
UNIT 7 FOREIGN POLICY

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7.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit aims at providing an account of China's foreign policy—its interaction with other countries including the immediate neighbours. After going through the Unit you would be able to:

- identify the main characteristics of China's foreign policy;
- explain the forces and factors determining Chinese behaviour in international relations;
- recognise the causes underlying difficulties and problems with great powers as well as with immediate neighbours;
- evaluate China's position and status in the community of nations.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

China is the largest country of the Asian continent and most populous in the world. In terms of its geographical size, it is next only to Canada and is nearly three times as large as India. China is situated in the centre of the world's largest continent and the bulk of the Asian continent lies within the scope of Chinese cultural influence. The countries situated in China's periphery are weak and small and more vulnerable to Chinese influence. China's significant socio-political status is given recognition by the United States and other great powers.

China's recorded history spanning over four thousand years is the history of a great country that flourished economically and culturally even at the earliest stages of civilization. For most part of its history, China however remained in self-imposed isolation with fewer contacts with the outside world. The Chinese were made to believe by the contemporary Chinese emperors that China was a celestial empire endowed with all things in abundance and desired nothing from outside.

During the nineteenth century the rise of British colonialism in the proximity of China and the emergence of a militant Japan posed a challenge to China's position

in the region. Military debacles suffered by China in its confrontations with Britain and Japan led to decline in Chinese influence. In 1911, the overthrow of the monarchy led to the founding of Republic of China under the leadership of Sun Yet-Sen. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in October, 1917 had its influence on China as well which culminated in the rise and growth of armed revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party of China under the leadership of Mao Zedong. The Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party worked together until parting of their ways in 1927. Subsequently, the Chinese Communist Party launched armed struggle against the Chiang Kai-Shek led Kuomintang Party which was then in power. The struggle finally culminated in the establishment of People's Republic of China in October, 1949 under the aegis of the Chinese Communist Party with Mao Zedong as its Chairman.

7.2 FACTORS DETERMINING CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy of a country is a composite response to domestic and external factors. In the external realm, operation of a country's foreign policy is facilitated at three levels: global, regional and bilateral. Framing and implementation of any country's foreign policy does not take place in a void or vacuum. Rather it is the tangible outcome of certain basic factors like geopolitical realities of the region where that country is located, its scramble for security, its domestic requirements and quest for economic development and its commitment to ideology. In a similar way, China's foreign policy has been governed by certain basic tenets which have remained constant despite variations in ways and means in attaining them. These variations have been influenced by changing circumstances both at home and abroad.

Since the founding of the Communist regime in People's Republic of China in October, 1949 concern for security has been the main bulwark of China's foreign policy. Over the past four decades, the Chinese leadership has shown remarkable capacity for adaptation to changing circumstances and for employing various tactics to attain the goal of national security. The factors that have influenced the Chinese foreign policy are: national interest, nationalism, historical experience and cultural values, revolutionary strategy, the theory of contradiction and the theory of the three worlds and the leadership and decision making powers. Since the advent of the communist regime in 1949—and even prior to that Chinese policy has been functioning within a framework based on Chinese understanding of the dominant global trends. An analysis of the Chinese foreign policy during the past four decades shows that this framework has been clearly modified at the end of nearly every decade since the 1950s. During the decade of 1950s, the Chinese foreign policy operated within the bilateral framework, with Beijing firmly aligned to the socialist camp under the aegis of Soviet Union. The Sino-Soviet schism in 1960s motivated China to renounce bloc politics. In the Chinese view, the Soviet Union during 1960s had become revisionist and henceforth China considered that the mantle of defending socialism had fallen on its shoulders, despite the fact that it was intensely embroiled in domestic trouble as a sequel to the Cultural Revolution. The decade of 1970s witnessed China's strategic alignment with the United States, its induction into the United Nations and also the formulation of Three Worlds Theory: the First World of super powers, the Third World of the vast majority of developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Second World juxtaposed as an intermediate between the two, primarily consisting of Japan and Europe. China was seen as part of the Third World.

The decade of 1980s was marked by traumatic changes in the regional as well as the global scenario and the period witnessed a shift in emphasis from political to economic and technological issues. The growing economic might of Japan and Western Europe and the growing US-Soviet detente, provided the framework for a new multipolar configuration of power. By the mid 1980s, the Chinese leadership had started believing that it would not be the military factor, but economic and technological capability which determine the superiority or otherwise of a country. Thus from then onward the Chinese started analysing global trends and the international situation with a view to formulate a world view that would accordingly shape their strategy and determine their foreign policy.

