Peking and Moscow:
The Permanence of Conflict

STEFAN T. POSSONY

A geopolitical conflict which is accompanied by national, ethnic-racial, and ideological strife tends to be extremely severe. If such a conflict also is paired with problems of political and physical survival—survival of empire, survival in the face of hunger, and survival against the threat of extermination war—it reaches the highest level of severity, permanence, and international danger. Bearing in mind that today’s enemy may be tomorrow’s ally, and vice versa, it can nevertheless be argued that, on the basis of current knowledge and of the problems now visible, the Sino-Soviet conflict must be regarded as a permanent constellation of the utmost seriousness. This statement is subject to the following qualifications:

1. The forecast is not for centuries, but for decades—specifically the next twenty to thirty years.

2. This constellation will last only as long as there is neither a major war nor a profound alteration of the entire world situation.

3. The Sino-Soviet conflict may erupt in full-fledged war; the probability of such an occurrence is high. However, the forecast refers specifically to a protracted conflict, not to open, virulent and nuclear war.

4. Global war could directly or indirectly arise from the Sino-Soviet conflict, but it could also arise from different causes. Given major war, for example, in Europe or between the USSR and the U.S., a new alliance between the USSR and China is by no means excluded. However, temporary alliances between the two communist aggressors would not necessarily terminate the basic conflict.

5. Should war be avoided, the Sino-Soviet conflict may be liquidated if and when the regimes of both the USSR and China cease to be expansionist and aggressive, and turn toward internal development. Such changes could occur through political erosion or evolution, or through the infusion of new technology and capital, but that hope may be too optimistic. In both countries major political changes probably presuppose bloody struggles which could entail foreign complications, so that the change which could end the Sino-Soviet conflict might actually provoke a war instead. At any rate, major political changes probably will not occur simultaneously in

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the two countries. Communism may go out of business in one before it ends its career in the other; and such a time-lag would pose an additional prospect of armed conflict.

There are no facts that render continuous Sino-Soviet conflict or a Sino-Soviet war a necessary or predestined event. If by enchantment cooperation-oriented regimes were to appear in Moscow and Peking, and if large sums of capital could be made available to solve economic problems in Siberia and China, the two countries could collaborate very fruitfully, ending a contest dangerous to both. But this alternative to the situation exists mainly in our imagination. In the real world, the Sino-Soviet conflict exists and has been progressively growing worse. Given the nature of the present Moscow and Peking regimes, which are imperialistic, the two party-states will prove unable to cooperate effectively. Hence problems and divisive factors will not disappear, indeed they will proliferate. The chances are small that this conflict will be liquidated peacefully.

On the other hand, a destructive war does not seem to be in the interest either of the USSR or of China. The Soviets should be more reluctant to fight a drawn-out mass war than the Chinese, but this implies that they must consider using preventive nuclear strikes. While both communist states probably will incessantly maneuver and each will attempt to install a friendly regime in its opponent’s land, they will most likely try to remain within the parameters of political and subversive warfare.

Still, the conflict has its own logic and momentum and it may force war decisions on one or the other side, just as the constellation before 1914 finally led to World War I. Specifically, the more suspicions, fears, complications, and ambitions the Sino-Soviet conflict generates, the more heavily will nuclear weapons, through their mere existence, weigh on the balance between war and peace. In 1914, many reasons brought Britain into the war against Germany, but the one overriding reason was British fear that Germany’s growing naval power would destroy the British world position. It would be entirely in line with historical precedent if the USSR decided it could not forever coexist with Chinese nuclear weapons.

American strategy must, therefore, be geared not only to the factual existence of the Sino-Soviet conflict, but also to the unpredictability of its further development, as well as the probability, high or low, that it could culminate in war. The constellation does not, by any means, exclude temporary alliances: the United States must be ready to defend itself against the USSR and China combined. Alternatively, the United States might enter a temporary alliance with either power. We are dealing with a triangle of hostility in which each of the three powers is opposed to the two others. But in this triangle the intensity of the various hostilities may vary by time and place.

Experience shows the fragility of constellations and the reversibility of alliances. Regardless of what we believe the intentions and policies of our opponents to be, we must primarily worry about their capabilities. Hence we draw the conclusion that we need very superior armaments to discourage any temporary alliance against us by the Chinese and the Soviets. The U.S. must be strong enough to handle both communist superpowers. We also must guard against acts of provocation which either of the other “triangulists” may attempt in order to involve us in conflict with his competitor. In a triangular relationship each “triangulist” always attempts this third power role. This is an elementary fact which Americans often ignore.

If the Soviets succeed in placing their man at the helm in Peking, this may mute the conflict for the time being, but it would not liquidate it. It also depends partly on U.S. policies whether the Sino-Soviet conflict continues without major eruption. The U.S. conflict with China lacks many of the usual geopolitical dimensions that weigh on conflicts between neighbors. Hence a political change in Peking might
liquidate mainland China’s hostility against us. Not so with the conflict between China and the USSR: the triangular conflict relationship is not fully symmetric.

The Sino-Soviet split is often interpreted as an ideological squabble limited to disagreements concerning communism. If this were so, the conflict could be liquidated promptly by adjustments of the ideology which, on both sides, is highly flexible. Yet ideology is just one of many factors. And even the same ideology would have profound differences in meaning in countries with such different socio-economic infrastructures and cultural traditions.

Both the Maoists and the Soviets profess socialism (or communism) as their overall political religion, just as Christians, Jews, and Moslems profess monotheism. Both ruling parties proclaim Marxism-Leninism as their own species of the genus socialism. This is comparable to our general belief in Judeo-Christian values. On the next level the USSR professes Leninism in a neo-Stalinist mode, while mainland China professes Leninism in a Maoist interpretation or Maoism *tout court*. A religious simile would be the split between Catholics and Protestants, and between Sunnis and Shiites.

