Republican party, and described as being both ambitious and managerial, Nixon climbed his country's political ladder of power while espousing a vehemently anti-Communistic viewpoint. This fact made it highly ironic it should be his administration that reached détente with Mao's communistic P.R.C. in 1972. After Nixon responded to an official invitation to visit the P.R.C. in February of that year,

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[86] Power Plays video.

[87] "After Peking Talks-New Shape of Asia," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 6, 1972, 14.

[88] Joseph Kahn, "Four Visionaries With Cloudy Visions," review of *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World* by Margaret MacMillan, *The New York Times*, February 28, 2007, 8.

he became the first American commander-in-chief to visit a country not then recognized by his government.[89] Stunning many across the country, Mr. Nixon's plans symbolized quite a drastic shift in established foreign policy patterns. During the two decades before he assumed the presidency, thousands of military personnel had fought and died for nationally espoused democratic ideals to prevail in both Korea and Vietnam. Now, when their most recently and duly-elected president spoke of peace in Asia, many citizens hoped such a historic meeting between Nixon and the Chinese Chairman would alleviate tensions between the two countries.[90]

Prior to his journey, Nixon often stated his fervent desire for world peace, and as spring 1972 approached, he emphasized his administration's hopes for "identifying the points where the interests of the two nations can be merged or at least reconciled."[91] He knew one visit could not possibly heal the rift caused by over twenty years of mutual animosity and suspicion, but he firmly believed through meetings with the P.R.C.'s leadership that a working dialogue might be re-established.[92] He actually owed a great debt to the hard work and cooperation of both Kissinger and Zhou. Without their dedicated efforts in establishing an agenda for his visit, Nixon's successful foray to Mainland China would never have occurred.

Despite his fully realizing the invitation would possibly aid Nixon's "campaign as the 'peace candidate'" in the next American election cycle, Chairman

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[89] Mackerras, *Western Images of China*, 98; "Middle America to Middle Kingdom," *Time*, February 21, 1972, 8; Grolier, *The American Presidents* (Danbury, CT: Grolier Incorporated, 1992), 176-77.

[90] "After Peking Talks-New Shape of Asia," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 6, 1972, 14.

[91] John Osborne, "Packing for Peking," *The New Republic*, February 19, 1972, 13; "To the Summit in Peking," *Newsweek*, February 28, 1972, 9,12.

[92] "To the Summit in Peking," *Newsweek*, February 28, 1972, 9,12.

Mao had also allowed the historic visit.[93] True, this represented a bold and extraordinary move on his part, but the Chinese leader showed no aversion to such generosity. By spring 1972, the new direction in political winds had already proven themselves favorable to the P.R.C.; even before the president's plane landed in Beijing, Mao's government managed to win possession of the coveted United Nations assembly seat away from Chiang's regime on Taiwan.[94] It is also interesting to note that by early February 1972, despite all the planning which obviously went into preparing the president's way to Beijing, officials at the White House had still provided the American public with little substantial information about what the event would actually entail. This, of course, runs counter to the more modern concept of open media coverage, but that was the essence of the Nixon administration.

Nixon later wrote that during their "last long session in the guest house in Peking, the Premier told him, 'You have risked something to come to China.'"[95] Commenting on how his guest's personal political record "showed great defeats, victories, and comebacks," Zhou also told Nixon, "adversity is a great teacher and that men who travel on a smooth road all their lives do not develop strength"; regarding these sentiments, Nixon later wrote: "From one who had endured the Long March, I considered that to be an unusually high compliment."[96] In February 1972, at the conclusion of his stay in the P.R.C., Nixon stated, "There is not reason for us to be

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[93] "The Long, Bumpy Road to Peking," *Newsweek*, August 2, 1971, 14.

[94] "Nixon in China: Who Stands to Gain Most," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 28, 1972, 13-14; "Peking Spectacular," *The Nation*, August 2, 1971, 67.

[95] Nixon, *Leaders*, 236.

