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The Chinese Communist regime stands in direct succession to an imperial tradition which consistently held that China, by virtue of her superior civilization, was entitled to take the pre-eminent position among her neighbors. Before the Western powers came to dominate the Far East in the 19th century, China's nominal empire extended to such areas as Korea, Mongolia, the Siberian maritime provinces, Tibet and Annam. Between 1840 and 1919 China was forced to accept the dismemberment of these territories from the empire. Mao Tse-tung echoed the traditional Chinese view in 1937 when he expressed to Edgar Snow his belief that China's historical relationship to these territories would be restored.¹ Having rejected Confucianism, it is nevertheless characteristic that the Chinese Communists, as Chinese, should regard their adopted Communist system as the new Chinese civilizing order which by tradition they must carry forward,

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eventually, beyond China's frontiers. Thus as a Communist, Mao in 1936 could also speak of his broader vision "to lead the Chinese revolution to its completion and also exert a far-reaching influence on the revolution in the East as well as in the whole world."²

Since 1949, Communist China has determinedly pursued policies in relations with her Asian neighbors which plainly seek to restore China's pre-eminence in the Far East and other powers' acceptance of this situation, which all Chinese would be inclined to regard as the natural and just order of things. For China's rightful position to be recognized, her leaders believe that all Western powers, particularly the United States, must leave the Far East. These Chinese Communist aspirations have been consistently opposed by American power since 1950 when the Korean War broke out. Moreover, since 1956 there have been increasing signs that the Soviet Union is also opposed to the Far Eastern pre-eminence of the Chinese state and the Chinese Communist Party. The influence exerted by the two super powers on China's Asian neighbors frustrates Peking's efforts to restore their acceptance of a China-centered political order.

Toward the Asian Communist movement beyond her frontiers, Peking has since approximately 1953 actively supported or maintained studied indifference to the fate of other parties depending on which course of action happened to advance the overriding aim of establishing the supremacy of the Chinese state. The present writer can think of no instance where China's leaders have placed their mission to advance Communism outside China above their more immediate, selfish, national interests.

Where Communist China has favorable state relations, as with Burma, Ceylon, Cambodia, Indonesia, and more recently Pakistan, the local parties have been left to cope with their own national and historical circumstances. Being both Chinese and Marxist, the Chinese Communist Party has a sense of history. Time, they believe, will bring communist parties to power in all Asian countries. The Chinese call for "revolution" in Asia should not be misunderstood or misinterpreted. That call is made with respect to particular countries and conditions: where "the imperialists" are present (i.e., Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, South Vietnam, Laos) and where native governments, as in the case of India, have adopted "anti-China" policies. One listens in vain for the strident Chinese call to "revolution" in any country that has made its accommodation with China's immediate national interests.

When the Chinese People's Republic was established on October 1, 1949, the prospects for restoring China's pre-eminence were more favorable than at any time in the humiliating century or more since Western domination in Asia began in 1839. The Japanese empire was destroyed. On February 14, 1950, the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship Alliance and Mutual Assistance for the first time secured China's northern frontiers against the threat of invasion and provided for aid to China against her main enemy, the United States, the sea power dominating the Pacific. With the Soviet alliance, moreover, China gained, also for the first time, the backing of a major Western power able (and then evidently willing) to promote the industrial development of China on which

all the new regime's aspirations ultimately depended. In South and Southeast Asia the withdrawal of Western power from India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, and Indonesia created new, weak states along China's frontiers. Largely deprived of their former Western military shield, these states could be expected in a short time to take their subordinate position in the Chinese scheme of things.

The Korean War marked the first watershed in Communist China's policies toward her neighbors. Until early in 1952, China's leaders had unswervingly adopted Moscow's thesis that the entire world was divided into two opposing camps: those supporting the Soviet bloc and those supporting the "imperialists."³ Down to 1952, therefore, China's leaders neither wanted nor enjoyed friendly relations with non-Communist Asian states, which were all regarded as supporting or ruled by "Western imperialists." Peking made little effort to conceal its opposition to them on ideological as well as political grounds and actively encouraged Asian Communist parties to follow "the path of the Chinese people" in seizing power.⁴ But the "Two Camp" thesis became outmoded as a policy guide after China entered the Korean War, when her objective interests were best served by normalizing relations with non-Communist states. By intervening in Korea Peking succeeded in driving the United States back from China's frontier and preserved the North Korean regime. It was, however, beyond China's strength to dislodge the U.S. forces from South Korea completely. By 1952 China's expenditures to maintain the military stalemate heavily burdened her economy on the eve of the

First Five Year Plan, begun late that year. When their industrial development program was launched, the Chinese leaders began to adopt a more conciliatory political stance towards possibly useful trading partners in Europe and Asia, some of whom had begun to express differences with the United States' Far Eastern policy.