The behavior of the Soviet and Maoist elites has amply demonstrated that their ideology is a strongly motivating force and that global implantation of a socialist-communist social order is a most serious intent, indeed the paradigm of their strategic plans. In both cases, the expansionist tendencies continue age-old imperialist trends and commitments. Russian imperialism is derived *inter alia* from a very ancient religious source—namely, eastern Catholic orthodoxy and the Byzantine tradition. China’s expansionism was always related to firm convictions about culture and Chinese superiority and it is tied to the notion that China should control all areas over which it once exercised “suzerainty.” The Maoists do not argue that China should be reconstituted in its maximal historical frontiers, but in its frontiers of the eighteenth century, before territories were lost. Among the incorporated and tributary lands taken from China are Afghanistan, Kashmir, Mongolia, West Turkestan, Tannu Tuva (Tuvinsk ASSR), and the southern portion of the Soviet Far East; the Maoists also have occasionally claimed Kamchatka. Some calculations show that since 1689, China has lost about 4 million square kilometers of land. Some 50 percent of this territory was taken by Russia; 40 percent was located in Southeast Asia and the Himalayas. The rest consists of Korea and Taiwan.

Whether the objective of global ideological victory commands priority in strategic decisions is another question. Undoubtedly, an objective of this sort imparts direction to long-range and permanent policies. If it did not, it would be merely rhetorical. But the preservation of state and regime must necessarily exercise overriding priority, especially in regimes that have lasted for some time. Priority also is a function of opportunity. World conquest may be assigned top priority at a time when there is a good chance that this objective can be attained. Once a major expansionist objective exists and is adhered to consistently, it will always influence policy and under suitable conditions may become the controlling motivation. Consequently, such an objective must never be belittled, let alone disregarded.

The CCP and the CPSU collaborated closely for many years. Without Soviet help, however grudgingly given and however often denied, the CCP could not have conquered China. (U.S. help also was a crucial factor.) But it is not true that the CCP invariably obeyed the Kremlin’s orders and functioned as a Moscow puppet. Mentally and physically communications between the two parties often were extremely difficult. The CPSU had to rely on Westerners for liaison with the Chinese communists and the CCP lacked trained people to familiarize the Russians with their problems.

The early leaders of the CCP were very
confused ideologically and their immediate successors were more or less unthinking imitators of Moscow. In 1935, at the conference of Tsunyi, Mao Tse-tung usurped control over the party and embarked upon his own "line." He did not by any means leave the orbit of the Communist International, but he struck out on an independent course. As early as 1936, he indicated he was not going to "liberate" China in order to turn over control to Moscow, and he also argued that the Soviet experience was only in part relevant to the Chinese communists.

In 1938 Mao insisted that the Chinese communists study Chinese history, adjust Marxism to Chinese conditions, and get rid of dogmatism. Party members who returned from study in the USSR were warned to be critical about what they had learned, and in several instances were subjected to reeducation. In 1939, in a major policy diversion, the CCP was audibly critical of Stalin’s pact with Hitler.

In 1945 the CCP committed itself fully to the ideas of Mao Tse-tung. Mao was credited with having given to Marxism-Leninism its Asian form. This commitment to Mao implied the rejection of Stalin’s ideological monopoly, and it also involved a downgrading of Lenin. While the ideological split began in 1945, it was not at first accompanied by an operational split. On the contrary, the Soviet contributions to Mao’s conquest of China between 1945 and 1949 were indispensable. But the Soviets were skeptical about Mao and from time to time indicated that they regarded his ideas, not as communist, but as bourgeois viewpoints. The stories that Stalin did not want Mao to seize power are no doubt true.

After coming to power the Maoists followed the communist routine of nationalizing industrial and agrarian capital and of instituting collective property and a centrally planned economic system. Yet from the start the Asian communist parties were aware that the differences between the CCP and the CPSU were major and were arguing about the Soviet and the Chinese "roads." East European CP’s avoided publishing some of Mao’s works—in East Germany (1951) a few speeches in which Mao discussed ideological issues were suppressed.

The 20th CPSU congress in 1956, when Stalin was posthumously dethroned, was a significant turning point in the relations between the two parties. Thereafter, one programmatic Maoist text after the other was issued to deepen the ideological differences. In 1958 the Maoists began publishing 
Hung Chi (Red Flag), their own ideological organ. In 1964 the Maoists talked about the "pseudo-communism" of Khrushchev and called the new rulers not only revisionists but class enemies engaged in carrying out capitalist restoration. This particular line completed the divorce between the uneasy partners.

The ideological differences bear mainly on problems of strategy and war. About nuclear war Hung Chi presented an expurgated version of the statement which Mao had been making repeatedly to the effect that even excessive losses did not matter if in the end communism would destroy imperialism. The Maoists did not agree with Moscow’s coexistence strategy which they wanted replaced by a strategy based on "proletarian internationalism." They rejected the idea of peaceful seizures of power; and they wanted to carry out the world revolution through national liberation movements, which indeed is a substantial departure from, if not a reversal of Marxism. (It is, however, not a very striking departure from Leninism.)

In 1964 the Maoists declared apodictically that "communists make revolutions" and added that the world revolution must necessarily be violent. This line was at variance with Marxist orthodoxy, even as preached by Lenin, especially since it was coupled with enormous emphasis on the revolutionary role of the peasants. It contradicted the basic Marxian doctrine that communism presupposes advanced industrialization in the capitalist mold and that technology creates the preconditions where-
in revolution becomes necessary in order to continue economic progress. The correct Marxian interpretation is, of course, that while the peasants can make revolution, they cannot make a socialist revolution. The standard Marxian interpretation is also that the revolution occurs in the technological-economic infrastructure, whereupon the CP, in the name of the "proletariat," adjusts the superstructure. Finally, the Marxians believe that revolution probably but not necessarily requires violence. The notion that Maoist strategy is the correct model for all communists is utterly unacceptable to the Kremlin and especially its nuclear planners. Why, they argue, must violence be regarded as necessary when in some instances it can be replaced by subversion and political maneuvers?