[96] Nixon, *In the Arena*, 12.

enemies," and Zhou had also proclaimed, "The gate to friendly contact has finally been opened."[97] After many hours of negotiations, the U.S. and the P.R.C. successfully issued a joint communiqué. In an issue of *The New Yorker*, Richard H. Rovere wrote the finished product pleased:

> just about everyone but the Nationalists on Taiwan and certain Maoist factions outside China. The only large disagreements were over the war in Vietnam and the unreadiness on our part to extend diplomatic recognition to Peking. On most other matters, understanding was reached.[98]

That important week in February 1972, both President Nixon and Premier Zhou had continuously chimed the same theme—"their nations had common geopolitical interests to offset conflicting ideological beliefs."[99] "Although still a relatively poor country," *Newsweek* noted at the time, "China has elbowed its way into the world's big-power club"; the article further stated, "under the pragmatic leadership of Chou En-lai—and prodded by fears of the Soviet Union—Peking has now launched an ambitious diplomatic offensive as well."[100] "As China grows in power," Ross Terrill predicted, "her ambitions will increase…. China will not always be in a condition of relative weakness…having 'stood up,' China is likely to 'stretch out.'[101] After all the hard work by diplomats on both ideological sides, and after American and Chinese national media sources provided hours of exciting coverage

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[97] "After Peking Talks-New Shape of Asia," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 6, 1972, 14.

[98] Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington: February 27, 1972," *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1972, 105.

[99] "Nixon in China: The First Steps of a Long March," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 23.

[100] "After Mao: Can the Revolution Go On?" *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, 54.

[101] Adie article, 382.

for their interested citizens, the adventure had ended well. The entire world now understood future communications between the U.S. and the P.R.C. promised to be both open and cordial.

By even initially considering a journey to China, Nixon had risked his political credibility; but by March 1972, just a few months before American voters would once again elect an executive officer, the entire trip had proven itself a successful gamble.[102] A writer for *Newsweek* noted Nixon had never undertaken "a major political or diplomatic sally that won him so many favorable press notices as last week's 'journey for peace.'"[103] The Chinese "may well have calculated," a contributor to *The Nation* also reflected, "that only a President elected with the support of conservative and right-wing elements could afford to go even this far in reaching an understanding with them."[104] As he returned home that spring, Nixon realized his recent diplomatic attempt had been successful. He also thought this fact would aid his campaign efforts later that fall; as an astute politician, Nixon certainly understood that he could potentially collect rich political rewards for his having accomplished productive summit talks with the powerful Mao Zedong.

Despite Nixon's recent and daring move in foreign affairs, his administration faced continued hostility from both its usual critics and anti-war protesters, but "as the partisan mudslinging so a part of American politics began once again, the president found himself taking political shrapnel from all directions"; he clearly

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[102] Lovell, *The Great Wall*, 327.

[103] "China Meets the Press," *Newsweek*, March 6, 1972, 26.

[104] "Peking Spectacular," *The Nation*, August 2, 1971, 67.

recognized the general 'antiwar movement threatened his chances for reelection.'"[105] Though "he had virtually eliminated the draft" and been "slowly withdrawing troops from Vietnam, still he was the sworn enemy" of protesters, such as Jane Fonda, who proclaimed: "American people don't like to be lied to. The man who is at the head of our country is not telling us the truth."[106] Regardless of such vocal opposition and "his unpopularity in the press, Nixon successfully ran for a second term," and defeated his Democratic rival, Barry Goldwater, "in one of the greatest landslides in American political history"; however, the Watergate scandal all too soon caused his ultimate downfall.[107] "All politicians have been known to have wily ways…to get things and learn things about their opponents," Patsy Jones stated. "Unfortunately for Nixon, he just got caught up in all that mess."[108]

After many long months of severe political difficulties, Nixon finally told his chief of staff, Alexander Haig, he "would resign but it would be with dignity and with no rancor"; the former president remembered commenting, "Well Al, I really screwed it up, didn't I?" but then noted, "He didn't have to answer."[109] In his final address as acting president, Nixon stated:

> We have unlocked the doors that for a quarter of a century stood between the United States and the People's Republic of China. We must now ensure that the one-quarter of the world's people who live in

[105] Barron, *Richard Nixon*, 79; Power Plays video.

[106] Power Plays video.