The onset of 1990s has been characterized by remarkable events like unification of two Germanys, collapse of erstwhile Soviet Union and emergence of Russian Federation, Baltic states, and five Central Asian Republics as sovereign independent countries, division of Czechoslovakia into Czech and Slovak Republics, the gulf war, and move for a United States of Europe after the signing of Maastricht Treaty and the urge for a new world order. China's response to these developments is closely linked to its foreign policy.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space provided below each question to give your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What have been the main stages of shift of emphasis in the foreign policy of China?

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7.3 RELATIONS WITH SOUTH ASIAN NEIGHBOURS

During the Cold War rivalry between United States and Soviet Union, South Asia had increasingly become a significant region in global politics. The strategic significance of South Asia has not diminished with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The region figures more prominently in the strategic calculations of the United States, China and Russia, the successor states of Soviet Union. China shares borders with Bhutan, Nepal, India and Pakistan. This makes China a pre-eminent power in the region.

India and Pakistan are two prominent powers of South Asia. Regional developments attract China's attention and similarly Chinese moves have their bearings on this region. During the 1960s and 1970s China vied with India for enhancing its influence in South Asia, demarcated the region into Indo-centric and Sino-centric. India's military debacle during the outbreak of Sino-Indian hostilities in October, 1962, resulted in the augmentation of Chinese influence in the region. The resultant outcome was China's improved relations with Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka during that period.

Following the Sino-India rapprochement from the beginning of 1980s, China has followed a policy of forging friendly relations with all the countries of South Asia and is committed to resolve the outstanding border issues especially with India through peaceful means.

7.3.1 Relations with India

China's relations with India are marked by various ups and downs. Though both countries share a long legacy of history with cultural and economic linkages dating back to centuries, yet there have been quite a few irritants, especially the border dispute which have marred the otherwise friendly relations between the two countries. India was the second among the non-communist countries to recognise the communist regime in the Beijing in 1949. India also displayed ample enthusiasm in getting China admitted to the United Nations.

During 1950s, the heyday of the Cold War, China subscribed to Mao's theory of two camps and India's policy of non-alignment was not appreciated by Beijing which was ideologically more inclined towards the Soviet Union. India's condemnation of the American policy during the Korean crisis in 1950 and support

for China brought New Delhi and Beijing closer to each other. However, what stood in the way of good neighbourly relations was the issue of Tibet. The Tibet issue was a British legacy by which India had inherited certain special political interests and extra-territorial privileges like owning some rest houses, stationing of armed guards and maintenance of its own postal communication at certain points. Hence, Chinese military action in Tibet in October, 1950 alarmed India.

However, both countries tried to narrow down their differences in April, 1954 on the basis of *Panchshila* or Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. Thereafter began a short-lived phase (1954-58) of Sino-Indian friendship. During this phase Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai visited India and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru also visited China. This phase did not last long, and by 1959, in the wake of border disputes and armed clashes, the two Asian giants were drifting towards a war which ultimately broke out in October, 1962.

India suffered a military debacle during the Sino-Indian war of October, 1962 and the unilateral ceasefire by China by October end 1962 though brought the armed hostilities to standstill but initiated a cold war between the two. It brought India-China friendship to an abrupt end and the era of Panchshila was replaced by an era of confrontation. During this period, the United States and Soviet Union provided military and economic assistance to India. However, the phase of Indo-American friendship proved very short while India's relations with Soviet Union became durable in the subsequent period. China moved closer to Pakistan which was already having strained relations with India.

In the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution (1966-69) China pursued the policy of breaking international isolation by cultivating friendly relations with the countries of Asia and Africa. China's open support to Pakistan during the Bangladesh Crisis in 1971 reduced any possibility of thaw in Sino-Indian relations. China's open support to Naxalites in India and insurgency in the North-Eastern states of India during late 1960s and until early 1970s also marred any chances of the process of normalization of relations between the two countries.

Until the mid-1970s, the prospects of normalization of relations between the two countries had not shown any helpful sign. But by 1975-76, both countries seemed enthusiastic to restore normal relationship. It was in 1976 that both China and India restored diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level. Following this, restrictions on trade, banking and shipping were removed and functional contacts resumed. In February, 1979, India's Foreign Minister visited China.

The desire for bringing their mutual relationship on an even path being strong between the two countries, the only irritant was the ticklish problem of the border. By 1981 both sides seemed interested in sorting out the border issue which led to the first round of talks of experts of the two countries in December, 1981 at India's behest. At this juncture China seemed to be in favour of the *Status quo*. China offered a package deal which *interalia* implied Chinese recognition of the MacMahon Line in the east as the border between India and China in exchange of India recognising Aksai Chin as part of China.

