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A LOOK AT CHINA

Has China really changed, and, if so, is the new China a dependable ally? Since diplomatic relations were established in 1979, a rapid succession of policies have continued to increase our ties with the world's largest nation, containing one-fourth the population of the world.

Over two hundred American firms with approximately two billion dollars in investments are now doing business in China. The United States last year authorized the sale of five hundred fifty million U. S. dollars' worth of the latest radar, computers, and navigation aids to the Chinese air force, and conducted the first joint naval exercise with this long-time adversary. Two journalists have expressed directly opposite views of the situation in today's China. Charles Smith, in his "Down the Capitalist Road", stated that China was rapidly turning away from a communist society and becoming a more capitalist government every day. He believes that China will be the first communist state ever to revert to capitalism. He maintains further that the Chinese people, having enjoyed the benefits of a capitalistic society, will not give them up.

On the other hand, George L. Hichs says China is "Forever Red"; that as the movement toward more democracy and capitalism gain momentum, Party leaders launch a nationwide campaign against "civil and criminal disorder". In fact, any criticism of the Party is severely punished. An electrician named Wei dared to write on a wall in downtown Beijing: "Just ask yourselves, Chinese, workers and peasants, whose masters are you?"

Or what do you own? To spell it out is pitiful. Others are your masters-- a very small percentage of the hundreds of millions of people, the Party leaders. For this he was sentenced to fifteen years in prison.

In the face of these two opposing views, we shall take a second look at China's economic and political condition and the roads she may choose to take in the near future.

China, we do know, is altering its economic approach drastically. For twenty-eight years Mao made war upon the principles of a free economy, reducing it to shambles. He sought to prove that a billion people, if denied financial incentives, would work harder for the state than Westerners work for themselves. Instead of succeeding, by the time Mao died in 1976, production had plummeted; grain output was less than it had been two decades earlier, forcing China to spend about one billion dollars on food imports. Millions were unemployed, and the average income barely subsistent.

Mao ZeDong was born in 1893 in the Hunan province. He grew up in a rich peasant family, but rebelled against his father, left home, secured some education, and became a teacher. He was among the founders of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. He began to build an army by joining the forces of two bandit chiefs and training them into an efficient fighting force. He believed from the start that any human being could be remoulded into revolutionary material.

Mao studied the writings of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin and wrote many works of his own which culminated in several volumes including "The Thoughts of Mao" and "Sayings of Mao". These two volumes were required reading for all during the Cultural Revolution and the people were forced to recite them endlessly.

He was never in the University elite. He knew no foreign language and had no direct knowledge of the world outside China. He did know, though, how to discipline his troops and live off the peasants around him, using coercion and terror.

With a series of well-organized campaigns in the late 1940's, Mao and his generals swept through central China and defeated the exhausted and divided Nationalists, who retreated to Taiwan in 1949.

Thus China was altered to a Communist state. Mao is considered a genius in leading and disciplining troops, but a failure in administering a large and diverse state. Immanuel C.Y. Hsi described him, in his book "China Without Mao" as follows:

"As a revolutionary
Mao had few peers.
As a nation-builder
He was unequal to the task."

Mao's reign is divided into four periods of alternating consequences. His first five years were of reconstruction, and he closely followed Russian models. But fearing that his power and importance were slipping, he initiated his "Great Leap Forward" through which he ordered intensive cultivation, supplanting the peasants' ancient and time-tested methods. He ordered rice to be planted very close together and in rows too closely spaced. Peasants were taken from their plots and sent to work on collective farms. The plants failed to survive, or grew too tall and spindly and bore very little grain. These conditions were compounded by the worst drought since 1879. People were forced to eat their seed grains. At this same time equally disastrous policies were introduced into heavy industry. Although they were abandoned a year later, starvation and suffering continued. An estimated twenty million people perished.

Mao's public response to this catastrophe was, "Gentlemen, the divine continent is not going to sink and the sky is not going to fall. It is merely that for a period, vegetables and hairclips have been in short supply. Everybody has his shortcomings, even Confucius."

A member of the Party, Liu Shaoqi, presided over the recovery and reconstruction of the economy. As peasant agriculture, education, and administration gradually resumed normalcy in the early '60's, Mao again felt threatened, this time by members of his own party. Whereas after the reconstruction following the war with the Nationalists, he used the Party and coercion to force adoption of his policies, this time he used the people, particularly the young, against the Party leadership he now feared. By the use of intense indoctrination, and, assisted by his cruel and ambitious wife, Jiang Qing and her cohorts called the "Gang of Four", his notorious Cultural Revolution was implemented. Jiang Qing's newly formed Red Guard, made up largely of teens and young adults, carried out his ten-year reign of terror.

