

## **Mao and the Soviet Union**

### **Foreign Policy Analysis into Mao's decision-making**

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## **Part I - Historical Backdrop**

Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China in 1949, and played a vital role in Chinese foreign policy and decision-making until his death in 1976. During his time in power, Sino-Soviet relations were tumultuous. This essay examines the 1949 Soviet recognition of China that led to the 1950 Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, as well as the events beginning in 1956 that led to the Sino-Soviet Split, culminating in 1969 with the Sino-Soviet border clashes. Mao was an instrumental player influencing both the Treaty and the Sino-Soviet split. I pose the question of what factors led to Mao's decisions regarding the Soviet Union during the short period of time from 1949 to 1969 that created such a stark contrast of relations between the two nations? These decisions drastically affected Chinese relations within the international community, as well as domestically.

I suggest that there are three background elements that must be understood before we can delve into an explanation for these contrasting decisions. First, historic tensions between China and the Soviet Union must be established. Second, Soviet leadership changes and internal threats to Mao's leadership as well as a contest for leadership in the Communist sphere must be considered. And finally, ideological differences and the evolution of the Communist Party of China must be recognized.

The relationship between China and the Soviet Union has a complex history. In order to understand why Mao made such contrasting decisions, we must first understand Chinese history and how the People's Republic of China (PRC) came to be. The PRC was established in 1949 by Mao. Before 1949, China was dynastically ruled by Emperors and local warlords. The relationship China held with most of its neighbors (i.e. Korea) was one of lord and tributaries. With regards to Soviet Union relations before 1949, there were "numerous border wars beginning as far back as the 17th century" leading to Chinese claims in 1954 that the tsarist and communist Soviet Union had taken land and assets that traditionally belonged to China.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ford, Harold P. "Calling the Sino-Soviet Split: The CIA and Double Demonology\*." [https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/winter98\\_99/art05.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/winter98_99/art05.html)

The arrival of Western powers in the 1800s accelerated the downfall of the Chinese dynastic system, which eventually collapsed with the 1911 revolution. The West determined trade, tariffs as the Western machine goods began replacing Chinese goods. This undermined Chinese control and security in the region. Additionally, the Chinese were confident that their system was strong (most invasions in the past resulted in the invaders adopting Chinese culture and way of life).<sup>2</sup> For over 100 years, from August 1842 until 1949 when the “Red Sun Rises” (i.e. the PRC is established), this great civilization, which was far ahead of most countries in terms of goods and culture, fell apart. This is an important time period designated as the “Century of Humiliation” because it was the basis for the Chinese Dream or the rejuvenation of China. During this century, many events occurred that helped Mao rise to power with the Communist Party, and in turn, they help us understand the ideologies of China’s modern state.

The first event entailed the many rebellions that took place in China. They established the precedent allowing Mao to conduct a strong rebellion when he came to power in the Communist Party. By examining various rebellions, Mao took note of what worked and failed.<sup>3</sup> For example, Mao learned from the Taiping Rebellion (1851-64) that Party discipline was of the utmost importance, and that if the revolutionary drive is lost after achieving a certain goal (in this case, taking over a city), then the rebellion and subsequent government will fail.<sup>4</sup> Another example is from the Nian Rebellion from which Mao realized the importance of ethnicity, and where the origins of Communist fear of crime and secret organizations was rooted.<sup>5</sup>

In 1911, a rebellion against the weak Qing Dynasty was the first step towards the 1949 revolution. The 1911 government was established by Sun Yat Sen and then ceded to Yuan Shikai.<sup>6</sup> This government laid the framework for the Republic of China and established the seat

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<sup>2</sup>Britannica, “China History Timeline.” pp. 42-57. <https://www.britannica.com/place/China/Japan-and-the-Ryukyu-Islands#toc71792>

<sup>3</sup> Lieberthal, Kenneth. “Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform.” *New York: W.W. Norton*, 2004. p. 87

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Office of the Historian. State Department. United States of America. “Milestones, The Chinese Revolution of 1949.”

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

of government in Nanjing, but it also “failed to unify the country under its control.”<sup>7</sup> The Qing dynasty lost control of the country, which created a power vacuum leading to the rise of warlords in provinces across China. Additionally, the new government had difficulties with consolidation of power, control, and implementation of new policies, especially after WWI and the humiliation of acknowledging Japan’s extensive privileges that were gained at China’s expense.<sup>8</sup> Because of the Republic’s difficulties consolidating power with regional warlords, the rise of communism also threatened the government.<sup>9</sup>

In July 1921, the Communist party of China was founded. The Communists and the Republic came to a head in 1925 with the death of Sun Yat-sen and the rise of Chiang Kai-shek to power with his statement confirming “the governing Kuomintang as a Nationalist party.”<sup>10</sup> During this time, Mao was simply one of many people in the party. However, after various civil conflicts between the Nationalists and Communists, Mao emerged as a leader. His leadership became apparent during the Long March from 1934-1935 when the Communist Party and its Red Army left their base in Jiangxi to march north in order to acquire additional security from the Nationalists.<sup>11</sup> The Long March was a year long retreat of the Communists from the Nationalists during China’s civil war. During the March, many people died.<sup>12</sup> Most Chinese view this event as the foundation of the CPC, and the time when they refined guerrilla warfare tactics and party ideology. Additionally, in January of 1935 during the Long March, Mao consolidated his power over the Communist Party, as he was one of the final remaining leaders to emerge at the end. He remained in power until his death in 1976.

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<sup>7</sup> Britannica, China, p. 46

<sup>8</sup> Britannica, China, p. 44

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Britannica, China, p. 47

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Lau, Mimi. “The Long March: What It Was and Why It Matters For China’s Xi Jinping.” October 21, 2016. <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2039033/long-march-what-it-was-and-why-it-matters>

During the second Sino-Japanese War from 1939-1945, the Nationalists and Communists agreed to unite against the Japanese.<sup>13</sup> Civil war resumed immediately after Japan's defeat in WWII. At this time, the Soviet Union, under Stalin, was not supporting the Communist party. This was made explicitly clear when Chiang (Chinese Nationalists) and Stalin signed a Treaty of Friendship and Alliance in 1945.<sup>14</sup> Although this treaty was created mainly to avoid conflict with Japan and to stop its steady advance into Chinese and potentially Soviet territory, it also demonstrated Stalin's support of the Nationalists over the Communists. This became one of the first tensions to exist between the Soviet Union and China because "Stalin had been far more concerned with the strategic security of Siberia than with brotherly ties to the Chinese Communist Party."<sup>15</sup>

After the Chinese civil war from 1947 to 1949, and the retreat of the Nationalists to Taiwan with the resulting Communist success, the Soviet Union became the first country to recognize the new leadership. It is important to note that before the civil war, the Soviet Union backed the Nationalists (the perceived winning faction) in order to secure their own territory against a perceived threat from Japan.<sup>16</sup> At a future time, this slight would be used by Mao to justify his decision for the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s. However, in 1949 the Soviet support and recognition were more important and necessary to acknowledge in order for the new government to flourish.

The lack of early support from the Soviet Union for the Communist party did affect relations from 1949 on, and this tension leads to the second point regarding Mao's relations with Soviet leadership. In 1950, Mao and Stalin signed a Treaty for Friendship and Alliance and the Soviet Union participated in numerous projects in China.<sup>17</sup> This new alliance strengthened the relationship between the two nations. This was apparent during the Korean war from 1950 to

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Atkinson, George W. "The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1947, pp. 357–358

<sup>15</sup> Ford, "Calling the Sino-Soviet Split"

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Atkinson, pp. 357–358

1953 when Stalin and Mao supported North Korea.<sup>18</sup> However, personal relations between Stalin and Mao were not as strong. “Mao complained in 1956 to P.F. Yudin, the USSR's Ambassador in Beijing, that for some time during his stay in Moscow in 1950: ‘*Stalin refrained from any meetings with me. From my side, there was an attempt to phone him in his apartment, but they responded to me that Stalin is not home. . . . All this offended me.*’”<sup>19</sup> This example was not an isolated incident. Stalin and Mao’s relationship will be examined in more detail later in the paper.