Peking contended that Moscow's strategy is too timid. By contrast the Kremlin fears that Peking's strategy may entrap the USSR in unmanageable crises and ruin the world revolution. The deeper dimension of this dispute is, of course, that the two "comrades" now are talking about two different things—Moscow means a world revolution which results in world rule by Moscow, and the Maoists plan a world revolution that establishes world rule by Peking. This is not a new situation in history. "My cousin and I are in full agreement," Charles V said about François I. "We both want Milano."

Not surprisingly the Soviets have asserted that according to Maoist teaching, Marxism really is inapplicable in China. They insist that Maoism implies forced labor, the limitation of consumption to the satisfaction of elementary needs, and the restriction of thinking to the contemplation of Mao's ideas. The Soviets also argue that in China the individual is nothing but a cog in the state machinery, that there are no democratic institutions in mainland China, that all resources are utilized to arm the state for "great power politics," and that there is personal instead of party dictatorship. All of this is true of Maoist China and to a large extent of the Soviet Union as well. The Maoists counter that Soviet communism degenerated after the death of Stalin, a mutation exemplified by the rebuilding of a class society under Khrushchev. According to the Yugoslav communist Milovan Djilas, however, the class society reemerged with all its trimmings long before Stalin died. A class society it is and always was, and the Maoist communists have called upon the people in the USSR to rise against the communist regime which is exercising class exploitation over them.

The Maoists uphold the principle of equality among all communist parties and states; that is, they refuse to accept any-overlordship by the CPSU or the USSR. Neither the Russians nor the Russians together with the other nations that are supposedly federated within the USSR possess the capability of ruling the Chinese, whose self-government, whether they are unified or partitioned, is an irremovable fact of modern history.

The ideological differences between the CPSU and the CCP may not exhibit deep philosophical meaning, but they advert to the fundamental truth that China remains beyond Kremlin control and constitutes a major block to further Soviet expansion. The Kremlin is quite unable to remove this obstacle; it may succeed in weakening China, but only at the cost of weakening itself and the USSR.

The Kremlin's ideological trouble is not restricted to China and Maoism: revisionism or reform communism has spread ideological diversion all over Eastern Europe and even the USSR. The tricontinental movement, while perhaps secretly maneuvered from Moscow appears to follow its own judgment. The Marxist-Leninist hump-dumpty cannot be put together again even if more than one hundred communist parties participate in CPSU congresses at Moscow.

The two main communist powers are divided by numerous additional problems. Some of those deserve listing:

1. A most important difference between Red China and the USSR is that there are
successful Chinese anti-communist states, the Republic of China on Taiwan, as well as Singapore and Hong Kong. These states have demonstrated that the Chinese have a genuine choice of systems better than Maoist communism.

2. The Republic of China has preserved the political legitimacy of Free China and has maintained a powerful national and anti-communist Chinese army. The KMT, which has been the traditional foe of communism, also has shown, what the Maoists failed to do, how the negative traditions of ancient China can be overcome and how Chinese society can be modernized. On Taiwan China possesses a substantial cadre of people who are qualified to take over, participate in, or run the government and administration of the entire Chinese nation. The anti-Maoists and anti-communists on the mainland, who have fought the dictatorship from within, will need the help of persons who have gained experience in modern government and management, and especially development. Free China has done infinitely better than Maoist China, and this fact is known to the people on the mainland.

In contrast, the several millions of Russian refugees have remained, by and large, politically impotent. Dispersed all over the earth and split into many groups, they never set up an organized, coordinated and meaningful opposition to the Kremlin. They even failed to develop authentic and comprehensible theoretical alternatives to communism that would reflect Russian traditions, be geared to the future problems of the country, and also respect the interests of the non-Russian peoples and citizens of the USSR.

3. The regime in the USSR is a functioning entity, even though not very efficient. The Mao regime is anarcho-communist and disorganized, and fails to meet even the low standards of government that the USSR is providing. It is possible that China may split into several satrapies.

4. In the USSR the Red Army never wielded real political power. From time to time the military have been influencing decisions but the party always retained the controlling position. By contrast, the PLA has become the real power in mainland China and since the cultural revolution it has been running the CCP, or what is left of it. Whether this situation will change after the ejection of Lin Piao, only the future will tell.

5. Considering the size and population of China, the PLA is a comparatively small army. It is not unified like the Red Army but to some extent has remained "factionalized" and tied to regionalism. As central government weakens or the political formula changes, centrifugal tendencies will grow stronger. Moreover, the PLA simply may lack the strength and the motivation to keep the country together; its commanders are obvious targets for Soviet political warfare. Chinese chances of influencing Soviet military leaders are minimal or nonexistent.

6. The CCP suffered badly during the cultural revolution and may not recover from its predicament. It actually split into two parties, not counting the PLA. Few of the leaders enjoy party or mass support, and the party structure and power pyramids are unstable. The party has been good only at propaganda and commotion. It remains unable to give the leadership which, despite its faults, the CPSU still provides.

7. Both communist parties are on particularly bad terms with the peasants. But in China the peasants (or the dwellers in the countryside) account for four-fifths of the population, as compared to a shrinking two-fifths in the USSR. The density of the peasant population still is excessive in China, while the Soviet countryside is beginning to experience depopulation.

8. The economic failure of the Mao regime is astounding. Maoist China offers the unique example of a major contemporary economy which has been stagnating. While some growth—perhaps one-fifth or one-sixth of the comparative growth achieved on Taiwan—may be stipulated in the absence of reliable figures, the lack of real growth is more or less self-evident, despite
a few eye-catching successes, *e.g.* the nuclear and aerospace industries. On a per capita comparison China operates on a level roughly one-tenth of that prevailing in the USSR.

9. Both countries have multiple “national problems,” but those of the USSR are more significant and potentially explosive. National problems affect about forty percent of the territory and half of the population of the USSR, and half of the territory of China but only a small percentage of the Chinese population. The Sino-Soviet and Mongolian borders divide the Turkic and Mongolian peoples, hence both countries have some identical national problems, which tend to aggravate the mutual tension.

10. The internal situation on mainland China is unique and in no way comparable to that of any other communist state. The internal situation in the USSR is unsatisfactory but not unstable; that of mainland China is both highly unsatisfactory and highly unstable.