The new line normalizing relations with Asian states took more definite political shape in April 1954 when China and India, Asia's two largest countries, signed an agreement on the status of Tibet. This treaty, which recognized Tibet as an integral part of China, formally declared joint Chinese and Indian advocacy of "the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence" to be the proper basis for relations between Asian states.⁵ China's sponsorship of the Five Principles, and her simultaneous efforts to improve relations with Japan, Indonesia, and Burma, brought widespread Asian acceptance of the view that Communist China wanted to improve her relations with all states and concentrate on peaceful internal economic development. As a result of the 1954 Geneva Conference settlement on Indochina, which the Chinese leaders helped to shape, China's state interests were advanced by: (1) the establishment of a Communist North Vietnam on her southern flank, and (2) the creation of weak states in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, where it seemed then that by peaceful means further Communist gains could be consolidated and Western influence completely removed.

In April 1955 Communist China scored a major diplomatic triumph at the Bandung Conference, attended by leaders from 29 Afro-Asian nations. The significance of China's

participation at the Conference was underscored by the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union were excluded. Furthermore, China's attendance demonstrated that she had broken loose from the U.S. effort to isolate her politically in Asia. The extent of China's independence of the Soviet Union was also revealed by some of Chou En-lai's statements, which seemed to pre-empt Soviet leadership in formulating a Communist-bloc policy toward non-aligned countries. At Bandung, Chou En-lai advanced a formula governing China's relations with her Asian neighbors, which the Chinese leaders believed they could turn into a peaceful but forward strategy. China pledged herself to live with her neighbors, to respect their different social systems, and to refrain from interfering in their internal affairs. Chou En-lai maintained that despite ideological differences Afro-Asian countries, including China, could be united in their common "struggle against imperialism."⁶ In effect the Chinese offered to renounce an active role in advancing Communist revolution abroad if Asian Countries would cooperate with the Chinese leaders in exerting political pressure on the United States and other Western powers to withdraw from the Far East.

After 1956, however, the Bandung formula proved to be successful only in relations with those Asian countries that could not decisively affect China's aspirations to pre-eminence: for example Burma, Ceylon, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Pakistan. China has not interfered in Burma's internal political life. In 1961 a Sino-Burmese agreement was concluded on terms long understood to be acceptable to the Burmese. For her part, Burma's foreign policy has shown

respect for China's broad strategic and political interests, for example in relation to the Sino-Indian border dispute, and foreign military and economic assistance. Cambodia (whose chief of state, Prince Sihanouk, appreciates better than most what is required of small neighbors seeking to accommodate resurgent Chinese power) established relations with Peking only in 1958 but has likewise consistently deferred to China in the full recognition that if North Vietnam's ambition to incorporate Cambodia is to be checked, China's friendship is indispensable. In April 1955 China concluded a dual nationality treaty with Indonesia which for the first time recognized the right of Chinese born abroad to take foreign citizenship. Despite Indonesia's subsequent harassment of Chinese nationals in 1959-1960, Peking has repeatedly acceded to the arbitrary decisions of the Indonesians on this question and, moreover, has given them economic assistance and political support. For Indonesia, unlike India, has emerged as the model of the kind of non-alignment the Bandung line was designed to encourage on an Asia-wide scale. From Peking's point of view, Indonesia is the only non-Communist Asian nation which since 1957 has consistently pursued an active "anti-imperialist policy," so as to weaken the Western powers and thereby indirectly support China's ambitions.

In the vital areas (Japan, India, and Indochina) where China must succeed if her pre-eminence in the Far East is to be established, the Bandung formula failed from the beginning to promote decisive reorientations away from the West and toward an acceptance of Chinese leadership. To a large extent the Bandung formula failed

because U.S. and Soviet policies, though in part differently motivated, undermined those of China. In the Chinese view both Soviet and U.S. policies toward Japan, India, and Indochina since late 1955 have been designed to promote the strengthening of resistance to Chinese influence. Peking expected American moves to counter her strategy, but the unfolding Soviet opposition to China does not appear to have been foreseen by the Chinese when they created the Bandung formula.

China's resentment of Soviet Far Eastern policies must have begun in 1956 when the Russians began to extend large-scale assistance to India, Burma, and Indonesia, evidently with a view to establishing Russian competition with China, as well as with the United States. By recognizing Japan in 1956 and subsequently pursuing an independent policy toward her, the Soviet Union in effect undermined the 1950 Sino-Soviet treaty, under which the two powers had followed a common policy of denying recognition pending Japan's reorientation away from the United States and her establishment of relations with Peking. Soviet implied criticism of China's stand in the dispute with India as early as 1959, and open criticism after November 1962, appears to have convinced the Chinese leaders that Russian Far Eastern policy is directed against China.