Soviet Union leadership changed with the death of Stalin. In 1953, Nikita Khrushchev came to power. Initially, this transition did not negatively affect the relationship between Beijing and Moscow. However, in 1956, Khrushchev conducted a “secret speech” regarding his desire to reform the Soviet Union which he believed needed modification from Stalin’s cult of personality.<sup>20</sup> This process of “de-Stalinization” was drastically different from what Mao expected, and contrasted directly with Mao’s own cult of personality that he was fostering. Thus, Mao publicly denounced Khrushchev’s speech which signaled the beginning of the Sino-Soviet split.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to leadership changes and the resulting conflict after Stalin’s death, Mao saw himself as the foremost Communist leader among the Communist bloc. “In 1953, Beijing published Maoist pretensions to ideological and policy leadership of the Communist world.”<sup>22</sup> The issue with this declaration was that Khrushchev, although denouncing many of Stalin’s actions, was not prepared to have Maoist thinking and ideology come to the forefront in the Communist bloc, especially due to the historical tensions between China and the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> The conflict between Moscow and Beijing “manifested itself in three forms: a dispute over strategy and tactics for the so-called ‘national liberation movements’ in colonial areas; active

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ford, “Calling the Sino-Soviet Split”

<sup>20</sup> Britannica, Khrushchev’s Secret Speech <https://www.britannica.com/event/Khrushchevs-secret-speech>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Reuters, China Timeline, p. 45

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

competition for favor and influence among the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa, as well as among the countries of Latin America; and a budding rivalry for control of the local Communist movements in all these areas.”<sup>24</sup> This desire for control and influence led to further conflicts between the Soviet Union and China at Communist Bloc meetings, the most famous of which was at the 22nd Party Congress in October 1961. At this Congress, Khrushchev attacked the Albanian Party (which had defied the Kremlin for years with China’s support), which was viewed as “of course, an attack on the Chinese Communist Leadership as well.”<sup>25</sup> Using other nations as a means to influence and control China was another tactic of Khrushchev’s rejection of Maoist leadership in the Communist Bloc.

After Khrushchev’s speech regarding “de-Stalinization” including a vocalized desire to work with countries who had previously been against Soviet rule, as well as Soviet rejection of Mao’s leadership in the Communist Bloc, Mao expressed anger and vowed to take ideological steps away from the Soviet Union. This was accomplished through the changes in Beijing’s commune and the Great Leap Forward , as well as China’s “shelling of Nationalist offshore islands without Moscow’s knowledge...and China’s nuclear weapons acquisition.”<sup>26</sup> Mao’s decisions to take steps to distance Beijing from Moscow are key to the Sino-Soviet split.

The vital point regarding Sino-Soviet split is that it was comprised of many small decisions beginning in 1949 and coming to a head with the border clashes of 1969. The split developed over a decade. The first “clear evidence coming in the form of ideological rhetoric....in 1959.”<sup>27</sup> With bilateral relations weakening, Mao made the decision to move forward on different ideological paths more boldly than before.

First, Mao decided to take a step away from the the Soviet version of regime enforcement. For Mao’s China, the regime maintained its domestic security through cadres. These cadres were people who would patrol the neighborhoods and inform on their neighbors.

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<sup>24</sup> Zagoria, Donald S. “Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961.” *Princeton University Press*, 1962. p. 245

<sup>25</sup> Zagoria, p. 370-383

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*

<sup>27</sup> ADST, “Two Shades of Red, the Sino-Soviet Split (Moments in U.S. Diplomatic History)” <http://adst.org/2016/03/two-shades-of-red-the-sino-soviet-split/#.WdRhkWhSw2w>

The Chinese version of the Soviet Cadres gave local officials a high degree of autonomy within their neighborhoods to enforce and maintain its domestic apparatus. Next, The Great Leap Forward from 1958 to 1962 was viewed by Moscow as a direct aggressive effort made against them. The Soviet Union essentially cut China out during this time because they were so alarmed at the amount of death, the lack of structural characteristics, the inefficient cadres, and the continuation of the Great Leap Forward (regardless of the death toll), if it meant success for China.<sup>28</sup>

During this time, China was infuriated with Soviet desires to create a détente situation with the United States, especially after the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. “After the Cuban missile crisis, Mao was very critical of Khrushchev’s concessions. More and more of this was buried in esoteric publications and utterances,” meaning Mao was speaking more and more openly against Khrushchev, but only intending for the criticism to be understood by specific people involved.<sup>29</sup> For example, in June 1963, China published “The Chinese Communist Party’s Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement,”<sup>30</sup> and the USSR replied with an “Open Letter of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union”<sup>31</sup> leading to further rifts in Sino-Soviet relations. These were manifest in the “exchange of hostile rhetoric.”<sup>32</sup>

In 1966, China again adopted a radical internal policy to, in Mao’s view, “ensure that the PRC would not follow in the Soviet revisionist footsteps,”<sup>33</sup> by launching the Cultural Revolution. Additionally, the Revolution tied-in directly with domestic Chinese leadership disputes Mao was involved in. Due to the extreme failure of the Great Leap Forward, Mao had lost influence and support in Chinese domestic politics. At this time, Mao was struggling with

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<sup>28</sup> Zagoria, p. 172-174

<sup>29</sup> ADST, “Two Shades of Red, Sino-Soviet Split”

<sup>30</sup> Marxists, “A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement. The Letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in Reply to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of March 30, 1963.” Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1963; pp. 1-61. Transcription: Maoist Documentation Project. (April 2010). <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sino-soviet-split/cpc/proposal.htm>

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*

<sup>32</sup> ADST, “Two Shades of Red, Sino-Soviet Split”

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*



his administration and governance, and also with the Soviet Union, so he called on the people of China to rally against the Soviet Union and stand with the Communist party. He did this by professing that there were inequalities in the social structure of the Soviet Union because certain groups were segmented by the party bureaucrats. Mao claimed that bureaucratization had already destroyed the Soviet Union, and that something needs to happen.<sup>34</sup> Essentially, “The Cultural Revolution can...be best described as Mao’s attempt to solve the basic contradictions between [his own Maoist views]...and the elitist tendencies of Leninist organizational principles,” while also taking steps to secure his political influence and leadership in China.<sup>35</sup> The purpose of the Cultural Revolution was to target the bureaucracy, however, Mao took the fight of revolution to the Party he had created, essentially the root of the system. This decision quickly led to the political isolation of China. The Cultural Revolution, which lasted until 1976, basically severed all diplomatic contact between China and the Soviet Union, as well as China and the rest of the world.<sup>36</sup>

During the Cultural Revolution, with Sino-Soviet relations already on thin ice, the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia in August of 1968, and used the Brezhnev Doctrine to justify the invasion. This was met with split reactions from the Communist Bloc. However, “The Chinese Communists...denounced it as analogous to Hitler’s intervention in Prague in 1939,” and this established the political climate for the 1969 border clashes.<sup>37</sup>

The 1969 border clashes were due to an historically “poorly demarcated border” between the Soviet Union and China - who both claimed sovereignty.<sup>38</sup> This is another example of the historic territorial disputes being brought into current political issues. The border clashes began

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<sup>34</sup> Hong Yung Lee. “The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Case Study.” University of California Press, 1980. p. 2-3

<sup>35</sup> Hong, p. 3

<sup>36</sup> National Cold War Exhibition. Sino-Soviet Split. <http://www.nationalcoldwarexhibition.org/schools-colleges/national-curriculum/detente/sino-soviet-split.aspx>

<sup>37</sup> Hitchens, Christopher. August 25, 2008. “The Verbal Revolution: How the Prague Spring broke Communism’s main Spring.” [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/fighting\\_words/2008/08/the\\_verbal\\_revolution.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/fighting_words/2008/08/the_verbal_revolution.html)

<sup>38</sup> Farley, Robert. February 9, 2016 “How the Soviet Union and China Almost Started World War III.” <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-the-soviet-union-china-almost-started-world-war-iii-15152>

after the Chinese invaded Zhenbao Island, and continued to create further tensions and numerous border clashes with the Soviets. This point in Sino-Soviet relations is the crux of the termination of relations between the Soviet Union and China. Fortunately, these clashes and the further escalation did not result in World War III, due most likely to the potential outcome of the war being a “short Chinese success, followed by a sharp, destructive Soviet rebuke” from the United States and other powers.<sup>39</sup> In October of 1969, China and the Soviet Union began border-demarcation talks, however, the fact remains that the Sino-Soviet split was still in effect.