[107] Sam Fogg, "The Story of Richard Nixon: His Political Career," *The Houston Chronicle*, August 9, 1974, 1; PBS; Ken Towery, *The Chow Dipper* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1994), 281.

[108] Jones interview.

[109] Richard Nixon, PBS.

> the People's Republic of China will be and remain not our enemies but our friends.[110]

After the camera lights dimmed that evening, the president and his family made their final preparations for leaving the White House and returning to California. The former commander-in-chief later remarked: "There is no way that you could apologize that is more eloquent, more decisive, more finite, or to say that you are sorry, which would exceed resigning the presidency of the United States."[111] As his official service to the nation neared its conclusion, Nixon still believed in helping the average working men and women of America. As one of his final acts, he "signed legislation extending a program of special aid for the jobless in high unemployment areas and providing cost-of-living increases in benefits for aged, blind and disabled persons."[112]

On August 9, 1974, Don Irwin's article in *The Houston Chronicle* pointed out that "never—until the Watergate scandals drove the Nixon administration to its inglorious end—has a President been forced out before a term expired."[113] In Washington and around the country, many politicians blamed Nixon for his own downfall. They believed "he could have deflected the entire scandal at the outset merely by declaring he would get to the bottom of the break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters and deal summarily with anyone in his

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[110] "The Story of Richard Nixon: Text of Nixon's Farewell Address," *The Houston Chronicle*, August 9, 1974, 8.

[111] Richard Nixon, PBS.

[112] "The Story of Richard Nixon: One of Nixon's Last Acts Extended Aid to Jobless," *The Houston Chronicle*, August 9, 1974, 5.

[113] Don Irwin, "The Story of Richard Nixon: His Life," *The Houston Chronicle*, August 9, 1974, 1.

administration who might be involved."[114] Back in the former president's hometown of Whittier, California, citizens gave an inquiring reporter mixed reactions about Nixon's official resignation. While one housewife named Nancy Ward commented, "I thought it was coming, thought it was for the best. I feel sorry for him but that is the way it is," a man named Robert Durham remarked, "I think it is a good thing. He has had a rough go in the press. Resignation is the healthiest thing for the country and the economy."[115] Years later, Walter Cronkite also stated that Watergate had once again proven "that it's not the original sin but the cover-up that gets our politicians or any of us into trouble. People understand making mistakes, but they don't understand lying about them afterwards."[116]

Regardless of how powerful or influential someone is in life, it is only a matter of time before his or her official policies become altered by the next generations. As noted earlier, neither Mao nor Zhou was a young man in 1972. Though "Mao was a sickly old man" when he talked with Nixon for that historic hour in February 1972, he had still been "the most powerful leader of the most populated nation on Earth. He could snap his fingers, and his troops would kill thousands of people."[117] By 1974, however, while Mao had continued to maintain his political viability and "reportedly developed the Three Worlds theory, his thoughts concerning the then developing international situation," Nixon had resigned his office in

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[114] Sam Fogg, "The Story of Richard Nixon: His Political Career," *The Houston Chronicle*, August 9, 1974, 1.

[115] "The Story of Richard Nixon: Folks in Nixon's Home Town Believe He Got Bad Deal," *The Houston Chronicle*, August 9, 1974, 5.

[116] *Cronkite Remembers*. CBS News Production, CBS Video, 1997.

[117] Barron, *Richard Nixon*, 78.

disgrace.[118] In 1976, when his loyal Chinese Premier "lay dying, Mao, who for years had been largely a recluse, went to the hospital" and "was the last person except Zhou's doctors to speak with him."[119] Until his own death later that same year, "Mao remained the pivotal force in China."[120] Within four years of President Nixon's initial journey to the P.R.C., both the Chairman and his Premier had passed away, and "a new regime more inclined to economic rather than ideological goals took over."[121]

In early November 1993, Nixon again visited the P.R.C. Surveying his surroundings, the former president commented: "'The growth of this place is really unbelievable. And you know,' he said quietly, 'I like to think that I had something to do with it.'"[122] For modern visitors to the P.R.C., living in an era "in which Chinese cities are populated by Starbucks, Buicks and Pizza Huts, it can be difficult to recall just how shuttered and remote the country once was."[123] It is important to remember that when Nixon's entourage arrived in Beijing, the Chinese "did not even have a copying machine. Today, they make millions of computers. Instead of denouncing American imperialism, China adopted a new slogan: 'To get rich is glorious.'"[124] By 1994, years after the deaths of Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou, Nixon still fervently

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[118] Rodzinski, *The People's Republic of China*, 231.