11. The USSR is well into its fourth leadership generation, and two demographic generations have passed from the scene since 1917. The communist regime in China still is run by its first generation of leaders, but that group is about to disappear. When it does, power struggles will be intensified.

Within the communist domain and disregarding Cuba, the USSR is least committed to China and most worried about China. If Red China were to return to the Soviet fold, the USSR would be called upon to give economic aid of a magnitude beyond its material and moral capability. But without huge capital investments, mainland China’s economic situation cannot be improved substantially or rapidly; hence communist China would remain unstable and exert a major drag on scarce Soviet resources; and if Moscow does not help massively, which it cannot, China may again turn against the USSR. The Soviets have not shown much talent at getting along even with those Chinese with whom they are ideologically harmonious.

The USSR does not want a final and basic break with China, as a result of which its Asian frontiers would be rendered dramatically insecure. It needs a safe position in Asia and for this purpose requires Chinese collaboration or impotence. The puzzle is this: how can the USSR attain those objectives?

Despite conflict and difference, the systems of the USSR and Maoist China retain important similarities. Both systems are totalitarian but neither, as constituted now, is likely to continue forever, or even for a long time. In both countries, the communist party has degenerated: the middle ranks are status quo-minded bureaucrats, no longer conquerors or innovators. In both parties and countries the young people are looking for new approaches.

In both parties, there are severe and ever recurring intra-party power struggles. Both parties—their top echelons and presumably their successors—are committed to direct and indirect expansion and permanent revolution. Both want to destroy “capitalism” and defeat the main capitalist-democratic countries. Both communist regimes have been practitioners of mass purges and murders. In the USSR, the purge mania has declined appreciably, though concentration camps remain; in Red China terrorism still is in full swing. Both economic systems fail to satisfy popular needs and both are managed according to antiquated and unworkable concepts. In both regimes, agriculture is in perennial crisis, the peasants are the most exploited “class” of the society, and agricultural outputs remain far below requirements.

Soviet social development has now reached a stage where dictatorship—that is, rule by a few poorly informed people running a huge country by decree as well as rule by people who can be purged but not replaced in orderly fashion—is becoming a road block. Mainland China is less developed than the USSR and, therefore, could temporarily benefit from an authoritarian, knowledgeable, and wise government. But its large size and great complexi-
ty, as well as the extraordinary ignorance of most of its rulers, have caused the dictatorship to act as an effective brake on virtually all advances.

Unbalanced development is one of the main features of the Soviet economy. The USSR is simultaneously one of the most highly industrialized and also one of the more backward areas in the world; mainland China is simply backward and essentially a subsistence economy. But the Soviet economy and industry are very large in sheer size. China remains a poor farming country with a few factories and several very large cities. The USSR is able to support a major war for a long time. The economy of Red China, with its lack of surplus, may be able to support irregular warfare indefinitely, given a truly strong national morale, but it cannot support regular war. It can fire nuclear weapons but it cannot yet accomplish conquests against well-armed opponents.

The Soviet economy has been unable to solve major problems of planning, e.g. economic calculus, balancing of offer and demand, pricing, distribution, investment, marketing, consumers' satisfaction, etc. Further economic progress is predicated on substantial organizational reforms. By contrast, the Chinese mainland economy's primary need is for major infusions of capital, for the development of infrastructure, and for the elimination of bureaucracy from agriculture.

Border disputes may serve to mask a larger quarrel, e.g. warnings may be conveyed through shallow penetrations by small detachments. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of incidents occurred along the ill-defined Sino-Soviet border during the 1960's. The Soviets, to improve their access to China, seized a number of border crossings, such as bridgeheads, fords, and mountain passes, while the Chinese tried to recover some of those positions and also engaged in reprisals. The series culminated in 1969 with two battles fought about an island in the Ussuri—the island is uninhabited and has no intrinsic value.

Actually, the so-called border dispute is not related to river islands and poorly marked borders, but deals with huge territories. The Chinese do claim a few thousand square miles of islands and mountain passes, but they are really demanding the return of something like 1.5 million square miles of Soviet territory in Eastern Siberia and the Pacific coastal areas, and they also want the return of some 300,000 square miles in Central Asia. They want to deprive the USSR of 10-15 percent of its lands. The Chinese also desire the Mongolian Republic (600,000 square miles).

Normal border disputes are susceptible to compromise and arbitration. Disputes about large territories are customarily settled by war. If such territories are of strategic significance, war is the only method of settlement. The Soviets argue that China's natural frontier is defined by the Great Wall and that Chinese possessions beyond the Wall, e.g. Sinkiang, Inner Mongolia and Tibet, were gained by imperialist conquest. The USSR does not claim Chinese territories, though Soviet Turks and Mongols could stake out such claims. But the USSR questions Peking's right to rule nearly one-half of its present land holdings.

From the Soviet point of view, the issue of this border dispute, which was initiated by Peking, is whether or not the USSR remains a Pacific power or indeed a multinational and Asian empire. From the Chinese point of view, the issue of this controversy, in which the USSR acts like a "great power chauvinist" and not like a fraternal socialist state, is whether or not China gains access to lands and raw materials which she needs and which were formerly hers. This brings up the much disputed question of whether China is or will be overpopulated and whether she must expand to keep her population adequately fed and supplied.

The Soviet Far East is inhabited by 5 to 6 million people. This area is situated east of a line linking points east of Lake Baikal with the Khatanga estuary on the Arctic Ocean. It includes Amur oblast, Khabar-
ovsk kray, Magadan oblast, Kamchatka oblast and Sakhalin oblast, as well as the Yakut ASSR (which is sometimes attributed to Eastern Siberia). The total area has a surface of 4.6 million square miles, including 1.2 million square miles of Yakutia. Of this area, the Chinese assert a claim for at least one-third. During the last thirty years, the Soviets have managed to put altogether one million additional inhabitants into this region, which could be what British Columbia is for Canada. Much of this immigration was from eastern and western Siberia, which are short of manpower, and there was substantial emigration away from the Soviet Far East.