In Indochina it has been increasingly clear to the Chinese leaders that Soviet policies are also at cross purposes with their own. At no time after 1956 has there been really strong Soviet opposition to policies of the United States. Washington refused to accept an Indochina

solution based on Communist and weak neutralist states under strong Chinese influence, though this was the pattern of development implied by the French defeat and the 1954 Geneva Conference Agreements. The United States would not sign the Geneva Agreements and subsequently sought to block further expansion of Chinese influence by creating SEATO and undertaking economic and military assistance programs to South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The Soviet Union did extend limited assistance to the North Vietnamese Communists when they resumed revolutionary tactics in South Vietnam and Laos in 1959, following political setbacks in both countries as a result of pursuing nonviolent tactics. However, following the July 1962 Geneva Accords, which ostensibly neutralized Laos, and the intensification of Communist insurgency in South Vietnam, Soviet support of the Communist fortunes in Indochina noticeably declined as the Russians became aware that the real beneficiary of a Communist takeover in either Laos or South Vietnam would be Peking, not Moscow.

As early as 1954 Chou En-lai told visiting Japanese Diet members that China wanted to establish relations with Japan and to conclude a peace treaty but that these steps required a genuinely independent Japan (namely, a loosening of ties with the United States). As applied to Japan after 1955, the Bandung formula called for an end to ideological attacks on the Japanese government coupled with offers to solve outstanding problems relating to trade, the repatriation of Japanese prisoners-of-war, and fishing rights, on condition that diplomatic relations were restored.

Strong political and economic pressures developed in Japan for normalizing relations with China, but they were never sufficient to sway the government on crucial issues. The Japanese government proved beyond question that China's efforts to normalize relations were of secondary importance to Japan and could be ignored on occasion, as when, in 1958, it denied the first official Chinese trade mission permission to fly the Chinese People's Republic flag, and in 1960, despite considerable internal opposition, negotiated the revised U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. Both actions, predictably, brought forth virulent Chinese criticism. China's present and future interest in procuring capital goods and possibly credit from Japan, now that the Soviet bloc cannot be counted on, has forced her to accept unofficial trade and political contacts on terms that are set, essentially, by the Japanese. Whenever the Chinese leaders determine that their contacts with Tokyo can be broken, Japan's entire relationship with the United States could become the target of renewed Chinese pressure.

India's confidence in 1959 that she had both Soviet and U.S. support bolstered her determination to expel the Chinese from the disputed territory along the Tibet-Kashmir frontier, as soon as her armed strength would permit, rather than negotiate a compromise reflecting India's inferior military position. The Chinese leaders evidently began to lose faith in the possibility of securing concessions in Ladakh around the spring of 1962, when a "forward" military policy was set in motion and Indian posts became intermingled with Chinese in the Chip Chap

and Golwan valleys. Perhaps Peking gave up all hope of a purely peaceful solution on October 12, 1962, when Nehru, rashly and rather theatrically, ordered the army to drive out the Chinese from all territory claimed by India. The unprecedentedly violent Chinese attack of October 20 drove the Indians from their recently occupied position in Ladakh and penetrated the Northeast Frontier Agency in two places to a depth of forty or fifty miles. On November 21, Peking proposed a ceasefire and 12-1/2 mile withdrawal behind the line of "actual control" as of November 1959; proposals which she unilaterally began to implement on December 1, 1962, before any significant international support for India could take a concrete form. The political significance of the border war as a guide to China's policies toward her neighbors emerged on October 27 when Peking published "More on Nehru's Philosophy in the Light of the Sino-Indian Boundary Question," the foundation of a sustained ideological war against the Indian leadership and its foreign and domestic policies. In launching unrestrained ideological war on India, Peking served notice on its neighbors that the Indian brand of non-alignment and opposition to China's pre-eminence were policies that carried grave risks for those adopting them.

The political isolation of India became manifest when not one of her immediate neighbors echoed New Delhi's charges of "Chinese aggression." China further consolidated her political position against India by the conclusion of a "provisional" boundary agreement with Pakistan on March 2, 1963, followed by the first Sino-Pakistan trade pact and agreement to establish a commercial air link,

both signed in December of that year. These accords have significance because they portend possible long-range Sino-Pakistan cooperation to outflank India and further reduce her influence. Similarly, in Nepal, the Chinese continue to give economic assistance and to construct the road previously agreed upon that will ultimately link Lhasa and Katmandu.