During December, 1981 at the first round of Sino-Indian talks on the border issue, both sides stuck to their respective positions. While China favoured the acceptance of *status quo*, India showed its strong reservations over such acceptance without any comparable concessions. The second round of talks held in May, 1982 made no appreciable progress on the boundary question. The various subsequent round of talks have been held between India and China but there has been no agreement on the question of border. However, both countries have entered into various agreements to cooperate in the fields of trade, commerce, science and technology and culture. In 1988 Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi visited China and in December, 1991 Chinese Premier Li Peng visited India.

During Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in 1988, both countries has agreed to set up a Joint Working Group to go into the border question. The two countries also agreed to resolve the remaining bilateral issues in terms of trade and cooperation in science and technology. During the Chinese Premier Li Peng's visit to India in December 1991, both countries reaffirmed their faith in

expediting the meeting of the Joint Working Group and increased economic cooperation between the two countries. Proposals like confidence building measures (CBMS) including reduction in armed forces along the Sino-Indian border have been mooted. Thus chances of resolving the border issue have become bright.

7.3.2 Relations with Pakistan

China's relation with Pakistan developed in the post Sino-Indian border dispute period when both countries signed the border agreement in 1963. Pakistan's relations with India were already strained mainly on the question of Kashmir. Thus this relationship was based on the old adage, an enemy's enemy is friend. Another objective of China cultivating friendship with Pakistan was to obliterate the influence of Cold War military alliances like SEATO and CENTO of which Pakistan was a member and to bring Pakistan under Chinese sphere of influence in order to enhance its image in the Islamic World.

China provided military and economic assistance to Pakistan especially in the latter's wars against India in 1965 and 1971. When the United States imposed an embargo on the supplies of American weapons to Pakistan, China came to its rescue. Pakistan also played a significant role in bringing Sino-American rapprochement.

Between 1965 and 1992, China has provided massive military and economic assistance to Pakistan. China has significantly contributed in modernizing Pakistan's defence by supplying sophisticated weapons. It has also made considerable contribution to Pakistan's nuclear programme. In late 1980s, when the United States imposed ban on the further supplies of sophisticated conventional weapons to Pakistan, it was China which filled in the gap. Despite its eagerness to normalise relations with India, China has not envisaged any laxity in its special relationship with Pakistan.

7.3.3 Relations with Bangladesh and Nepal

During the initial years of the birth of Bangladesh (1971-74), there were no diplomatic relations between Dhaka and Beijing mainly because of China's refusal to recognize the newly born Bangladesh. However, following the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Bangladesh in 1975, their relations have shown steady improvement in almost all spheres. China has made available economic assistance as well as some military aid to Bangladesh. There have been frequent exchange of visits at the highest levels between the two countries. However, Sino-Bangladesh relations did not attain the level of warmth as the Sino-Pakistan one, it is perhaps because of Bangladesh's "uncertainty" and its policy towards China in the light of its dependence on India. While dealing with Beijing, Bangladesh has been cautious enough not to offend India and the Soviet Union. Since China has reiterated on many occasions its desire to foster closer relations with the countries of South Asian region, Sino-Bangladesh relations have also made steady progress.

China's relations with Nepal, got underway with the onset of 1960s. Prior to Second World War, Nepal's interaction with the outside world was mainly confined to British-India and Tibet. It was only after the Second World War that Nepal gradually opened up itself to the outside world. During 1950s, Nepal's relations were predominantly with India and it maintained a lowkey level relationship with China. In the early part of 1960s Nepal forged closer relations with China but India remained a pre-eminent factor in determining Nepal's relations with China.

China made efforts to bring Nepal under its sphere of influence by providing economic assistance and supporting Nepal's peace zone proposals. But following the normalization of Sino-Indian relations, China has reconciled to India's pre-eminent position vis-a-vis Nepal. However any disruption in Nepal-India relations is likely to bring Nepal closer to China.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below each question to give your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Why and when China's relations with India deteriorated?

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2) Why has China maintained friendly relations with other neighbouring countries of South Asia?

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7.4 RELATIONS WITH ASEAN COUNTRIES

Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprising Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, was formed on 8 August, 1967. China's relations with the ASEAN countries shifted from hostility in 1960s to rapprochement since the mid-1970s. During the peak years of the Cold War in 1950s and 1960s, the growing American involvement in South-East Asia, formation of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the US military bases in Thailand and the Philippines provided China the main plank to condemn the South-East Asian countries. The formation of ASEAN had evoked adverse criticism from China. Besides, the launching of ASEAN coincided with China's Cultural Revolution and active American involvement in the Vietnam war. Thailand's geographic proximity to China and the former's close military relations with the United States has been a cause of concern for China. Accordingly, China's attitude toward Thailand depended on its perception of whether and to what extent its security was being threatened. Thus, in the broader perspective, China perceived inception of the ASEAN as an organization "propped by the US imperialism to serve its war efforts" in Vietnam. Following China's induction into the United Nations in 1971 and Sino-US rapprochement in 1972, China's attitude towards ASEAN also underwent a change. During 1974-75, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines had established diplomatic relations with Beijing. Indonesia and Singapore established diplomatic ties with China in late 1980s.