Instead of the peasants, as before, the chief victims were intellectuals and property and business owners. The Red Guard was required to denounce, strike, maim, and in many cases, kill those who had any education, wealth, or culture. Surgeons were sent to the cabbage patches while ignorant twenty-year-olds replaced them diagnosing and prescribing treatment; China's leading writers and artists were exiled to hard labor in the interior. Teachers were imprisoned, and those with any foreign connection were very often tortured or killed. Books were burned, sculpture, paintings, and porcelines of the past were smashed, and architecture was demolished. Ten years of

cruel and destructive behavior had again made a total wreck of their beloved country. Young people, who a few years earlier would have been devoting their attention to their studies, found themselves destroying their classrooms, torturing or murdering their teachers, and engaging in rape and sexual brutality.

When their frenzy of devotion and violence was over after the death of Mao, many decided that their idealism had been manipulated. They had lost their youth for nothing. They had lost hope for the future and trust in the leadership of their country. Today many are trying to make up their education in night classes, but there is a "missing generation" in the professions and sciences. Today the most competent in these fields are the middle-aged or the very young who have been educated since the death of Mao.

As Mao neared death, the power struggle, which included Mao's wife, began to intensify. One month after his death, she and her Gang of Four were arrested and in 1981 they were tried, convicted, and are now imprisoned.

After two years of struggle, Deng Xiaoping, a man who had been purged and reinstated so often, he has been called the iron yo-yo, emerged as chairman of the Party. He began to seek solutions for the economic and social problems left in wake of both the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. To say that this was a radical and welcome change to the impoverished and disillusioned Chinese people is to put it mildly. They no longer put any credence in Mao's promises of a Communist paradise in some distant future. The Communist Party, appealing to their patriotism had asked them to work for the modernization of China that the country might regain her historical greatness. Under Mao, a favored slogan had been "Better a poor society under socialism than a rich society under capitalism."

Alongside Deng's early economic reform policies was a campaign toward de-Maoification. Wall posters and articles in the People's Daily criticized Mao's mistakes and cruelties in an effort to de-mystify him and erode his image as a god-hero. Mao's Cultural Revolution began to be called "Ten Years of the Great Catastrophe" and by the second anniversary of his death, both the 'Little Red Book' and his quotations in newspapers had disappeared.

Great numbers of political prisoners were released, hospitals and schools re-opened, and many of those who had been dishonored were 'rehabilitated' meaning their names had been cleared. By 1980 portraits of Mao in public places had been removed as were billboards bearing his quotations. The third anniversary of his death went unnoticed.

Deng's first economic changes began with what was termed the four modernizations. They were in agriculture, science and technology, industry, and national defense. He adopted the principal of "each according to his ability, each according to his work." This was diametrically opposed to Mao's principle of Party placements.

Beginning in China's largest province in 1978, Deng set free the factories to retain some profits and spend them as they saw fit. They could hire their own workers, reward them, and fire lazy or redundant staff. Most factories slipped into high gear immediately. In one steel factory, extra revenues went into bonuses--22% for the average worker, and 60% for one workaholic employee.

In the first year of the experiment, the reformed factories were up 24% compared with 14% for the unreformed ones.

The experiment was extended to agriculture where 80% of the Chinese work. Extra acres were made available to the peasants to add to their 'private plots' and they could farm them as they wished. The farms in the experimental province had, under Mao become a famine-ridden food-importing province. Today its farms produce seventy-six million tons of grain annually, twice what the province needs.

These and other reforms plus Deng's open door policy soon began to change the face of the country as business men, technical experts, teachers, and tourists began to pour in bringing foreign investment that reached several billion U. S. dollars. The World Bank reported last year that China had shifted from being a major importer of food in the '70's to being a surplus producer in the '80's.

The living standard of most Chinese has improved substantially as shown by the two-story brick houses replacing the mud huts, both in the cities and in the rural areas. Brightly colored clothing has replaced the drab costumes of the past, and appliances have lightened the drudgery of their everyday lives.

May of last year brought in the first department store with more than fifteen thousand foreign items. Coco-Cola is available throughout China and Kentucky Fried Chicken has become the first fast-food company to have restaurants in the People's Republic.

All this "capitalist roading", a derogatory term coined in the Cultural Revolution, does not please the die-hard communists in the leadership, and China remains very much a Communist country. The institutions of state are still firmly in place and the Communist Part still rules non-democratically.

Deng does not wish to change from the Communist rule. He said he wanted merely to modify it. "We must let our people know" Deng said, "that we firmly support socialism and communism. and that all the policies we have adopted are for developing socialism and the eventual realization of communism."

In view of this political stance, he calls his new system "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics." His reforms, however, have threatened the privileges and positions of the old Party leaders, many of whom he has weeded out. Since 1984 Deng has changed the leadership of several ministries of the State Council on the lower level, appointing younger men as governors and Party secretaries in twenty-six of the twenty-nine provinces. In 1985 he began restructuring the military, removing the generals who were his most severe critics. He has also retired many in the top echelon of the Party replacing them with younger men loyal to his reforms.

Although many of the Maoists have been routed, a new opposition has risen. These critics do not wish to remove Deng, but are alarmed by the numerous problems created by the new economic reforms. They think relaxation of the

central control has gone too far. They would like to see China admit foreign capital, technical know-how, and equipment without admitting Western ideas and customs. They are especially concerned that Western democracy and sexual freedom will threaten their monolithic rule and moral standards. They watch Deng closely to make sure the reformists do not stray too far from the path of socialism. They regard Deng's economic reforms a necessary evil rather than a desirable step toward progress.