By contrast, the population of Manchuria has been increasing by one million a year—every year during a sixty-year period. About one hundred million Han moved toward the north during this century—one of history’s largest migrations. In the south of China population growth was more rapid than in the central provinces, which given the present economic-technological pattern, are overpopulated. There has been during this century a vast Chinese emigration southward and overseas. If the borders were opened, there would be an avalanche of emigrants, not just anti-communists, but of people seeking work and economic success.

During and after World War I there took place a substantial Chinese and Korean Unterwanderung into Siberia and the Soviet Far East. In 1939 some 90,000 Chinese were living on the Soviet bank of the Ussuri river and were interbreeding with the Udege, the native people. In the same area there were 100,000 Koreans who remained endogamous; another 70,000 Koreans were living in the Chinese-claimed Ili river valley and other parts of the Kazakh SSR. The Soviets urgently need workers in the area and in all party congresses since 1956 this point has been stressed. There is no question whatever that the build-up of the Soviet Far East is lagging badly.

Is China overpopulated? The question is difficult to answer; the meaning of the term is ambiguous. Also, the population of China is unknown, and so its growth rate. But it is known that the caloric food intake is fairly low (2,000-2,100 calories per day) and that high quality foods are scarce. It is also known that the Maoist planners aimed to double food production and that at best they achieved a static per capita output. There is no need in a modern economy for a country to produce its own food. But to be a regular food importer, the country must be a regular exporter. To do this China would have to accelerate industrialization, drawing workers away from the fields into the factories. For the time being, therefore, China can only be a marginal and occasional importer of food, but it must buy food whenever it has a bad harvest.

Accordingly China must increase food production. This requires expansion of cropland and substantial improvements of agricultural yields. Exact figures are lacking but there is good evidence that Chinese yields are mediocre; that most croplands are particularly deficient in nitrogen; that unused arable soils are scarce, perhaps nonexistent; and that new land can be cultivated only after it has first been ameliorated.5

There is plenty of land available and plenty of hands to do the necessary leveling and to build canals. But large amounts of water must be transported over long distances of mountainous terrain. Vast constructions are needed, and a manifold expansion of fertilizer production, including the development of a fishmeal industry, is mandatory. Furthermore, the modernization of agriculture requires fast progress in electrification and motorization. Thus, huge capital investments are indispensable. The effort would consume much time during which the population will continue to grow and to build up pressure.

On a comparative per capita basis China’s cropland is of about the same size as that of West Germany; and it is about half the size of that of Italy. West Germany uses fertilizer heavily, produces only one-
fourth of its own food supply, and imports the rest. Italy remains a large importer of food. If the modern Chinese were to be well fed, China’s food imports could easily exceed ten billion dollars annually. But before its industrialization is well advanced, China will not be able to engage in trade on this scale.

China has always been a land of regional famine—statistically it usually produced enough food but the surplus from good harvest areas could not be transported into areas suffering from drought or flood or insects. Transport deficiencies still are among China’s major problems and they still prevent the effective distribution of food.

The possibility that the Chinese may be a Volk ohne Raum has been feared for about one hundred years. This possibility is now turning into a reality, possibly a nightmare. A Maoist production plan for 1960 called for an output of some 450 million tons of grain by 1967. Chou Enlai claimed that production in 1971 reached a record of 264 million tons, unquestionably an “overestimate” by some 20 percent. When the population reaches one billion by 1990 or so, some 600 million tons will be required. This would require a boost of 230 to 300 percent within twenty years.

It is clear, therefore, that acreage increases by 10-20 percent, a mere doubling of fertilizer output, and even plenty of short free-flow canals—changes that are within current Chinese capabilities—will not solve the problem. A four or fivefold increase in yield from the present cropland may be technologically or theoretically possible, but lack of capital makes it economically unfeasible.

At present China has about 120 million hectares under crops, including 30 million under double cropping, so that in effect its farmland amounts to 150 million hectares. The cropland of the U.S., with about one-fourth of China’s population, was 120 million hectares in 1966, and that of the USSR, with one-third of the Chinese population but a cold climate, about 200 million hectares. If China is divided by a line leading from the southern tip of Yunnan to the northern tip of Heilung-kiang, the western area of 2.5 million square miles is populated by 35 million people (14 persons per square mile), the eastern 1.75 million square miles by some 700 million (400 persons per square mile).

China must prepare to feed a population of one billion by 1990 or at the latest by 2000 A.D. Assuming per capita food intake to remain static (at a highly inadequate level of something over 2,000 calories daily), China with its present technology would need 170 million hectares, including double-cropped fields. There is not much arable land left in the densely populated portion of the country—the usual estimate is 3 percent. Assuming there are still 12.5 percent available, an additional 15 million hectares could be cultivated. To utilize more land in the western steppes and semi-desert areas would require enormous investments, but if 8 percent of the total unused arid lands were cultivated—a highly optimistic idea—5 million hectares would become available. Perhaps an additional 30 million hectares of the enlarged cropland could be used as double crop fields—equally an optimistic hope. With all these changes, China’s cropland would still be 30 million hectares below requirement. If yields were boosted by 20 percent, the deficit would disappear, provided the population stabilizes.

Since those assumptions are far too hopeful, the deficit, even with a static per capita food intake, may easily reach a level of 50 million hectares. The compensating yield increase of one-third to one-half would require substantial enlargement of foreign trade. If food intake were to be doubled—a cautious requirement—the deficit would be above 200 million hectares. This deficit could be overcome only if yields were at least doubled. This may be feasible, but above a certain yield, FAO figures show, increasing amounts of fertilizer are needed to raise output by small increments. To judge from Taiwan figures, about a twenty-fold increase in fertilization may be nec-
ecessary to achieve the doubling of China's yields. In other words, China would require a multiple of the current world production of fertilizer—but the necessary industrialization is not possible before the food and agrarian problems are solved. This is worse than a vicious circle, it is a vicious vise.