From late 1970s until 1980s, China maintained tacit alliance with ASEAN countries against Soviet-Vietnam entente and it was perceived as a mixed blessing by ASEAN member countries. However, the ASEAN countries viewed the China-Vietnam belligerence with varied Scepticism. For Thailand, Beijing's belligerence with Vietnam was useful because of the threat of another Chinese incursion thus engaging a massive portion of Vietnamese forces far away from Thailand's borders, on the other hand, Indonesia and Malaysia viewed with suspicion the Chinese willingness to intervene in Vietnam. This suspicion was underlined by Beijing's reluctance to renounce its support for communist resurgence in the region who had traditionally maintained links with China.

Besides, Malaysia and Indonesia also entertained apprehensions that persistent Thai help to the Khmer Rouge could lead to renewed Vietnamese incursions into Thailand, which in turn, would result in an ever increasing Chinese influence.

Consequently in March, 1980, Malaysia and Indonesia, at a meeting at Kuantan,

devised a way to block such a prospect by asking China to reduce its pressure on Vietnam in exchange for a lessening of Vietnamese closeness to the Soviet Union. Until the late 1980s, the Kuantan principle remained the only plausible alternative to a confirmation of the status-quo in the ASEAN-China relations. However, the United States had not endorsed the Kuantan initiative because of growing Sino-US entente. Following the disintegration of Soviet Union, preceded by the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces out of Cambodia and restoration of democracy in the country, the prospects of further normalisation of relations between China and ASEAN member countries have brightened.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space given below each question to give your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Why were China's relations strained with the ASEAN in 1960s.?

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2) What is Kuantan Initiative?

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7.5 RELATIONS WITH SUPER POWERS AND WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

After having examined China's relations with important neighbours of South Asia and ASEAN, now let us examine China's relations with super powers and West European countries.

7.5.1 Relations with Soviet Union

Emergence of the People's Republic of China in 1949 coincided with the occurrence of some significant changes in the international situation. The most significant was the advent of cold war rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union that affected the entire globe. The other important change was the emergence of independent countries first in Asia and then in Africa. According to Arnold Toynbee, the factor that governed the international system in the late 1940s was that the victors of the Second World War failed to maintain their war time cooperation and consequently the world was repartitioned into two hostile camps.

During the formative phase of its foreign policy, China hardly had any diplomatic option in choosing between the two camps. In view of the United States support to Taiwan and pursuit of the policy of global containment of communism, PRC could not come to terms with Washington. And China now could look upon Soviet Union for help and assistance. Consequently, China chose to align with the socialist camp under the Soviet leadership. The basic premise of Chinese foreign policy in this period has been well expressed in the following statement of Mao:

“lean to one side, and we are firmly convinced that in order to win victory and consolidate it we must lean to one side... all Chinese without exception must lean either to the side of imperialism or to the side of socialism. Sitting on the fence will not do nor is there a third road... We belong to the side of the anti-imperialist front headed by the Soviet Union and so we can turn only to this side for genuine and friendly help, not to the side of the imperialist front.”

Relations between China and Soviet Union became closer and friendly after the conclusion of Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Material Assistance on 15 February, 1950. Another agreement for long-term Soviet credits to China was also concluded. Soviet support against any threat to China especially from Japan was also affirmed. The control of Chinese Eastern Railway was transferred to China. Between 1950-59, Soviets helped in modernising the organization, training and equipment of the Chinese armed forces. Apart from providing military assistance, Moscow also made available considerable economic and technical assistance to China.

Relations between China and Soviet Union however, started deteriorating from 1959 onwards thereby culminating in almost complete rift in 1962. Ideological differences between the two countries provided the starting point. The Soviet leadership that succeeded after Stalin's death in 1953 revised Leninist doctrine concerning war. The essence of the new Soviet view was recognition that the existence of nuclear weapons had lessened the acceptability of risks of general war. However, the Chinese declined to accept the new Soviet interpretation of Leninist doctrine and called the Soviet as “revisionist”. China, on the other hand, advocated the use of force, including nuclear weapons, in the “wars of national liberation”

Apart from the ideological problems, conflicting territorial claims, Soviet reluctance in providing nuclear technical know-how to China and Soviet termination of agreement in 1959 to provide technical assistance to China further widened the chasm between the two countries. The parting of ways began to seem permanent to both China and Soviet Union. Moscow's overtures to Washington in the aftermath of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's visit to the US in 1959 and armed skirmishes along the Sino-Soviet border in 1960 further sharpened the rift between the two which was officially formalized in view of the Cuban missile crisis of October, 1962. From then onward the Chinese stepped up their criticism of Soviet Union.