Deng, since the beginning of 1986, has faced renewed resistance from the uneducated and suspicious Party bureaucrats who do remain. He has wanted from the beginning, a freeing of the administrative offices from Party control. He also wants to allow more than one Party-nominated candidate, as well as non-Party independents, to run in local elections. These have been opposed by the dogmatists. They see it as a threat to the supremacy of the Communist Party. In September 1986, Deng was forced to shelve his political policy in order to proceed with his economic policy.

The bureaucrats, armed with their victory, made it taboo to discuss political reform further, and banned a number of publications. There was even talk of a new Anti-Rightist Campaign against the intellectuals, and a rumor of an impending coup against Deng Xiaoping. This political situation fostered student demonstrations in thirteen Chinese cities in December of last year.

Seventy per cent of the population of China are under thirty-five years of age. The university students, roughly two million out of over one billion people, are the elite. Long impatient with the insensitive Party bureaucrats, and the action taken against their professors and other intellectuals, they took to the streets demanding freedom and democracy.

The demonstrations lasted four weeks. The police acted with restraint, trying to prevent disturbances but not punishing the students.

After the students had returned to their campuses, however, the People's Daily, the official paper of the Communist Party blamed the demonstrations on the influence of liberalism and claimed that the Party's ideological work had been inadequate. Some said that it meant that there would, as a result, be a new, intensified political indoctrination program for university students and that the young people would have to reaffirm their faith in the leadership of the Party and Marxism. Also that some of the professors would be scapegoats and the others would have to engage in self criticism and that all would be silenced.

Kenneth G. Lieberthal, a China specialist at the University of Michigan, writes, "Deng, however, is a master of political manipulation. Deng's style has been, when the dogmatists have an issue to run with, he steps back a bit and lets them overstep their bounds.

However, Jaime A. Florcruz and Richard Hornik reported from Peking in a March issue of Time that Deng is in trouble as a result of the demonstrations, even to the point that his economic reforms may be imperiled. His protege and hand-picked successor, Communist Party General Secretary, Hu Yaobang, was abruptly ousted after being blamed for the student demonstrations. Deng immediately spread the word that he favored the ouster as well as a crackdown on the students, who had demanded democracy. He seemed to be playing both sides against each other to remain on top.

The Chinese press continued to uphold him up as an opponent of liberalism and Western values, but there are reports of Deng's declining influence.

Students were singled out for a clamp-down. All Chinese universities launched new ideological indoctrination courses with the spring term. A spokesman for the Education Commission said that only those with "political integrity" would be regarded as qualified students. Another top education officer called for the demonstrating students to be sent to factories and farms to be "integrated with reality and physical labor."

In an extraordinary show of solidarity with the intellectuals and students, one hundred sixty American scholars appealed to the Chinese government to relax its campaign against the students and professors.

Deng's leading rival in the Party has been eighty-four-old Peng Zhen, a Marxist of the old school, but there are the well-educated middle-aged men in Party leadership who support Deng and his reforms and they are getting impatient.

It is still uncertain whether Deng's free-market economic reforms are seriously threatened by this power struggle. Some think they have too much momentum to be stopped, but signs of a rollback are cropping up. Some who have raised capital for new private factories dare not set them up. The dogmatists have emphasized the need to increase production by improving workers' attitudes rather than by pay incentives. The People's Daily wrote, "If everyone cares solely for money and profits, it is difficult to realize the Socialist Four Modernizations, let alone Communism."

This month the three-thousand-member, thirteenth Party Congress will meet to elect a new Central Committee, which in turn will select the all-purpose Politburo. No doubt the power struggle between the two groups will intensify. By the time the congress meets, Deng may be able to use the protests as evidence that the country's political structure needs basic change. However, regardless of how many reforms he brings about, this leader is no democrat. Even though he agreed with part of the students' uprising, he draws the line at violations of basic principles, such as Communist Party leadership. His political reforms, though dramatic by Chinese standards, are far short of the demands of the students. Western-style freedoms are many decades away, but tensions will build as many thousands of students move into positions of leadership, many coming from universities abroad. Since Deng Xiaoping is eighty-two years old and most of the bureaucrats are in their eighties, the course of China in the 1990's will be determined by this new generation of leaders.

For the entire thirty-eight years of Communist rule in China, Party policy has swung back and forth from a semi-liberalism to Marxism and is expected to basically continue the same pattern except for one important aspect.

Although twenty-three hundred counties make up this great country and only two hundred of them have ever welcomed a foreign visitor, the fact still remains that mainstream China is no longer isolated from civilized

international society. World opinion and the foreign policy of countries contributing to their economic structure does and will continue to influence the decisions of the government.

It is unlikely that there will be enough Marxism and Maoist dogmatists among the younger leaders to prevent it.

I would not want to be the Maoist who tells the people, "Comrades, we're returning to the joyous struggle and poverty of building a new Socialist Man.

Forget about saving for those new refrigerators.