Her pre-eminence established along the Indian frontier, China's attention since 1963 has focused on the neighboring states comprising Indochina. For nine years, in the Chinese leaders' view, they have watched with concern (and currently with alarm) the efforts of the United States to strengthen the 1954 Geneva Conference settlement by helping to create viable non-Communist regimes in South Vietnam and Laos. Since 1955 the Chinese government has consistently condemned political developments contrary to their interest, such as: (1) U.S. military and economic support to South Vietnam; (2) the former Diem government's refusal to hold elections in 1956 unifying North and South Vietnam, although the 1954 Geneva settlement called for them; and (3) American support to Laotian rightist and neutralist leadership in the political and military struggle to curb Pathet Lao domination of that country. Available evidence indicates, however, that the major impetus behind revolutionary action in Laos and South Vietnam comes from North Vietnam whose state interest would be advanced by communizing these areas. Peking, whose state interests do not require communization of Southeast Asia, could accept "neutralist" states in Laos and probably South Vietnam as well, provided their political coloration was similar to Burma, Cambodia and Indonesia.

As North Vietnam pressed armed revolution in both Laos and South Vietnam after the 1962 Geneva Accords, direct U.S. involvement also increased. In the absence of clear Soviet support for North Vietnam and its protégés the Chinese leaders have indicated that they will accept certain risks inherent in supporting North Vietnam rather than default on obligations to strategically placed allies or jeopardize their political position in the whole area by appearing to retreat before American power. But Chinese statements indicate that Peking's support of North Vietnam's actions is by no means unconditional. Given the present state of the insurgent operations in South Vietnam the Chinese may be more concerned that its success may provoke the United States to actions that threaten the security of the existing North Vietnamese state than they are about the long-range benefits that could result from the reunion of the two Vietnams under the Hanoi regime.

As this article is being written, the Chinese government has expressed alarm over the situation in Laos where the coalition government collapsed on April 19, 1964, following sustained Pathet Lao military pressures designed to enforce acceptance of Communist demands by the neutralist-rightist dominated cabinet. Laos is presently in a state of de facto partition between the Communist Pathet Lao (actively supported by North Vietnam) and neutralist-rightist forces largely dependent on the United States. The Chinese government has officially called for another 14-nation conference on Laos, and no longer regards the Souvanna Phouma government as legitimate.⁷ An outright Communist Laos is not essential to the interests of the Chinese state. But her interests,

as the present leadership seems to appraise them, do require that Communist gains be preserved in some form, and more important, that the United States should not emerge from any settlement in a position to influence events in Laos contrary to China's wishes.

What has emerged since 1959 is really two rather broad but distinct Chinese policies towards her neighbors: the Bandung line carried on in relations with those states which seek political accommodation with the Chinese state and do not join with either the Soviet Union or the United States to frustrate Chinese aims; and political warfare toward countries which, like India, Japan, Laos, and South Vietnam, in any way submit to or join with Peking's enemies and seek to rival or contain China's influence.

The basic obstacles to Chinese pre-eminence in Asia remain unchanged. The dominant powers appear to be in substantial agreement that despite her history, traditions, and vitality, resurgent China must be prevented from establishing a pre-eminence in Asia comparable to that obtained by the Soviet Union in East and Central Europe, and by the United States in the Western Hemisphere. By her policies toward India and Indochina in particular, it is apparent that the present Chinese leadership does not intend passively to accept Western supremacy in the Far East again in this century -- whether of Soviet or American making. Much of China's hostility toward Russia and America arises from a perception of these two powers as conspiring to frustrate China's legitimate ambitions at every point. It is a view colored by and expressed in Marxist-Leninist terms, but it is also basically Chinese

in its feeling. For the Chinese in this century, whether Nationalist or Communist, have discovered with great bitterness that neither the Western democracies nor the Western Communist states really want the Chinese nation to be restored to greatness.

FOOTNOTES

1. Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China, Random House, 1938, p. 96.
2. Mao Tse-tung, "Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War," December 1936. Selected Works, Vol. 1, International Publishers, (New York) 1954.
3. Liu Shao-chi, Nationalism and Internationalism, November 1, 1948. Foreign Language (Peking) 1951.
4. Liu Shao-chi, Inaugural Address to the Asian-Australian Trade Union Conference, November 23, 1949.
5. Sino-Indian Agreement on Intercourse between the Tibetan Region of China and India. April 29, 1954. NCNA, April 30, 1954.
6. China and the Asian-African Conference (Documents). Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1955, pp. 21-27.
7. Chinese Government Statement on the Laotian Situation, June 9, 1964. Peking Review, June 12, 1964, pp. 6-7.