After the formalization of Sino-Soviet split, the growing US-Soviet detente was viewed by China as a means to the encirclement of China and as a struggle for hegemony. With the escalation of the Vietnam war, the Chinese misapprehensions about Soviet-American relations further grew. The Soviet endeavours of cultivating friendly relations with India, Mongolia and other countries of Asia were viewed in Beijing as the flanks in the encirclement of China. During the latter half of 1960s, the Chinese viewed Soviet policy toward North Vietnam as “Sham support and real betrayal”. It also accused Moscow of using the so-called “united action” to control North Vietnamese and of creating differences between the Chinese and Vietnamese people in order to undermine their military unity.

Following the Sino-US rapprochement in early 1970s, the Chinese attitude toward Vietnam war also underwent a change and the Soviet Union was no longer accused of being an accomplice of the United States in the war. While China's criticism of United States became very mild, it accused Soviet Union of “Socialist hegemony”. Therefore Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December, 1979 was viewed by Beijing as a threat to international peace and security and also interpreted Soviet military presence in Mongolia as a threat to China.

Perceptible change in Sino-Soviet relations occurred during the 1980s especially in the context of leadership changes in both countries. Low-level normalization of relationship talks were initiated in October, 1982 and continued at six-month intervals thereafter. Both countries signed a number of economic accords during 1984-85. In March, 1985, the Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev called for “a serious improvement in relations with China”. In 1987,

both countries held two rounds of negotiations on the border issue resulting in improved relations.

7.5.2 Relations with United States

In view of Mao Zedong's "leaning to one side" policy of aligning with the Socialist camp led by the Soviet Union and US policy of global containment of communism under the Truman doctrine, there existed no diplomatic relation between People's Republic of China and the United States. Another significant irritant between the two was the US support to Chiang Kai-Shek's Taiwan. When the Communist forces led by the Mao scored victory over the Kuomintang forces of Chiang Kai-Shek in 1949, the latter fled to Taiwan. Hence there emerged two Chinas—Mainland China or People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan or the Republic of China. The Communist leadership in Beijing argued that Taiwan was not an independent territory but part of Mainland China. Beijing debunked the theory of two Chinas and regarded itself as the real China. United States not only recognized Taiwan but maintained political, economic and defence relations with it. Washington did not recognize the Communist regime in Beijing and even thwarted the latter's induction into the United Nations by using its veto power in the UN Security Council. It was argued in Washington that Taiwan was an essential link in the US defence system in the Pacific. In the wake of Sino-US rapprochement in 1972, and induction of PRC into the United Nations in October, 1971, relations between Beijing and Washington have considerably improved. But the Taiwan issue is still an irritant for both the countries.

Outbreak of armed hostilities between North Korea and South Korea in June, 1950 further hardened American attitude towards China. North Korea was being supported by the Soviet Union and China while USA came to rescue South Korea. The Korean war which lasted for three years and claimed 50,000 American lives made United States change its position from passive neutrality in the PRC's affairs to pursuing an active policy of weakening and isolating China.

The Chinese intervention in the Korean war had enhanced its prestige in the communist world and it also assumed the status of a great power. Though United States had succeeded in getting China being branded as an "aggressor" in the United Nations, but China won the admiration and sympathies of many countries of Asia. United States succeeded in persuading the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan to join in an alliance against China as South-East Asia Treaty Organization or SEATO which was formally launched on 8 September, 1954. Philippines and Thailand had already provided military bases to the United States and they had to join the SEATO while Pakistan joined it because of its regional problem with India not because of threat from China.

During 1960s, China was more preoccupied with the Soviet Union especially in the aftermath of Sino-Soviet split, and growing US-Soviet detente was seen as super power's collusion to encircle China. The later half of 1960s witnessed China embroiled in internal political upheavals unleashed by the Cultural Revolution in 1966 and thus it had placed itself in a self-imposed isolation from any role in world affairs. However, by late 1960s, Washington had been sending friendly overtures to China which were looked upon with suspicion initially by the latter. The formalization of Sino-Soviet split made China realize that in historic, geo-political and other terms, the Soviet threat to China was more imminent than the United States. Besides, Beijing had started realising that the solution of the Taiwan problem could be achieved by reaching an understanding with United States.