“Struggles over ideology, leadership, and resources...resulted in a sharp split between the allies that had global repercussions”<sup>40</sup> and still affects the international world today. The relationships between Mao and Stalin, and then Mao and Khrushchev, were instrumental to the Sino-Soviet Alliance in 1949, as well as the Sino-Soviet split; however, other factors were involved as well. It is apparent that the Sino-Soviet split was not in the national interest of China. For example, studying the personalities of Stalin and Khrushchev is vital to understanding their reactions to Mao’s China. More importantly, it is important to take into account Mao’s highly confrontational personality, and his aspirations to maintain control over domestic issues (Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution, etc.), as well as control over international perceptions and status (i.e. leader of Communist Bloc). In the next section, Mao’s personality is examined to determine how and why certain decisions were made.

## **Part II: Leadership and Governmental Structure**

According to Jerrold Post, Mao’s psychobiography would include five parts: Development in the Context of the Nation’s History, Personality, Worldview, Leadership Style, and Outlook.<sup>41</sup> Each of these will be discussed in the following section regarding Mao’s

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid*

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*

<sup>41</sup> Post, Jerrold M., ed. “The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders: With Profiles of Saddam Hussein and Bill Clinton.” *Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press*, 2003. ch 4, p. 102-104. Appendix: “Conceptual Framework and Organization Design for an Integrated Political Personality Profile.”

background, evolution into a political and ideological leader, and a discussion of his inner circle during 1949 and 1969.

### **Mao's Background and Personal Characteristics**

Mao's personality and political practices played equal roles in his ability to remain in power from the creation of the PRC in 1949 until his death in 1976. He was unique as a leader because of his drive for power, and his insight into what was required for China to become a successful independent nation.<sup>42</sup> Mao's political ideology aligned with the Communist Party ideals, but it was his drive, background, and core beliefs and understandings that enabled him to rise to power and implement his goal of a powerful China. One of Mao's strengths was his recognition of the power of the people. His force of will and his personality enabled him to mobilize the masses (specifically the peasantry) to accomplish his objectives. He mobilized the people with specific goals to ostracise and purge opponents (political and otherwise) and their support bases. This utilization is an example of Mao's ability to lead through a cult of personality.<sup>43</sup> Mao's cult of personality was developed from actions and ideas drawn from Mao's lived experiences - his upbringing, his involvement at the dawning of the Communist Party in China, his participation in the Long March, and his battles with his political opponents during the early years of the Party.

Mao was born in a village to a wealthy farmer in 1893, many years before he seized power of the Communist Party in 1935. He was the oldest of three boys. His parents had seven children, but only three survived. Growing up, he excelled at his studies and enjoyed reading and was very intelligent and independent.<sup>44</sup> At a young age his parents wanted him to marry in an arranged marriage. He defied his parents and left home to avoid the arranged marriage and continue his education.<sup>45</sup> After graduating from school in Changsha, Mao went to Beijing where

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<sup>42</sup> Glenn Kucha, Glenn & Llewellyn, Jennifer. "The Cult of Mao." *Alpha History*, 2015.  
<http://alphahistory.com/chineserevolution/cult-of-mao/>

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> Mao Zedong: Biographical and Political Profile.  
[http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china\\_1900\\_mao\\_early.htm](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1900_mao_early.htm)

<sup>45</sup> Farley,

he was exposed to Marxism, which was key in his political formation. In Beijing he became politically involved and was instrumental in organizing the May 4th protests against the Japanese occupation of Shandong (after the Paris Peace Conference Concessions at Versailles).

The Communist Party of China (CPC) was founded on July 1, 1921. When the civil war between the Nationalists and Communists was at its peak in the 1930s, Mao was a low ranking member of the CPC and was working as a principal at a school in the countryside in Hunan. In addition to his work as a principal, Mao was also mobilizing and radicalizing the peasants to join the CPC.<sup>46</sup> Because he was not where the action was in the north, when Chiang Kai-shek (the Nationalist leader) tried to purge the Communists, Mao survived. It is important to note that the Soviet Union was supporting the Nationalists at this time.<sup>47</sup> In 1935, during the Long March, many Communist Party leaders died. The lack of leadership opened the door for Mao to emerge as a leader of the Communist Party. He had found his vocation, and he remained in this position until his death in 1976.<sup>48</sup>

One of the hallmarks of Mao's leadership was his ability to mobilize the masses, particularly the peasants. Mao recognized the strength and power that the masses held. Because he was born into a farmer's family, he had worked with the peasants for years, and could relate to them. He also taught at a country school and was accepted as part of the rural community. Over the years as leader of China, he would continually return to the idea of mobilization to accomplish his goals and deter political opponents (international and domestic). Mao believed that it was necessary to mobilize the masses to revolution to ensure the government's success.<sup>49</sup> He did so with various campaigns focused on accomplishing his goals. However, while Mao was excellent at mobilization, he was not necessarily as skilled at organization.<sup>50</sup> During his leadership, some campaigns he promoted failed due to this failure. Many would bring this to his

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<sup>46</sup> Lüthi, Lorenz M. "The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World." Princeton University Press. March 2, 2008. ISBN: 9781400837625 p. 23

<sup>47</sup> Mao Zedong: Biographical and Political Profile

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Lieberthal, Kenneth. "Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform." *New York: W.W. Norton*, 2004. p. 50

<sup>50</sup> Lieberthal, p. 93

attention in an attempt to challenge his authority. For example, over 30 million people died in the Great Leap Forward due to the masses excellent response to mobilization, but a horrendous lack of planning.<sup>51</sup>

The Long March was a pivotal point for Mao's political standing, but it also impacted his personal beliefs. The March ended after 370 days, leaving only the strongest and the most resilient to lead. The impression from the Long March that remained with Mao was the idea of being "left in the wilderness." During the Long March, if people stayed with the larger group then there was a better chance of survival. If anyone was left because they were perceived as a threat, they were literally left out in the wilderness and would most likely perish. Essentially, if everyone acclimated and concurred with leadership, all would have the best chance for survival. While the literal version of this principle was especially true during the Long March, Chinese people have adopted this standard into their party ideology. Mao recognized the power behind this way of thinking, and adopted it into his personal political agenda. In practice, if someone in Mao's political circle was ever opposed to any leadership suggestion (i.e. Mao's ideology), Mao would cast them out into the "political wilderness" to ostracize them and limit their political influence. This idea of ostracising people from the inner group was a practice Mao utilized in Chinese politics for the rest of his life. This is an idea also predominant in Chinese culture; the idea that if one is alone, one cannot survive. Ostracism in China, both physically and politically, was and is viewed as failure to succeed. Mao understood this type of thinking and became a master at ostracizing a single individual or whole groups through fear and manipulation.<sup>52</sup>