[119] Nixon, *Leaders*, 237.

[120] Nixon, *1999*, 247.

[121] Hoover article, E-6.

[122] Monica Crowley, *Nixon in Winter* (New York: Random House, 1998), 159.

[123] David J. Lynch, "A trip that changed history; Book chronicles Nixon's seminal visit to China," review of Margaret MacMillan's *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World*, *USA TODAY*, March 12, 2007, 4B.

[124] Norman Rowlinson, "First full account of Nixon's entree to China," review of the Macmillan book, *The Buffalo News* (New York), March 18, 2007, G4.

believed it remained in America's best interests to retain a healthy relationship with China. "The Chinese have long memories," he wrote. "We must not poison the friendly relationship we risked so much to establish when we opened the door to China twenty-one years ago."[125] Following Mao's death, his political successors instituted far-reaching reforms, which have allowed China to experience great economic success; in 2006, the nation reportedly ran a trade surplus of $260 billion with the U.S.[126] While these changes caused the disappearance of famine and deprivation on a mass scale, according to one recently published account, the art of repression is still being practiced in China, which "may, in the end, be what remains of Mao's legacy."[127]

In February 1972, as part of his desire to achieve new levels of world peace and diplomatic stability, Nixon traveled to the communistic P.R.C.[128] This important foreign affairs move eventually not only paved the way toward successfully ending American troop involvement in the Vietnam War, but it also occurred prior to the domestically explosive Watergate scandal, which destroyed Nixon's political career.[129] After the former president passed away in New York City in 1994, millions around the world watched a live broadcast of his funeral proceedings.[130] Some of the memorial statements deserve recognition for their uniqueness. Robert Dole, a

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[125] Nixon, *Beyond Peace*, 133.

[126] "Nixon's visit; boosts China; Richard Nixon," *The Gold Coast Bulletin* (Australia), November 11, 2006, 66.

[127] CBS News Transcripts.

[128] Frank Freidel, *The Presidents of the U.S. of America*, ninth ed. (Washington, D. C.: White House Historical Association, 1982), 79.

[129] Ibid.; Calkins, *The Story of America*, 335.

[130] Grolier, *The American Presidents*, 176.

Republican from Kansas, proclaimed: "Whereas, because of his efforts as President to improve relations with the then-Soviet Union, to bring China out of isolation, and to forge peace in the Middle East, Richard Nixon more than earned the title of peacemaker."[131] While the comments printed in the official record included, "I believe history will treat Richard Nixon well and with much interest," and "While his Presidency will be debated for years to come, any person sharing his time could not escape his reach, from his international efforts in China, Vietnam, and the former Soviet Union, to his national efforts of revenue sharing, rebuilding our cities, and protecting our environment," Kissinger, the former president's valued assistant, spoke the following words at his former boss's funeral service: "He dared confrontations…he bore with some pain the disapproval of long-time friends and allies over relaxing tensions with China and the Soviet Union."[132] Adding his thoughts as a voice-over for the televised coverage that day, Nixon biographer Stephen Ambrose also publicly remarked: "He became not just an elder statesman. To everyone's amazement except his, he's our beloved elder statesman."[133]

When asked about this particular president, many Americans easily recall the endless hours of televised hearings they watched from their living rooms, or perhaps visualize once again the moment on August 8, 1974, when they witnessed Nixon's

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[131] U.S. Congress, Senate, *Memorial Services in the Congress of the United States and Tributes In eulogy of Richard M. Nixon Late a President of the United States*, Hon. Robert Dole of Kansas, Monday, April 25, 1994, as part of Senate Resolution 206–Relative to the Compilation of Eulogies on the life of Richard M. Nixon, Former President of the United States, in Memorial Tributes in the Senate of the U.S., In eulogy of Richard M. Nixon, 36.