With the good offices of Pakistan, United States and China started negotiations for normalization of bilateral relations. The visit of Chinese table tennis players in April, 1971 to USA, which came to be known as pingpong diplomacy paved the way for this process. An announcement was made in Washington on 15 July, 1971 that US President Richard Nixon would visit China in the spring of 1972. The visit of President Nixon to China in February, 1972 paved the way for Sino-US normalization and rapprochement. The joint communique issued after Nixon's China visit, also known as the Shanghai communique, affirmed US interest in a peaceful settlement of Taiwan question "by the Chinese themselves" and progressive withdrawal of US forces from here. It was a big diplomatic gain for China.

On 1 January, 1979 the Sino-US relations were formally normalized when the two countries exchanged ambassadors. And there has been no looking back since then.

China's relations with United States have passed through two distinct phases ever since the normalization: the anti-Soviet United Front (1972-81) and the independent foreign policy (1982-89). During early 1970s, China still mentioned "US hegemonism" in their foreign policy pronouncements. But after the death of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in 1976, attacks on American foreign policy started disappearing as China sought to ally with any anti-Soviet government and movement world-wide.

In the post-Mao period and with the elimination of the "Gang of Four", the Chinese Communist Party adopted the programme of "Four Modernizations" in 1978. These "Four Modernizations" level of foreign policy implied:

- a) Rapid economic construction and modernization of China;
- b) A peaceful external environment for pursuing the tasks of development and modernization;
- c) Reducing security problems—first with the Western countries then with the neighbourhood and finally with the Soviet Union and socialist bloc; and
- d) Achieving the unification with Taiwan, Hongkong and Macao and firmly establish one China with Beijing as its capital.

Attainment of these objectives as goals warranted China's close relationship with the capitalist world headed by the United States. Thus China's drive for modernization, its disenchantment with Moscow and open conflict with Vietnam, provided greater impetus to forge "the United Front" with the United States and its allies. China has facilitated direct dialogue between the United States and North Korea. At the United Nations, it cooperated with the US on issues ranging from Namibia to the two Gulf Wars—first between Iran and Iraq, and then between Iraq and the Allied forces led by United States. In return the United States has backed China's recently adopted developmental goals, kept up the flows of capital and technology to China and helped to overcome problems over trade and Taiwan.

Defence cooperation between China and United States started developing after the 1980 visit to Beijing by US Defence Secretary, Harold Brown. This cooperation gradually developed in three directions: exchange of high level visits, military to military functional exchanges and technology transfers. Between 1985 to April, 1989, the US military sales to China, limited to defensive weapons, added upto about \$ 800 million in long term programme.

There has been manifold increase in overall bilateral trade between China and United States. At the time of rapprochement the trade in two-way turnover stood at \$ 96 million in 1972 and by 1979 it reached \$ 2.3 billion. By 1989 Sino-American trade had reached to \$ 17.8 billion thus registering 700 per cent increase during the past two decades. China has emerged as the tenth largest US trading partner and the United States, in turn, had become China's second largest trading partner and foreign investor after Hongkong. In 1988, American investment in China grew from 400 to 630 projects with a commitment of \$ 3500 million. China also enjoys the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status with the United States.

A brief disruption in otherwise smooth Sino-US close relations was envisaged in the aftermath of June, 1989 developments—when Chinese authorities quelled a student's demonstration in Beijing's Tiananmen Square with a strong hand and adopted repressive measures.

United States along with other member countries of the Group of Seven (or G-7)—comprising the United States, France, West Germany, Britain, Japan, Canada and Italy—condemned the repression in China and suspended bilateral aid, trade and defence cooperation with Beijing. However, in the wake of conciliatory moves pursued by China in its domestic affairs led the United States to remove some of the sanctions by November, 1990. Human rights situation in China is a significant factor in shaping the Sino-American relations.

7.5.3 Relations with Western European Countries

In recent years there has been an appreciable upsurge in China's relations with the nations of Western Europe, both on a bilateral basis and within the broader framework of the European Community (EC). During the cold war years, there were almost negligible political interaction between China and Western Europe as the relations were often characterised by mutual suspicion. This situation continued until the early 1970s. Placement of Western Europe in Chinese foreign policy was subjected to variations in China's theoretical orientation of its external relations from time to time. In 1950s when China adhered to "two camp concept," Western Europe was considered to be a subordinate part of the US-dominated "imperialist camp". Thus China denied itself the pursuit of an independent foreign policy toward Western Europe.