Mao had to assert himself as a leader by purging and undermining his opponents and their support base. This is another key strategy that Mao would use throughout his political career. Mao claimed he was best suited to lead because he claimed to know "and understand China."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Mao Zedong: Biographical and Political Profile

<sup>52</sup> Lieberthal, p. 78

<sup>53</sup> Lüthi, p. 39

After Mao officially took power, he started the Rectification Campaign which lasted from 1941 to 1944 with the purpose of rooting out those opposed to his ideology. The movement began as a series of group meetings to study Mao's writings, but "was later exposed as a campaign to identify, marginalise, intimidate, and remove party members opposed to Mao's leadership and policies."<sup>54</sup> The Rectification Campaign took the ideas Mao established from the Long March, and those that were not in agreement with them were identified as disloyal and cast out of the Party.<sup>55</sup> The Rectification Campaign was a major point of leadership established through Mao's cult of personality.<sup>56</sup>

Mao knew how to manage his cult of personality with purposeful propaganda promoting his views.<sup>57</sup> He realized that after any propaganda campaign, his suggestions would be accepted by the public that desired to please him. He used his influence to mobilize the masses, and eventually they turned against the USSR.<sup>58</sup> This process is the same procedure Mao followed in establishing or manipulating most of his domestic and international policies throughout his leadership of the PRC. Mao came to full power in the Communist Party and stopped "blind imitation of Soviet experience and obedience to Soviet directives."<sup>59</sup> Mao's statement shows the healthy distrust the Chinese held towards the USSR at that time, and planted the seed of undermining the Soviet Union.

### **Examples of Mao's Personal Characteristics and Beliefs in Decision Making: Featuring Other Members of Government & Government Structures/Institutions**

#### **The Third Plenum of the 8th Central Committee - Lushan (August 2-16, 1959)**

The Third Plenum in Lushan was a very important event portraying Mao's personal convictions in how he fought for what he wanted. The Third Plenum was a meeting for all the highest ranking Chinese officials of the 8th Central Committee. It occurred ten years after the

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<sup>54</sup> Cairns, Rebecca. "The Rectification Movement." *Alpha History*, 2015.  
<http://alphahistory.com/chineserevolution/rectification-movement/>

<sup>55</sup> Ibid

<sup>56</sup> Kucha, Glenn & Llewellyn, Jennifer. "The Sino-Soviet Split" 2015

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> Kucha, Glenn & Llewellyn, Jennifer. "The Cult of Mao." 2015

<sup>59</sup> Reuters, China Timeline

establishment of the People's Republic of China. Mao and the rest of the government leaders met to discuss the establishment of a government after the revolution. Many important Communist Party leaders were involved in this Plenum, and Mao's manipulation and ostracization of people during this time showed his personality skills at their most deadly. At the meeting, the CPC moved forward with Mao's suggestion of a Great Leap Forward.

Mao realized coming into the Third Plenum that he was potentially losing power to Liu Shaoqi, the number two person in the government (his vice chairman), who was very organized - the opposite of Mao. This loss of power was because Mao was unable to present a completely organized plan for the Great Leap Forward.<sup>60</sup>

Before the Plenum even began, Peng Dehuai, a member of the Communist Party of China, leader of the People's Liberation Army, and an old friend of Mao from the Long March, was targeted by Mao in order to manipulate the Plenum towards Mao's view.<sup>61</sup> Peng always spoke his mind to Mao, even though the rest of China had begun to self-censor around Mao for fear of ostracization.<sup>62</sup> Peng wrote a private letter to Mao in which he expressed criticism of the Great Leap Forward and of Mao himself. Mao decided to dispense the letter to all those attending the Plenum. He used the contents to "smoke out" any enemies against the Party who expressed doubt in the Great Leap Forward, essentially anyone who was against Mao's agenda.<sup>63</sup> By undermining and ostracizing Peng, Mao believed he had a way to control his main competition, Liu Shaoqi<sup>64</sup>. At this point, Liu Shaoqi was forced to decide who to side with regarding the letter. Either pro-Mao or anti-Great Leap Forward. If he sided against Mao, he would be purged. Liu ended up siding with Mao and the Great Leap Forward to avoid future trouble.<sup>65</sup><sup>66</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> Lieberthal, p. 49

<sup>62</sup> Lieberthal, p. 129

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Britannica, China, p. 46

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup> North, Robert C. "Liu Shaoqi: Chinese Statesman." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2008.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Liu-Shaoqi#ref51319>

The strategies Mao deployed at this conference were masterful and displayed his cunning, political shrewdness, and his belief in how power should be wielded - through control, manipulation, fear, and subtle threats. Mao's reputation was powerful enough that one key leader in the government, Deng Xiaoping, did not even attend Lushan for fear of being ostracized by Mao.<sup>67</sup> Mao skillfully manipulated many key government leaders at the conference by practicing negative groupthink strategies such as manipulation and scapegoating.<sup>68</sup> One person Mao manipulated at the Plenum was Zhu De, Mao's military commander throughout the civil war.<sup>69</sup> Mao was able to first isolate Zhu by asking him in front of everyone at the conference what he thought of Peng's letter criticizing the Great Leap Forward. When his attempt to avoid giving an answer failed, Zhu concluded that he needed to side with Mao in order to avoid being ostracized. This is a prime example of groupthink due to fear of a leader, to constrain people not to cause contention.<sup>70</sup> Mao also manipulated Zhou Enlai - another comrade from the Long March, who Mao knew would support him; as well as Lin Biao (military power), and Chen Boda (in charge of propaganda), both of whom quickly turned to Mao's point of view.<sup>71</sup> At the Third Plenum, Mao was able to persuade everyone to side with him.

The results of the Lushan Conference revealed that no one would cross Mao or be willing to criticize the Great Leap Forward.<sup>72</sup> Because of this outcome, Mao would only listen to the positive comments regarding the Great Leap Forward, and so he decided to move forward with even more power. This prime example of groupthink laid the groundwork for Mao to continue cultivating his cult of personality, not only in the general populace, but also in the government, and became a key strategy in Mao's reaction to the USSR.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. "Deng Xiaoping: Chinese Leader." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2006. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Deng-Xiaoping>

<sup>68</sup> Abilene Video\* From Class

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> Kucha, Glenn & Llewellyn, Jennifer. "The Sino Soviet Split" 2015

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> Lieberthal, p. 98

<sup>73</sup> Lieberthal, p. 49



When the Great Leap Forward eventually came crashing down, Mao found himself on the wrong side of his own manipulation strategy. Mao fostered his cult of personality, and mobilized the masses for the Great Leap Forward, but his lack of organization skills clearly led to disaster.<sup>74</sup> Although Mao admitted that the Great Leap Forward was a mistake, he was ostracized himself, and as a result, Liu and Deng were able to take over.<sup>75</sup> From 1959 to 1968, Mao was the one thrust out into a bureaucratic wilderness.<sup>76</sup> Liu, as Vice Chairman, became Chairman, and Mao remained the “great Helmsman”. He was still able to retain his voice in the government if he wanted to, but he removed himself from the arena to plan his strategy to regain his position.

### **Cultural Revolution**

As discussed earlier, the Cultural Revolution was the means for Mao to secure his political role and leadership after the unfortunate results of the Great Leap Forward and Liu’s new position in the government. Mao decided that mobilizing the masses was the best answer for his return to power. Mao believed that a revolution was necessary for his triumphant return from the political wilderness, and he used his own cult of personality and propaganda to mobilize the masses to accomplish his objective.