[132] Ibid., Hon. Paul D. Coverdell of Georgia, Wednesday, June 8, 1994, 60; Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, at the State Funeral for President Richard Nixon, 1913-1994, Wednesday, April 27th, 1994, Four o'clock in the afternoon, at the Richard Nixon Library & Birthplace, Yorba Linda, California, 6.

[133] Stephen Ambrose, during Richard Nixon's official State Funeral coverage, ABC News, 1994.

resignation speech.[134] Younger Americans may simply state *Watergate* or not even recognize Nixon as a former U.S. president if questioned about him.[135] It is indeed a rare person who gives Nixon credit for his China initiative's valuable contributions to world history.[136] In late February 1972, President and Patricia Nixon visited the People's Republic of China. While Nixon cautioned the American public about unrealistic enthusiasm and optimism before he left on his epic journey, and while he fully understood that significant differences in worldviews were not likely to simply vanish, he clearly realized and "emphasized peace depended on major powers having the capacity to communicate in a non-confrontational manner with one another about their differences."[137] Inside negotiation rooms in Beijing that week, American and Chinese officials successfully reopened diplomatic channels, and the possibility for real peace in the region became more concrete.

A large press contingency, working eighteen-hour days, followed the Nixons' every step. Many observers recognized that the commander-in-chief had risked his entire political career by attempting such a venture, because the controversial concept ran completely at odds with formerly established national foreign policy patterns. In retrospect, the Nixon administration made several mistakes in choosing who would be allowed to travel in their entourage to Mao's domain. That spring, although American network executives sent their top anchors to cover the exciting, groundbreaking event, few, if any, of those chosen to accompany the president had extensive personal

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[134] Pat McLeod interview; Jean McLeod interview.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Freidel, *The Presidents of the U.S. of America*, 79.

[137] Schulte, Jr., *Facts on File Yearbook 1972*, no. 1629, January 16-22, 32.

knowledge of either Chinese culture or history. Domestic audiences soon realized the substantive explanations for what they were viewing on their television screens were actually emanating from a handful of Sinologists who had been left behind in the U.S. The president's well-established practice of maintaining high personal levels of secrecy when conducting his personal affairs also played a part in this unfolding geopolitical drama. In efforts to protect the integrity of the world leaders' discussions from dilution, the network coverage suffered; this meant U.S. viewers were ultimately provided with long-distanced flash and hype, rather than stories based on true substance.

In only a few years, contact between the U.S. and the P.R.C. increased dramatically, and the troubling Vietnam experience had concluded. Unfortunately, by this time, American domestic troubles had also destroyed Nixon's presidency. In 1974, when remarking about the scandal that led directly to his resignation, Nixon remarked: "The way I tried to deal with Watergate…is a burden that I shall bear for every day of the life that is left to me."[138] On April 11, 1993, former president Nixon commented:

> I will be known historically for two things—Watergate and the opening to China. One bad, one good. It's not fair, considering that we worked so hard on so many other things like détente with the Russians, the war on cancer, the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency]…but those two things are going to stand out, and that's the way it is.[139]

Former President Gerald Rudolph Ford believed, prior to Nixon's Watergate troubles, "his breakthrough to China was his major achievement, and he was justifiably proud

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[138] Lindop, *Presidents Who Dared*, 23; Doris Faber and Harold Faber, *American Government: Great Lives* (New York: Scribner's, 1988), 203.

[139] Crowley, *Nixon in Winter*, 158.

of what he had accomplished. He was riding high, at his pinnacle."[140] In 1997, a few years after Nixon's death, Walter Cronkite also publicly acknowledged the former president's accomplishment in February 1972 by stating, "The Nixon trip to China was one of the great diplomatic moments of all time. It was an act of great political courage."[141] Through all of Nixon's many personal achievements, and often fully televised shortcomings, average Americans and members of the national media had waited, watched, and then tried to decipher the meanings behind his often quite controversial political moves.