Sino-Soviet rift coming to open in early 1960s made the Chinese to put forward a new "three zone" interpretation of the international system in 1964 in which Western Europe was depicted as part of a "second intermediate zone", comprising of smaller developed capitalist countries. In 1974 when China modified this theory and advanced the thesis that the international system now consisted of "Three Worlds", Western Europe along with Japan was placed in the Second World, allegedly seeking an independent role in world affairs.

Following the Sino-American normalization in 1972, China started establishing contacts with the West European countries. Chinese embassies throughout Europe were expanded and upgraded in the course of 1970s and in 1975, Chinese ambassador to Belgium was accredited concurrently to represent China's interests at the EC in Brussels.

Countries of Western Europe are a potential source of defence supplies necessary for China in modernising its armed forces. China remains militarily weaker than either the United States or the present day Russian Federation. Imbued with this primary concern, political and military leadership in China has pursued a two-pronged approach simultaneously; a skillfull manipulation of the shifting the balance of power and steady build up of the weapons industry and the military forces.

The major EC countries with their advanced weapons industry suits China very well to meet latter's defence requirements. Though there exists defence cooperation between China and United States but expanded areas of cooperation between China and EC in the realm of defence supplies would reduce the former's overdependence on the United States.

During late 1970s, EC countries could provide both the technological know-how and the weapons system in accordance with Beijing's defence requirements. However, the question of arms sales to China falls under the purview of COCOM, a coordinating committee within NATO entrusted with the task of monitoring sales of military-related equipment and expertise to communist countries. During this period, United States, a influential member of the NATO was reluctant to approve arms sales to Beijing. EC members, also being the members of the NATO were reluctant to defy Washington.

The change in US attitude in view of normalization of Sino-US relations and rapid deterioration of US-Soviet relations in the aftermath of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan paved the way for the sale of defence related technologies and product to China by the West European countries along with the United States, UK, France and West Germany (East and West Germanys United in 1990), have been the main exporters of arms to China.

Check Your Progress 4

Note: i) Use the space given below each question to give your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Explain the main reasons of Sino-Soviet rift.

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 2) Why did United States oppose China's admission to the UN?

7.6 ROLE IN THE UNITED NATIONS

By the time the Communist Party's rule was established in Beijing in October, 1949, the United Nations had become four years old. The Chinese leader Mao Zedong had in a statement in August, 1949, welcomed "the United Nations conference on international organisation" held in San Francisco in 1945. The United States vehemently opposed China's membership of the UN in pursuance of its "Two Chinas" policy under which it supported Taiwan and opposed Beijing because of its support to the Kuomintang to China's liberation. It was only in October, 1971 that China was admitted as a member of the United Nations.

China's perceptions of the role of United Nations in the settlement of international disputes and UN peacekeeping operations have been subjected to change from time to time. From late 1940s to early 1950s, the Chinese appreciated the UN role in the settlement of international disputes. From late 1950s till early 1980s China was critical of the UN role. However, by late 1985, a new Chinese attitude emerged that not only encouraged the UN to play an active role in settling the international conflicts but also stipulated that China could and should contribute its due share in these efforts.

During late 1940s and early 1950s, China's positive attitude towards the UN despite the latter's intervention in the Korean War, was governed by Beijing's hopes that its ally the Soviet Union would disallow the domination of the world body by the Western powers led by the United States. However, deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations in late 1950s proved instrumental in altering the Chinese perception of the UN which became more critical. China perceived the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular as tools used of "imperialism" and/or social imperialists to promote their interests and to enjoy strategic, political, economic and even territorial advantages at the expense of Third World Countries and national liberation movements.

During the decade of 1960s, China's attitude towards the UN was governed by its conception of the international system and its relations with the two super powers. It regarded the world body as a tool of American imperialism and Soviet revisionism to press ahead with neo-colonialism and big power politics. After China's induction into the UN in October, 1971 and its becoming a permanent member of the Security Council, China's attitude towards the UN partly changed. During the first decade of its membership of the UN (1971-81), China acted and reacted as an outside observer rather than a fullfledged responsible member and allowed itself to criticise the world body in severe terms.

It was only after the demise of Mao Zedong, the downfall of the 'Gang of Four' and the emergence of a more pragmatic and open-minded leadership of Deng Xiaoping that China began to reconsider its role *vis-a-vis* the UN. In the 1980s, China adopted an "independent foreign policy" which laid emphasis on staying

away from too close to the United States, seeking reconciliation with Moscow and establishing close relations with the countries of the Third World. Implementation of such a policy entailed diversification in foreign relations and greater involvement in the world in order to promote China's interest. It also called for more of China's active role in the United Nations.