After Mao was pushed out into the wilderness, he established new goals. First, in order to remove his successor, Liu Shaoqi, Mao planned to take out Liu’s support base by undermining and ostracizing Liu. Second, he planned to discipline the government for rejecting him. Third, he resolved to keep the spirit of revolution alive in the next generation.<sup>77</sup> Because Mao believed that revolution worked in the past to help him achieve power, he did not doubt that revolution would work again. Since Mao was marginalized from the peasants after the catastrophe of the Great Leap Forward, he had to figure out how to win the peasants back to his side. He postured the Cultural Revolution in a way that supported his cult of personality.<sup>78</sup> Mao played to his strengths

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<sup>74</sup> *ibid*

<sup>75</sup> Britannica, China, p. 45

<sup>76</sup> Lieberthal, p. 290

<sup>77</sup> Lieberthal, p. 176

<sup>78</sup> Glenn Kucha, Glenn & Llewellyn, Jennifer. “The Cult of Mao.” 2015

and Liu Shaoqi's weakness; namely, he used the revolution to reveal his personality.<sup>79</sup> When the system became chaotic, Mao believed everyone in China would look to him for leadership as they had in the past during the Long March and the Establishment of PRC, etc. The chaos from the Cultural Revolution enabled Mao to reestablish his leadership, and in addition, it fundamentally destroyed and eroded the stability and institutional apparatus that Liu established after Mao's failure of the Great Leap Forward.<sup>80</sup> This was a calculated political move based on Mao's personal experiences. Mao was calculating and patient from 1965 to 1966, utilizing the skills he learned during the civil war while practicing guerilla warfare.<sup>81</sup> By January of 1967, Mao was reinstated to power again.

When Mao took back the title of Chairman from Liu, he also ensured that Liu's power base was eroded and purged. After his return, Mao decided to reorganize the government. Fortunately for him, almost everything including institutions and historical landmarks were destroyed in the Cultural Revolution. The military (the People's Liberation Army, PLA), as the only government institution that was still intact, needed leadership, and Mao stepped in.<sup>82</sup> Mao had even more power at his command with his control of the military. He used this to create an aura of strength and fear.

### **Mao and the USSR 1949 - Sino-Soviet Peace Agreement**

While Mao and Stalin may have signed a peace agreement after the Communist Party came to power in 1949, there was little love lost between the two men.<sup>83</sup> Mao remembered the issues with the Soviet Union's lack of initial support. Additionally, one of the greatest

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<sup>79</sup> Michael, Franz. "Mao and the perpetual revolution : an illuminating study of Mao Tse-tung's role in China and world communism." *Barron's*, Woodbury, N.Y., 1977.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Lieberthal, p. 89

<sup>82</sup> Michael, Franz. 1977

<sup>83</sup> Sheng, Michael M. "Response: Mao and Stalin: Adversaries or Comrades?" February 2009. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/china-quarterly/article/response-mao-and-stalin-adversaries-or-comrades/5632967AE7E1660648EFCD3B028873B2>

discrepancies during this time period was between the Soviet security goals and Chinese revolutionary interests (specifically Mao's desire to be in a constant state of revolution).<sup>84</sup>

### **Mao and the USSR 1969 - Sino-Soviet Split**

While the Sino-Soviet Split came to a crux in 1969 with the border clashes, the deterioration actually began much earlier. The main event that spurred Mao to begin openly criticizing the Soviet Union was Nikita Khrushchev's "secret speech" in 1956 denouncing Stalin's cult of personality.<sup>85</sup> From the time he was rising to power in the CPC, Mao fostered a cult of personality to not only deal with the government, but to also wield power and instill fear into political opponents, and to an extent, even towards the general populace. Knowing this about Mao, the "secret speech" would have been quite a threat to Mao's power.

Mao never forgot that the Soviet Union, specifically Stalin, did not support the Communist Party of China until the Communists were about to take control of China. In fact,

"looking back at that period [the years prior to Communist Party of China] in 1962, when the Sino-Soviet conflict had come to a head, Mao declared: 'In 1945, Stalin wanted to prevent China from making revolution, saying that we should not have a civil war and should cooperate with Chiang Kai-shek, otherwise the Chinese nation would perish. But we did not do what he said. The revolution was victorious. After the victory of the revolution he [Stalin] next suspected China of being a Yugoslavia, and that I would become a second Tito.'"<sup>86</sup>

It is apparent from this quote that Mao's personality traits and actions in the government were key to the split.

While Mao and Stalin were not friends, Mao still made efforts to outwardly respect Stalin in a show of unity in the Communist Bloc, and in order to maintain a calculated control over Sino-Soviet relations.<sup>87</sup> And although Mao had a healthy self-esteem, he was still motivated by

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<sup>84</sup> *ibid*

<sup>85</sup> Britannica, Khrushchev's Secret Speech

<sup>86</sup> Britannica, China, p. 47

<sup>87</sup> Lüthi, p. 45

his need for validation. This was evident in his interactions with Stalin.<sup>88</sup> When Khrushchev came to power, it was a difficult situation for Mao. Khrushchev was a completely different type of person than Stalin. He emphasized politics over personality. Mao's personality traits definitely clashed with Khrushchev because Mao leaned heavily on his cult of personality.<sup>89</sup> Unlike with Stalin, Mao didn't need validation Khrushchev, instead seeking validation through becoming the leader of the Communist Bloc. Further, Mao was very ideological, while Khrushchev more western minded and willing to make concessions with the United States.<sup>90</sup> These differences lead to openly conflicting views and opinions at conferences and state visits.<sup>91</sup>

### **Inner Circles During Two Decisions**

Most of the leadership in China in 1949 was composed of the revolutionary leaders. During the second decision in 1969, a few members were different or held different positions. However, each time the groups came together to make a decision, they functioned in a similar manner. Groupthink was very prevalent, especially due to the fear of being ostracized from their positions of power.

### **Inner Circle During First Decision**

There were numerous leaders of the Communist Party of China that served on the Political Bureau. Some key members of Mao's inner circle in 1949 included Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Zhou Enlai, and Lin Biao. Liu Shaoqi was the chief military commander of the Communist Party in 1937, and the Vice-chairman under Mao after 1949. His value to Mao was in his Soviet relationships that allowed him to head the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association from 1949 to 1954.<sup>92</sup> Deng Xiaoping met Zhou and other revolutionaries in France in the 1920s. He learned about Communism in his travels to Moscow and joined the CPC. He met Mao in 1931 and was well-regarded in the military campaigns of 1937-1949 and generally favorably viewed

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>89</sup> Lüthi, p. 240

<sup>90</sup> Michael, Franz. 1977

<sup>91</sup> Ford, "Sino-Soviet Split"

<sup>92</sup>North, Robert C. "Liu Shaoqi: Chinese Statesman." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2008.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Liu-Shaoqi#ref51319>

the Soviet Union during this time.<sup>93</sup> He became the Vice-Premier to Zhou Enlai in 1952. Zhou Enlai was Mao's boss in 1928 during the beginning of the CPC, and became the Premier in 1949 where his job was essentially to support Mao's version of China.<sup>94</sup> His value was in his development of ideas. He was instrumental in developing the Great Leap Forward campaign. Finally, Lin Biao was a General in the Civil War and a key player in the CPC victory. He helped capture Beijing, Wuhan, and Guangzhou.<sup>95</sup> His ties to the Soviet Union came from the three years he lived there while being treated for a war injury.

### **Inner Circle During Second Decision**

During the second decision, the four inner circle members from the first decision had changed their positions of leadership and their political opinions. However, Mao was the Chairman again, regained his power and made decisions like before.