Heavy fertilization, of course, must be accompanied by large-scale irrigation, or else the soils are damaged. In a hilly country where, as in China, even steep slopes are being cultivated, this poses additional technical and economic problems; for example, a nationwide irrigation system would augment power requirements drastically. Unless major resources are made available, a doubling of yields by 2000 A.D. seems out of the question; even an increase of 50 percent would be a major accomplishment.

Realistically, therefore, China is short of perhaps 100 million hectares (250 million acres), less if the Chinese content themselves indefinitely with lean diets. Where could China find such large tracts of land? Obviously, the cultivation of the marginal lands left on hilltops in eastern China won't help very much. So if land is to be found within China, it must come from the western part, excluding the Tibetan highlands. It may be remembered that the arid lands in western China carried relatively large populations in centuries past. The area has become the heartland of the Chinese nuclear industry, and the heavy influx of industrial manpower, settlers, and soldiers already is straining existing resources, especially water, very badly.

To irrigate 50 million hectares in this area by long distance importation of fresh water, about 1,000 pipelines with a diameter of 1 meter each would be required, costing $200,000 per kilometer for the tube alone. If the system were to be 1,000 kilometers long the total cost would be 200 billion dollars. Tens, perhaps hundreds of million tons of steel and thousands of electric pumps would be needed. If the projected Alaskan pipeline presents a valid pattern, the cost of the pipe would be two or three times larger.

The California State Water Project uses long stretches of the Sacramento river and comprises 20 dams, 21 pumping plants, 11 miles of tunnels and canals, 1 major canal, and 4 aqueducts. The entire system, which might serve as a precedent for medium-distance irrigation in China, was funded at 2.8 billion dollars, which probably neglects many indirect costs, and it delivers 4.23 million acre-feet over a distance of 650 miles, irrigating 2.5 million hectares with 20 cm. of water annually. Analogous irrigation of 50 million hectares in China would require an investment of some 60 billion dollars—a sum which approaches the GNP of China. This solution is clearly unfeasible by 2000 A.D., especially since the technical problems posed by conditions in China are particularly difficult. It is therefore necessary to use water resources that are available locally.

The so-called ploughshare technique—nuclear explosions for economic purposes—is applicable to this type of problem. The concept is simply to collect seasonal flood waters by erecting dams within existing rivers through nuclear explosions or by blasting holes near the river banks which can serve as reservoirs. The explosions move a lot of earth quickly and cheaply, and the blasts which produce the craters can be used to “build” the dams. Even in arid zones, rivers that drain mountains usually have large flows during the time of melting snow and heavy precipitation.

A typical ploughshare operation would suffice to ensure the permanent irrigation of some 5,000 hectares—let us say 10,000 hectares if we take local precipitation into account. The total water supply would be equivalent to one produced by an annual rainfall of 25 to 30 cm: not a large amount but enough for sustained agriculture. The area served would also be protected from crop-destroying floods. China's arid region is surrounded by mountain ranges which have a perimetric length of 3,500 km. It is unlikely that more than 100 suitable loca-
tions for this type of nuclear engineering can be found. The solution thus falls far short of the goal.

Yet it is obvious that first priority must be bestowed on the utilization of normal river flow. Many rivers in western China disappear uselessly in the sand; this enormous waste can be stopped. The Aksu and the Yarkand form the Tarim, a 1,200-mile system which drains 354,000 square miles. It carries its water into the desert where some evaporates and the rest flows underground.

At its confluence with the Yarkand, the Aksu has a water flow of 17,000 cubic feet per second in June. Presumably this is at a low level. If so, the annual flow would be above 15 billion cubic meters or 300 times more than the yield of the average ploughshare operation. This water would suffice to irrigate 5—7.5 million hectares—but a portion of that water, to be useful, would have to be carried to distant locations. The point is, however, that several rivers are located in the area. Hence substantial amounts of water can be distributed through pipeline and canal systems which, while expensive, are economically feasible. Additional amounts can be secured by impounding rainfall.

It is also conceivable that ploughshare techniques could substantially boost the agricultural yields in those areas of Sinkiang, Tsinghai and Inner Mongolia which receive statistically adequate rainfall but are handicapped by the irregularity of the flow. Theoretically, there is enough land so that the 50 million hectares goal could be reached through ploughshare technique of building catchment basins. But this technique is still to be developed and perfected, the operations would have to be planned, and several thousand shots would have to be fired. Nothing of the sort can be accomplished by 2000 A.D.

It is obvious that three methods—impounding of river flow, catchment of rainfall, and long distance water transportation—must be combined “to make the desert bloom.” But this is a long-range solution. China may well reach a critical point in its population-food balance before even preparatory tests have started.

So the question arises whether China can find land outside of its borders. Burma would be one promising place, and it would be suitable, possibly for cultivation by southern Chinese. Burma is sparsely populated, and it has about 17 million hectares which, with two-and-one-half crops annually, would be the equivalent of 42 million hectares. Since 6.5 million hectares are cultivated, the net gain could be 26 million hectares.

The Mekong river project will result in an additional 9 million hectares for double-cropping. The significance of this project is heightened by the fact that with new “miracle rice,” yields can be multiplied. Therefore, China’s rice requirement can perhaps be satisfied—if the new seed is also sown in mainland China and if China obtains a large portion of the Southeast Asian rice output. Yet Southeast Asia is difficult to conquer; it has its own rapidly growing population, and it offers few suitable locations for Chinese peasants to plough the soil. Hence, that area’s resources must be secured through amicable trade; and this implies that the interests of the local population will retain first priority. In any event, rice is not the only requirement China must satisfy. In fact, the qualitative improvement of the Chinese diet, which is a precondition of all-around economic progress, presupposes considerable diversification.