Since 1985, the Chinese attitude towards the UN has become more cooperative. The Chinese have lavishly praised the UN. While speaking at the 40th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the UN, Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang said "In world history it is rare for an international political organisation to have such enduring vitality like that of the UN whose universality and importance grow with the passage of time". And since then China has played a more constructive and active role in the United Nations.

Check Your Progress 5

- Note: i) Use the space given below each question to give your answer.
- ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

1) When did China begin to actively participate in the UN and why?

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7.7 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we have seen that the foreign policy of China, since the inception of the communist regime in October, 1949 has been a mix of its response to global and regional developments and China's national interests. During 1950s when the cold war rivalry between the two super-powers—United States and Soviet Union—was at its peak, and China's relations with Soviet Union were cordial given the ideological differences as well as US adherence to two China thesis. China was hostile to the US. China regarded the United Nations as a tool of American imperialism and the countries in its neighbourhood of south and south-east Asia having close relations with Washington were viewed with suspicion.

During 1960s Chinese foreign policy underwent traumatic changes in the aftermath of Sino-Soviet rift in 1959-60 and then it also perceived a threat from 'social imperialism'. In south Asia, China's relations with India strained in the aftermath of Sino-Indian hostilities of October, 1962 while it improved relations with Pakistan and Nepal. During the latter phase of 1960s, China was embroiled in the Cultural Revolution which isolated China from the outside world.

During the decade of 1970s, China's relations with the United States improved and in October, 1971 China joined the UN. However, Sino-Soviet relations remained strained. The demise of Chairman Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai and liquidation of the Gang of Four were followed by the emergence of the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. In late 1970s, China adopted an ambitious programmes of Four Modernizations and improved its relations with industrialized countries of the West and Japan in order to attract financial and technical assistance. It also improved its relations with the ASEAN countries.

By the 1980s, China, while maintaining cordial relations with the United States, West Europe and Japan, pursued an "independent foreign policy" which aimed at coming not too close to the United States and improving relations with the Third World. From mid-1980s onward, China has also started actively participating in the activities of the United Nations keeping in view with its foreign policy objectives.

7.8 KEY WORDS

Cold War: Struggle between the super powers United States and Soviet Union, to bring countries of the Third World into their respective sphere of influence.

Cultural Revolution: It is a Marxist connotation which prescribes innovative popular struggle against revisionism and betrayal of the revolutionary cause in the social and cultural realms. Mao Zedong crudely and irrationally interpreted and introduced the concept in China in mid 1960s.

Rapprochement: A reconciliation of interests of rival states after a period of hostility; renewal of friendship among states.

Entente: Ending the state of hostilities and coming to an understanding.

7.9 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Choudhury, G. W., 1982. *China in World Affairs, Foreign Policy of the PRC Since 1970*: Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado.

Harding, Harry, ed. 1984, *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980*. Yale University Press, New York.

Hsueh, James C and Kim, Samuel S. ed. 1980, *China in the Global Community*. Praeger, New York.

HsUeh, Chun-Tu, ed. 1982, *China's Foreign Relations: New Perspectives*, Praeger, New York.

Yahuda, Michael, 1983, *Towards the End of Isolation: China's Foreign Policy after Mao*, Macmillan: London.

7.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) There have been four stages of shift of emphasis in the foreign policy of China. During the first stage of 1950s, Chinese foreign policy operated within the socialist camp led by Soviet Union. Second stage commencing in 1960s, saw China renounce bloc politics and embroiled in domestic politics. The third stage in 1970s brought China out of isolation and come closer to the West. During the fourth stage launched in 1980s, China asserted its independent role and added emphasis on four modernization.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) China's relations with India deteriorated mainly on Tibetan question and Indo-China border issues.
- 2) In view of hostilities pervading Sino-Indian relations after October, 1962. China improved its relations with Pakistan and Nepal, other South Asian countries to earn goodwill and gain diplomatic leverage against India.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Because of the pre-eminence of US influence in South-east Asia and some of ASEAN member countries having been allied to the US led to the estrangement of relations between China and the ASEAN.
- 2) Kuantan initiative was undertaken by Malaysia and Indonesia during a meeting held at Kuantan in May, 1980 which *interalia* called upon China to reduce its pressure on Vietnam in exchange for reduction of Vietnam's dependence on the Soviet Union.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1)
 - i) Ideological differences;
 - ii) Border dispute between the two countries.
- 2) United States opposed China's admission into the United Nations because of its "Two China" policy and support for Taiwan.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) From 1985 onward China started actively participating into operations of the UN in pursuance of its independent foreign policy and to forge close relations with maximum number of countries.