Liu Shaoqi had pushed Mao from power after the failure of the Great Leap Forward to become Chairman from 1959-1968 (when Mao regained power).<sup>96</sup> He died under bad conditions during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>97</sup> Deng Xiaoping opposed Mao and the Great Leap Forward in 1959. He gave his support to Liu Shaoqi as the new Chairman. He wrote a letter against Mao's Great Leap Forward campaign, but did not stand up to Mao in the leadership meetings. In 1966 he fell out of political favor and did not have a voice on the Sino-Soviet split. Zhou Enlai helped in regain his political position after the Cultural Revolution.<sup>98</sup> Zhou Enlai attempted to defend Liu during the Cultural Revolution, and succeeded in defending Deng. However, he knew he would lose his position if he did not support Mao so he gave his support to Mao, but Mao turned

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<sup>93</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. "Deng Xiaoping: Chinese Leader." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2006.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Deng-Xiaoping>

<sup>94</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. "Zhou Enlai: Premier of China." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2008.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Zhou-Enlai>

<sup>95</sup> Rhoades, Edward J.M. "Lin-Biao: Chinese Military Leader." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2007.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Lin-Biao>

<sup>96</sup> North, Robert C. "Liu Shaoqi: Chinese Statesman." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2008.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Liu-Shaoqi#ref51319>

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. "Deng Xiaoping: Chinese Leader."

his favor to Lin Biao.<sup>99</sup> Zhou visited Moscow in 1964 hoping to repair the deeping rift, but he was unable to resolve the fundamental differences that had arisen between China and the Soviet Union.”<sup>100</sup> Lin Biao was another revolutionary figure who became Mao’s heir apparent in 1969. However, he attempted a coup and died when his plane went down while he was fleeing Russia in 1971.<sup>101</sup>

These men were close associates of Mao over the years. However, Mao’s personality dominated the decision-making and these men, as well as others, changed their opinions to match Mao’s, especially after they opposed him on some points and realized how horrible it was to be ‘out in the wilderness.’ The changes in the inner circles from the first decision to the second decision were not so much in the membership, but the opinions and alliances that fluctuated. In the end, Mao’s ideology prevailed.

### **Leadership Style and Orientation**

Margaret Hermann’s Leadership Style Analysis helps to determine what the drives and motivations of Mao were.<sup>102</sup> This analysis will be done using her “Leadership Style as a Function of Responsiveness to Constraints, Openness to Information and Motivation” format (Figure 1). I determined that Mao challenged constraints, and was closed to information, but that his motivation was problem focused and expansionist. This means that Mao is a ‘crusader’ who focuses on “expanding one’s power and influence.”<sup>103</sup> Moving onto Figure 2 “General Alignment of Traits with Orientation,”<sup>104\*</sup> I found that Mao would have a high in-group bias and nationalism, as well as a high belief that he could control events. Further, Mao needed power, had high self-confidence, a high distrust level, and was very task oriented with a low conceptual

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<sup>99</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. “Zhou Enlai: Premier of China.”

<sup>100</sup> Ibid

<sup>101</sup> Rhoades, Edward J.M. “Lin-Biao: Chinese Military Leader.”

<sup>102</sup> Hermann, Margaret G. “Assessing Leadership Style: A Trait Analysis.” *Social Science Automation*, November 1999, Minor revision 2002-11-13. p. 9

<sup>103</sup> Hermann, Margaret G. p. 9

<sup>104</sup> \*Handout from Class, “Table 2: General Alignment of Traits with Orientation”

complexity.<sup>105</sup> This means Mao would be very results oriented, especially when they were his decisions and his desired results.

Figure 3, “Description of Six Possible Orientation to Foreign Affairs” determines what drives Mao as a leader.<sup>106\*</sup> Essentially Mao was interested in control over people, places, things, and divided the world into an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ mentality.<sup>107</sup> Further, Mao would be wary of people and try to determine what they will do next, and would be mostly focused on security and behavior.<sup>108</sup> On Figure 4 “Behavior Leaders with six Orientations are Likely to Exhibit in Policymaking Process” Mao’s nature and relation to opposition is judged. As an expansionist, Mao desires high loyal staff or group<sup>109</sup> of colleagues to work with, and Mao’s goals will always be the driving force behind decisions and research. Additionally, Mao would have a low tolerance for disagreement as it could impact his credibility.

This process is very helpful to understand what drives Mao (i.e. his mentality and focus on security and behavior), as well as what his decisionmaking process would be like (he wants a group loyal to him, his decisions are final and supported, etc.). This plays right into his psychobiography which we have examined this entire section.

### **Mao Psychobiography According to Jerrold Post<sup>110</sup>**

The development of Mao in the context of the nation’s history and culture is apparent in his education and socialization. There were numerous key events that played into his leadership including interactions with Soviet leadership and his early exposure to Communism. His personality was shaped by the same events that shaped the pillars of the Communist Party Ideology, thus creating an unbreakable link between Maoist thought and the CPC. His individual experiences and personality created his worldview and perceptions. Which manifested in the

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<sup>105</sup> \*Handout from Class, “Table 2: General Alignment of Traits with Orientation”

<sup>106</sup> \*Handout from Class, “Table 1: Description of Six Possible Orientations to Foreign Affairs”

<sup>107</sup> *ibid*

<sup>108</sup> *ibid*

<sup>109</sup> \*Handout from Class, “Table 3: Behavior Leaders With Six Orientations Are Likely to Exhibit in Policymaking Process”

<sup>110</sup> Post. ch.4, pg 102-104.

People's Republic of China through campaigns, continuous revolution, and grassroots mobilization, and led to the development of Maoism.

### **Mao - Influence of a Single Individual**

Mao is a distinctive leader in Chinese and world history. Mao held a title that no one else ever held in China before or after, that of Chairman.<sup>111</sup> Mao wielded his power in a very unique way. When he was out of the government system and out of power, he would create a situation of chaos among the masses so he could emerge as the leader to re-establish control. Mao understood that in Chinese politics, the power comes from networks, power bases, and personalities. Mao wielded control over all of these factors.<sup>112</sup> Mao built power bases by mobilizing the masses (peasants). He would then control the propaganda that was given to them. In this way, he ensured that he was in control of the people and the government. The outcome of this control is that international and domestic decisions were made according to Mao's self-serving actions, grudges, and desires. His cult of personality was his not so secret weapon in retaining control and power.

## **Part III: Domestic Politics and Opposition and Cultural Effects**

As examined, Mao's decisions are based on desires, leadership factors, and personality. Cultural effects and domestic politics played a part in decision making as well. To better understand cultural effects, the history of China leading up to the two key decisions needs to be examined.

### **Cyclical Nature**

Chinese history has a cyclical nature based on dynasties. For example, throughout Chinese history, the many different dynasties all had similar lifespans. Generally, a famine, natural disaster, or another type of crisis would lead to a peasant revolt, which would then lead to

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<sup>111</sup> Lieberthal, p. 198

<sup>112</sup> Ibid



an overthrow of the leaders of that dynasty. After the dynasty is overthrown, a dark age would be in effect until a new leader or local warlord would rise to enough prominence and power to establish a new dynasty.<sup>113</sup> This new leader would rule until another crisis arose, which would start the cycle over again. These dynastic cycles today are viewed with equality, meaning for example, the highest point of the Tang Dynasty is no better than the highest point of the Qing Dynasty.<sup>114</sup> This is an important distinction to be aware of, because the current era is viewed differently.