Mongolia has a surface of approximately 1.5 million square kilometers, of which the southern third is part of the Gobi desert. It also has high mountains where cultivation seems unfeasible. Yet something like one-half or about 80 million hectares should be agriculturally usable, and much of the country appears suitable for the nuclear ploughshare treatment. Even now Mongolia has the beginnings of a crop agriculture and it carries vast herds of animals. If the pastural lands could be improved—this is in part a matter of irrigation—there is no
reason why Mongolia could not become the Argentine of Asia and sustain in addition to more than 20 million horses, camels, goats, and sheep, plus expanded crop cultures, at least 50 million cattle rather than the 2 million-odd it is handling now. Since Mongolia is virtually empty, it is the biggest agricultural prize in East Asia. The USSR is holding this large piece of real estate to which it has no title whatever and which historically was linked to China. Aside from the ethnic problems involved, China really needs that land, not as a subjugated country, but as a part of its economy.

The Chinese-claimed areas in the Soviet Far East include, perhaps, 30 million hectares of arable land. This may be an overestimate: but what is arable in that area depends in large part on the manpower, the capital and the technology that can be invested. At best ten percent of the arable land is now cultivated and enormous work (e.g. drainage) would be required to put more under the plough. Since agriculture in the taiga is labor-intensive, the Chinese would be able to cultivate that area successfully, while the Soviets lack the manpower to do so.

The USSR is expected to reach 333 million inhabitants plus-minus 25 million by 2000 A.D. The contested areas in the Far East will be populated by 20 to 30 million people at most, many of whom will be transients. Yet Manchuria alone will hold more than 120 million. While the Soviets are developing Chinese-claimed areas in western Turkestan rapidly, the build-up of the Soviet Far East, decreed by the 23rd CPSU Congress in 1966, is slow and uncertain. The Soviets are, of course, fully aware of the fact that their Pacific territories are economically needed by China and Japan. Since they form an integral part of the Far Eastern economic region, they must be regarded as a distant colony of “Russia.”

The Soviet Far East, even in its southern parts, is not a very promising cropland but there would be enough to sustain a population of more than 50 million, provided modern techniques (for example, up-to-date permafrost management) were used. The taiga is expensive to ameliorate, but it is next to the tropics the world’s main unused agricultural reserve; and the Chinese are virtually the only people who could use the taiga on a large scale. For the time being, the taiga is agriculturally more promising than the steppe and particularly the desert.

Among the potentialities of the “second Manchuria” in the taiga, prospective crop yields are not of crucial importance, even though some staples like soybeans, millet, rye, and potatoes are well adapted to the area. With some amelioration, the southern taiga could carry livestock in large numbers; and with the exception of pigs, China lacks livestock. If China gains access to Mongolia, the taiga’s livestock contribution might not make too much difference, but the area is uniquely rich in fisheries, and China needs far more fish. Above all, the area has enormous timber stands, and China is notoriously short of timber.

Livestock, fish, and timber offer a solid basis for industrial development. The USSR has gone in heavily for food-processing, paper manufacture, and ship-building, but the area’s energy potential invites really ambitious projects. With its Soviet tributaries Zeya and Bureya, the Amur is rated at 10 million KW, or 1.2 percent of the potential energy in all of the world’s rivers. The area also contains oil, gas, and coal. There are ferrous and nonferrous metal deposits which could sustain considerable industry. The GNP of the Soviet Far East is about 1.5-2 percent of the USSR GNP, and may be estimated at more than 5 billion dollars.

Even as it is known today, the potential of the area appears to be crucial for China, the USSR, and Japan. There are constraints on rapid development; mainly lack of manpower, transport, and cheap food. Food would be cheaper if it were brought in over short distances or grown locally; and transport improvements presuppose extensive rail and road-building. But the brutal fact
is that the necessary manpower can be supplied by China only. China’s involvement in the “second Manchuria” rests on three factors:

1. The main population pressure in China is vectored toward Manchuria and points across the Amur.

2. The development of the “second Manchuria” would be expensive but this is one area where plenty of cheap manpower can do a maximum of good.

3. The first and second Manchurias are geo-economically interrelated. The development of the area north of the Amur actually is predicated on the resources available in the area south of the river. Conversely, the accelerated development of China’s Manchuria requires economic interaction with the territories held by the USSR.

China’s first order of business is to solve its agricultural problem to ensure feeding its population and to get industrialization effectively on the road. Without agricultural solutions, no industrialization; but without industrialization, no agricultural solutions. Thus, China needs additional land but it cannot obtain or use that land without quantum jumps in capital investment and technological capability.

The Chinese lack a satisfactory raw materials base and therefore they covet the return of territories which contain coal, oil, natural gas, iron, tin, lead, zinc, and gold, and which formerly were owned by them. Economic pressures and territorial needs are related to ethnic cleavages in China, the USSR and in Southeast Asia.

When Japan is brought into this game, the situation becomes still more complicated. The Chinese don’t have to expand but the less effectively their problems are being solved within their current boundaries, the stronger their urge to conquer will be. Some Chinese long-range planners, it seems, have been eying the possibility of large Chinese settlements in Africa. Would they overlook the prizes nearby? The Chinese are the most populous nation on earth; their number is growing steadily. Yet they remain restricted to a confined habitat, much of which is today economically useless.

There will be somewhere a critical point, but whether it will come when China has 1 billion or 1.2 or 1.5 billion inhabitants, is unpredictable. Population growth and delay in resource development already may have carried the country beyond the point of no return. Hopefully there is still time. But are there sufficient resources to use the period of grace? Is the constellation suitable to problem-solving approaches? The answers to both question must be hesitant and pessimistic.

If the Soviets were serious about proletarian internationalism they would find ways to develop the lands of Siberia and the Far East together with the Chinese. For example, the energy potential of the Amur basin requires joint development in an area extending from the Sungari reservoir near Kirin to the estuary; and from Chita and the three-country corner where Mongolia, China, and the USSR meet, to Khabarovsk. If Moscow wanted to strengthen peace, it could propose an Amur project to Peking. But such an approach is marred by a serious defect: any major Soviet-Sino cooperation to solve economic problems jointly requires millions of Chinese workers. Those Chinese would have to labor precisely in those territories which once belonged to China.