After the networks had broadcast images of his retreating helicopter, and America had welcomed his successor, President Ford, into the White House, Nixon's second tumultuous term finally ended. As for his treatment during the Watergate scandal, Nixon reflected in 1990 that, "It was not enough for my critics to say that I had made terrible mistakes. They seemed driven to prove that I represented the epitome of evil itself."[142] When he left Washington on August 9, 1974, climbing "aboard a helicopter for a ride to the airport and a flight home to San Clemente, California," Nixon commented, "Always give your best. Never get discouraged; never be petty; always remember, others may hate you, but those who hate you don't win unless you hate them, and then you destroy yourself."[143] William Safire, a former Nixon era speechwriter, has since noted, "The Nixon administration with all its mistakes did some wonderful things, started some wonderful things, and Nixon as a

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[140] Cannon, *Time and Chance*, 117.

[141] *Cronkite Remembers*. CBS News Production, CBS Video, 1997.

[142] Goldman, *Richard M. Nixon*, 129.

[143] Márquez, *Richard M. Nixon*, 90.

man I think redeemed himself at the end."[144] The former president had certainly possessed a unique personality, which Safire later described by providing a piece of seven-layer cake analogy; he commented, "If you're going to take a piece of Nixon, it's not fair to work along one layer. You just gotta take your fork, and go right down that whole cake. And take the bitter with the sweet."[145] Whether those that served under him considered him a hard gem, as in H.R. Haldeman's case, or as a lump of soft dessert, as in the Safire analogy, Charles Colson remembers his former boss as "a very hard-driving brilliant demanding visionary kind of leader. When he was bad, he was really bad, and when he was good, he was great."[146]

After suffering a major stroke, Richard Milhous Nixon passed away in New York City on April 22, 1994, at the age of 81.[147] During his presidential terms, he accomplished both important domestic and foreign policy objectives. Under his administration, America achieved détente with Chairman Mao Zedong's Chinese communists. Inheriting the Oval Office after several of his Democratic presidential predecessors had deeply involved the American military in Asian affairs, Nixon thought the time had come for his country to have the courage to take the first precarious steps toward better diplomatic stability in that region. Despite obvious ideological differences between the U.S. and the P.R.C., the new American president concluded he needed to actively pursue some type of peaceful negotiations with Mao's government.

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[144] William Safire, ABC News.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Charles "Chuck" Colson, ABC News.

[147] Grolier, *The American Presidents*, 176; Lindop, *Presidents Who Dared*, 23.

Richard Nixon remained focused on progress for America throughout his presidency. In his "First Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy for the 1970s," he had already been thinking about overtures to the P.R.C.'s leaders, because on February 18, 1970, he stated, "The Chinese are a great and vital people who should not remain isolated from the international community. In the long run, no stable and enduring international order is conceivable without the contribution of this nation of more than 700 million people."[148] When presenting his second report on February 25, 1971, he noted that, "each of the major powers of the Pacific region—Japan, the USSR, the People's Republic of China, and the United States—is faced with difficult decisions in adjusting its policies to the new realities of East Asia."[149] The following year, on the night of January 20, 1972, only a few weeks before he began his historic journey to the P.R.C., Nixon made the following remarks in his State of the Union address:

> America has an important role to play in international affairs, a great influence to exert for good. As we have throughout this century, we must continue our profound concern for advancing peace and freedom, by the most effective means possible, even as we shift somewhat our view of what means are most effective.[150]

In what he believed would be in the best long-term interests of the American people, Nixon took a most historic and dramatic diplomatic step during the early 1970s. By accepting Chairman Mao Zedong's invitation in mid-1971, and by disregarding the domestic opposition to his China initiative, and the many blatant

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[148] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1970*, 181; Nixon, *RN*, 545.

[149] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1971*, 268.

[150] Nixon, *Public Papers: 1972*, 44.

personal criticisms he received in the popular press, the American president bravely reached out his hand and successfully reopened the fragile lines of communication with the communistic P.R.C. in 1972. After Richard Nixon made the courageous, albeit politically controversial, decision to attend the Beijing summit meetings in February 1972, many other countries then began to reexamine their own rigid Cold War perceptions about the People's Republic of China. The world has never been the same.

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