Because there were many dynasties, and this cycle was repeated often throughout Chinese history, whoever rose to prominence was viewed as the sole leader of the time. They were viewed revered because they had been given the “Mandate of Heaven.”<sup>115</sup> This Mandate meant that the leadership in power were approved by heaven to rule. For example, when a local warlord rose to power, if there were prosperous crops that year it confirmed the heavenly role of the leader in power. On the other hand, natural disasters, crises, and the decline of power showed that the leader was not fit to lead, the mandate of heaven was rescinded, and thus, the leadership must be removed from office. This cultural principle remains central to Chinese history, and plays directly into current domestic politics. It displays a self-serving vision of right or wrong, whatever the action.<sup>116</sup> “Mao understood the need for the Communist Party to maintain the view that they had the mandate from heaven. He also understood that to stay in power he must dispel the prevailing notion that the Communist Party could not avoid resistance.”<sup>117</sup> Struggles and obstacles could not be viewed as failures or as confirmation that the Mandate of Heaven was not in effect for Mao’s leadership. Mao later capitalized on this viewpoint by instigating rebellions (such as the Cultural Revolution) for his own political gain, and spun it so the masses turned towards him and the government, not against him. Thus, the key difference in the Chinese mindset in the modern era and the creation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, is that it

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<sup>113</sup> Lieberthal, p. 45

<sup>114</sup> *ibid*

<sup>115</sup> Michael, Franz. 1977

<sup>116</sup> Lieberthal, p. 79

<sup>117</sup> Michael, Franz. 1977

shattered all the earlier dynastic cycles, and allowed current leadership to rule while maintaining their legitimacy.<sup>118</sup>

### **Central Mindset and Western Powers**

In addition to viewing history as cyclical, the modern Chinese mindset is central. This is due to China's position of regional power during their dynasties. Historically, China was the major power in the area, and they held a unique position which allowed them to create a trade monopoly. Additionally, their sense of self was so strong that invaders (such as the Mongols) were often assimilated into Chinese culture, rather than taking control of China.<sup>119</sup> However, the coming of the West accelerated the downfall of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912).<sup>120</sup>

This occurred for many reasons, but one of the main issues was that Western powers determined trade, tariffs, and Western machine goods which eventually replaced Chinese goods and services. The Chinese were so confident in their own leadership and mandate from heaven that they did not believe they would ever be overthrown, especially by Western powers. The trade of opium tipped the scales and paved the way for the collapse of the last Chinese dynasty. Demand for Chinese products in Europe and other Western nations, allowed China to retain more money than they were spending.

This imbalance of trade caused Britain, in 1773, to create a higher demand of opium from China (prior to 1773, opium was used on a small scale in China).<sup>121</sup> By 1838, the balance of trade had shifted towards Britain and other colonial powers.<sup>122</sup> With the influx of opium and the lack of funding to pay for it, corruption in the government became rampant. This contributed to the decline of the Qing dynasty. During the hundred years from August 1842 to 1949, (the period when the "Red Sun Rises"), the great advanced civilization of China began falling apart due to these factors. The last Chinese dynasty collapsed by 1911, and the Republic Period from 1912-

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<sup>118</sup> *ibid*

<sup>119</sup> Lieberthal, p. 162

<sup>120</sup> Mao Zedong: Biographical and Political Profile

<sup>121</sup> Lieberthal, p. 147

<sup>122</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. "Opium Trade" *Encyclopedia Britannica*.  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/opium-trade>

1949 began. This is the period of Mao's rise to power and the solidification of his political beliefs.

### **Impacts on Domestic Politics**

The reason that the dynastic trend and colonialism are important to consider is because of their influences on domestic politics and the impact they have on interacting with the international world. Understanding China's historical dynastic regimes and their cyclical nature gives clues to what current Chinese leadership will do when encountering a challenge, and how and if they will succeed.<sup>123</sup> The current Communist Party does not want to enforce or create radical changes that would drastically reform and then ostracize the people, leading to a potential rebellion. In the past, dynasties were faced with the problem of how to govern in turbulent times. During these times, the government was essentially non-existent, or it made drastic choices that contributed to the downturn of the cycle. The current Communist party moves very cautiously in minimal sufficing steps and measures. This reluctance to have change means that it may not address the actual major problems of society.<sup>124</sup> This practice derives directly from Maoist thought. Maoist thought created the idea of a Chinese Dream of rejuvenation after the Century of Humiliation; it remains prevalent today.<sup>125</sup> China's current leader Xi Jinping has said that China needs to return to Maoist thought and keep advancing that dream, proving that the past is reflected in China's present and future.

Through the Republic Period from 1912 to 1949, Mao refined many of his ideals and cultural beliefs that created the Communist Party and eventually influenced all of China. Mao did this by examining a few key rebellions and taking pieces from each one. The Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864) offered Mao historical perspective and insights, namely that the leader of a rebellion could use grassroots mobilization to attract a following (as the leader of the Taiping rebellion did). Additionally, this rebellion helped Mao solidify his ideals of Party Discipline and the resolution to retain those revolutionary ideals which he believed would lead to the

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<sup>123</sup> Mao Zedong: Biographical and Political Profile

<sup>124</sup> Lieberthal, p. 147

<sup>125</sup> Lüthi, p. 176

Communist Party's success. Another Rebellion that influenced Mao and subsequent Chinese domestic policy was the Nian Rebellion from 1853 to 1868. By studying this revolution, Mao developed the origins of the Communist fear of crime and secret organizations. The most influential Revolution Mao studied was the 1911 revolution led by Sun Yat Sen.<sup>126</sup> Both the Nationalists and Communists were influenced by this revolution, leading to competing ideologies about revolution and leadership in China, and eventually to civil war.<sup>127</sup>

Domestically, Communist Party discipline is very important. This is due to lessons Mao derived from history, and which have carried on today. Each revolution Mao studied influenced Maoist thought and developed into ideals that affected domestic politics. Mao looked at the successes and failures of the revolutions and learned from them. He took insights and practices from those rebellions he studied, and he incorporated them into Communist practice during the Republic Period and after the PRC had been established. These principles are retained in current Communist ideals that continue to influence the government, leadership, and the population. Some examples of enduring principles are the ideals of Party discipline and loyalty to leadership, grassroots mobilization through the peasants, continual revolution, and an overriding vision (Maoism) to keep it cohesive.<sup>128</sup> Another Maoist philosophy, used by and against Mao, is the idea of a "political wilderness" which was established during the Long March.<sup>129</sup> It continues to directly impact domestic decision making and is currently being utilized by Xi Jinping.<sup>130</sup>

### **Domestic Groups That Impact Decisionmaking**

Since the Communist Party has basically the same ideology, there are not many domestic groups that impact decisionmaking. The People's Liberation Army is state controlled and does whatever the leadership decides.<sup>131</sup> Additionally, most domestic groups are either controlled or sponsored by the government and will not necessarily go against the PRC.

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<sup>126</sup> Office of the Historian. "The Chinese Revolution of 1911."

<sup>127</sup> Lüthi, p. 220

<sup>128</sup> Lieberthal, p. 203

<sup>129</sup> Reuters, Russia-China Relations

<sup>130</sup> *ibid*

<sup>131</sup> Lieberthal, p. 147

## **Decisions**

Mao's decisions in 1949 and 1969 are reflective of this cultural Chinese history. Additionally, these decisions give insight into the role Mao's cult of personality played in political decisions and his rise and retention of power. The decision in 1949 to sign a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union was born out of necessity on both sides. However, in the context of this historical backdrop, Mao's decision to sign the 1949 Treaty was domestically a step in the right direction, and anyone who went against it would be ostracized, thrown out into the political wilderness, and would lose face. Additionally, if the PRC crumbled almost as quickly as it was built up, Mao (as Chairman) would lose face and be ostracized. That could not happen, and thus Mao and the PRC found a way to maintain legitimacy and secure the stability of the PRC while also building up international ties.

Mao's second decision to cut ties with Russia in 1969 not only affected domestic politics, but had foreign policy implications. This is mainly due to the International Communist Bloc of Nations and Mao's desire to step into Stalin's place as leader, but domestic politics and interests did play a part. In the 1960s, the government wanted to save face not only internationally, but domestically. This is because of China's still emerging prominence in the region. Internationally this decision was influenced by the lack of leadership in the Communist Bloc after Stalin died, and Khrushchev's denouncement of many of Stalin's actions. Domestically, the decision was made after a number of border attacks between Russia and China.<sup>132</sup>

## **Part IV – Systems, Economics, Regional & Global Politics**

Between 1949 and 1969, Chinese borders did not change, the government evolved but the Communist Party of China (CPC) remained in power, and Mao Zedong retained his position as the great helmsman, leading the way. What did change between 1949 and 1969 were China's

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<sup>132</sup> Farley, February 2016

economic needs, its domestic relations, and its international relations. These changes influenced Mao's two main decisions regarding Russia.