The insoluble Soviet dilemma is that to hold their eastern possessions they must populate and develop the USSR east of the 70th meridian, and that to accomplish such a purpose they cannot do without the Chinese. Hence, to defend those lands against the Chinese, the Soviets must invite the Chinese in. While those areas might become militarily secure, which is doubtful, the Russians and Ukrainians would be submerged or expelled through an ethnic-demographic process. As Chinese labor must be attracted by the comparatively high wage levels in the USSR, a gradual Chinese Unterwanderung into the eastern USSR must be expected in the absence of violent clashes.
Whatever the USSR does, its transport capacity in the east must be greatly expanded. The Trans-Siberian railroad's performance can be bettered somewhat but a parallel line would be uneconomic. It now costs five rubles to carry by rail one ruble worth of commodities from the Urals to the Maritime Province. By building feeder lines to the many ports in the Far East, Soviet rail construction capacities would be fully employed for decades.

The Northern Sea Route is needed to supply settlements and military installations along the arctic shore, but is neither practical nor economic for carrying the requisite load of supplies from the western USSR to Soviet Pacific harbors. Three sea routes remain: the route through Suez, and the global range routes around Africa and South America. The latter route could conceivably be shortened by passage through the Panama Canal; but the Canal already is being used to capacity. It would seem obvious that within the near future the USSR will not be in a position to satisfy the logistics requirements of a genuine build-up of its Pacific lands.

The situation, therefore, is that while China is confronted by a nearly insoluble food problem, the USSR is faced by an almost inusable problem in long distance transport. Politics are in an evident contradiction with economics. The USSR might be well advised to make the agricultural potential of Mongolia available to China, but it will hardly do this, partly because the Kremlin does not think that way, and partly because, in the face of China's growing nuclear strength it wants to strengthen, not weaken its regional position.

Since the underlying problems are intractable, the Sino-Soviet conflict will continue for a long time. The danger of war is permanent and great. Accordingly, the USSR will have to decide once or twice a year whether or not the Chinese nuclear strength is to be preempted. Nevertheless, the risks of war are so enormous that war may be averted. The fact is that the Maoists have no concept for solving their problems, nor do the Soviets have a policy for their Far East, except to hold it by force. The USSR is not likely to dampen the problem by relinquishing Mongolia, and China is not likely to allow large numbers of Soviet citizens into Sinkiang to fire off ploughshare explosives and put the Tarim into shape. Hence there may not be much progress toward sensible solutions.

Aside from preventive war, the Soviets also must think offensively. Inevitably they have their eyes on Manchuria which they need if they want to neutralize both China and Japan, and remain the top force in the western Pacific. The strategic necessity of controlling Manchuria was recognized under the tsars. Yet after 1949 the USSR, taking ideology too seriously and geopolitics too lightly, accepted "voluntary defeat" in turning Manchuria back to China. It now appears anxious to repair that blunder. They may not "conquer" the area but they may claim condominium rights such as they enjoyed before. Once they are at it, they may ask for similar rights in Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia. But if they believe the Soviets shun the risk of war, the Chinese may use a similar approach vis-a-vis the Soviet territories whose resources they think they must have. There are, as we have seen, some opportunities for constructive international cooperation between China and the USSR, and between China and other partners. But in such uncertainties, accentuated by ideological thinking and fears about regime survival, resort to violence and war is the solution or pseudo-solution which is intellectually most easy to grasp and which exasperated leaders are most tempted to pursue.

World peace and prosperity will not be enhanced if the Chinese pressure cooker should explode.
The formula is that "territory which was once Chinese must forever remain so." This formula is applied flexibly, but it is usable in virtually all disputes involving China and its neighbors. Francis Watson, The Frontiers of China (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 20.


Crocker National Bank, The People's Republic of China, A Study (San Francisco, 1971), chapter II A.


Spencer and Thomas, p. 550.


Some data are available on the flow of secondary rivers in the Altai and Sayan mountains in the USSR. One Altai river with a length of only 15 miles carries 800 million cubic meters. Two Sayan rivers have flows of 7 billion and 29 billion cubic meters, respectively. (S. P. Suslov, Physical Geography of Asiatic Russia (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1961), pp. 86 and 279.) River flows on the Chinese side probably are smaller than on the Soviet side, but enormous amounts of water are probably available.

Thiel, p. 150 ff., indicates that the Transbaikal and Amur region may have 46 million hectares. There are considerably lower estimates, e.g. Soviet Geography, June 1965, p. 62.

Eliot, Pound and Lewis:  
A Creative Friendship

HENRY REGNERY

It may be a source of some pride to those of us fated to live out our lives as Americans that the three men who probably had the greatest influence on English literature in our century were all born on this side of the Atlantic. One of them, Wyndham Lewis, to be sure, was born on a yacht anchored in a harbor in Nova Scotia, but his father was an American, served as an officer in the Union Army in the Civil War, and came from a family that had been established here for many generations. The other two were as American in background and education as it is possible to be. Our pride at having produced men of such high achievement should be considered against the fact that all three spent their creative lives in Europe. For Wyndham Lewis the decision was made for him by his mother, who hustled him off to Europe at the age of ten, but he chose to remain in Europe, and to study in Paris rather than to accept the invitation of his father to go to Cornell, and except for an enforced stay in Canada during World War II, spent his life in Europe. The other two, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, went to Europe as young men out of college, and it was as a part of European, not American, cultural life that they made their contribution to literature. Lewis was a European in training, attitude and point of view, but Pound and Eliot were Americans, and Pound, particularly, remained aggressively American; whether living in London or Italy his interest in American affairs never waned.

The lives and achievements of these three men were closely connected. They met as young men, each was influenced and helped by the other two, and they remained friends, in spite of occasional differences, for the rest of their lives. Many will remember the picture in *Time* of Pound as a very old man attending the memorial service in Westminster Abbey in 1965 for T. S. Eliot. When Lewis, who had gone blind, was unable to read the proofs of his last book, it was his old friend, T. S. Eliot who did it for him, and when Pound was confined in St. Elizabeth's in Washington, Eliot and Lewis always kept in close touch with him, and it was at least partly through Eliot's influence that he was finally released. The lives and association of these