### **System Factors of the 1949 Decision**

On October 1, 1949, Mao and the Communist Party established the People's Republic of China (PRC). On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Soviet Union recognized the the PRC as the leaders of Communist China, leading to the signed "Treaty of Friendship, Union, and Mutual Assistance".<sup>133</sup> As mentioned previously, the Soviet Union had shown support prior to this date to the Nationalists before surmising that the Communist Party would be successful in gaining control after the revolution. Although the PRC and Mao were aware that the Soviet Union switched alliances relatively quickly at this time (this lack of loyalty contributed to the Sino-Soviet split in the late 1960s), in 1949, Mao still supported renewing the 1945 contract between the Soviet Union and the old Chinese government to create a stronger tie between the two nations. Thus, on February 14, 1950, Mao met Stalin in Moscow and signed the Treaty of Friendship.

The treaty was signed for a variety of reasons, some of the most important reasons were due to the PRC economy and domestic politics at the time. The PRC was a brand-new nation with few allies, and in desperate need of economic benefits. The Treaty Mao and Stalin signed ensured mutual protection through military assistance and international decision-making, while additionally ensuring that China benefited from Russia's economic strength.<sup>134</sup> Because of the treaty, during the 1950s, thousands of workers from the USSR contributed to the Chinese economy through work, advice, and leadership.<sup>135</sup> During the time of the treaty, Moscow brought 160 industrial and economic projects to China, and over invested \$300 million dollars to jump-start development efforts.<sup>136</sup> The \$300 million dollars, along with the USSR experts sent to China, supported the economic benefits of the Treaty. However, they also imposed Soviet

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<sup>133</sup> Reuters, Russia-China Relations, May 2008

<sup>134</sup> Atkinson, pp. 357–358

<sup>135</sup> Kucha, Glenn & Llewellyn, Jennifer. "Sino-Soviet Relations." 2015.

<sup>136</sup> Reuters, Russia-China Relations, May 2008

ideology into a new Communist government. Mao eventually came to resent the high cost of the Treaty and the resulting economic impacts. For example, China ceded mineral rights in Xinjiang to the USSR, and the two ports of Dalian and Lushan in Manchuria to the USSR. In addition, China had to pay back the \$300 million loan with interest and pay for the Soviet experts.<sup>137</sup> However, at the time it was the best and possibly the only way for China to gain economic strength as a new government.

Mao and the Communist Party of China (CPC) had regional politics to contend with as well. After the 1949 Communist victory, Chiang Kai-Shek and his Nationalist forces fled to Taiwan to regroup (State History).<sup>138</sup> This Nationalist Regime ‘regrouping’ was supported by the United States, even though Mao’s forces were victorious.<sup>139</sup> To date, the Nationalists are still in Taiwan. However, during that time, Mao and the Communists were still wary of the Nationalist threat, particularly because they were backed by a world power, the United States.

In addition to economic needs and regional politics, global politics played a major role in the 1949 Sino-Soviet Union. Stalin and Mao both recognized the need for unity in the face of opposition to Communism, especially from other powerful international actors. For example, the ‘fall’ of China to Communism “led the United States to suspend diplomatic ties with the PRC for decades.”<sup>140</sup> With a powerful global power against them, Mao knew that ties to another global power, the Soviet Union, would serve the needs of the new and evolving PRC. Because the majority of the nations in the United Nations still viewed Chiang Kai-Shek, the Nationalist leader living in Taiwan, as the true leader of China, there could be significant problems for the Communist Party if the U.S. and the Nationalists enforced that view with the backing of the international community. The USSR was the only supporter of the PRC in the UN. The

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<sup>137</sup> Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. “Conclusion of the ‘Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance’.”

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/ziliao\\_665539/3602\\_665543/3604\\_665547/t18011.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/t18011.shtml)

<sup>138</sup> Office of the Historian. State Department. United States of America. “Milestones, The Chinese Revolution of 1949.”

<sup>139</sup> Reuters, Russia-China Relations MAY 2008

<sup>140</sup> Office of the Historian. State Department. United States of America. “Milestones, The Chinese Revolution of 1949.”

diplomatic strength gained from the signed Treaty gave China credibility in the international community that they desired and was necessary at that time.<sup>141</sup>

### **The Korean War**

During the twenty years between these two decisions, China and the USSR backed North Korea in the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. This was a source of tension between Stalin and Mao. Mao felt that throughout the war the Chinese paid for all the weapons supplied to North Korea, and they committed many troops to the war. Mao committed these forces to the war based on the assumption that Stalin would provide similar forces per the outlines of the Treaty of Friendship. However, because Stalin didn't want to be outwardly at war against the U.S.<sup>142</sup>, Moscow made sure that the Chinese paid for all weapons supplied to North Korea, as well as all troops on the ground, only contributing to air support.<sup>143</sup> Stalin's influence kept China in the war, but it was draining to China economically, politically, and militarily. Within a month of Stalin's death in 1953, China signed a truce to end the fighting because they could not maintain the support without increasing the detrimental effects to their country.<sup>144</sup> This conflict also pitted the PRC and the U.S. on opposite ends of an international conflict yet again, effectively ending any potential for cooperation between the new Chinese government and the United States. This was the first in many regional and international politics that led to a change in PRC and Mao's rhetoric.

### **System Factors of the 1969 Decision**

In the early 1960s, Sino-Soviet relations had evolved to a far different place than what they had been merely a decade before. This is due in part to Stalin's death and Nikita Khrushchev's new role as leader in the Soviet Union. As discussed previously, Khrushchev made statements condemning Stalin's cult of personality in 1956, seemingly targeting Mao and

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<sup>141</sup> Atkinson, pp. 357–358

<sup>142</sup> Kucha, Glenn & Llewellyn, Jennifer. "Sino-Soviet Relations." 2015

<sup>143</sup> Ibid

<sup>144</sup> Office of the Historian. State Department. United States of America. "Milestones, The Chinese Revolution of 1949."



his own cult of personality.<sup>145</sup> This was the beginning of the Sino-Soviet Split, although there were many additional systemic and political reasons as well.

First, the economic situation in China for the past 20 years had seen many changes. The influence of Soviet thinkers on the country's economic development, the Great Leap Forward, and the War in Korea were major contributors to the fluctuations in Chinese Economy. When the Cultural Revolution first began, the economy was not negatively affected to a great extent. Although, China would fall behind in future technological advances due to the lack of highly intellectual or skilled people available in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>146</sup> After the unequal economic losses due to the burden of cost of the Korean War (which China and the Soviet Union fought in together), Mao realized that the Treaty of Friendship was only benefitting the Soviet Union. When the Cultural Revolution began, Mao felt this imbalance even more, and began to pull away from the Soviet Union.<sup>147</sup> Also, China began to distance themselves from the Soviet Union because China was on the verge of reaching out to other countries for trade and economic benefits.

A second reason was that the main system factors leading to the Sino-Soviet Split in 1969 was that after Stalin died in 1953, Mao began to see himself as the world's senior Communist leader.<sup>148</sup> This viewpoint was solidified when Khrushchev began denouncing Stalin's personality cult and leadership. While Mao had not necessarily been friendly towards Stalin in private, in public he always supported him.<sup>149</sup> This difference of opinion between Mao and Khrushchev led to the USSR and PRC vying for supremacy. Communist Bloc meetings at the Moscow Conferences in 1957 and 1962 led to harsh exchanges of words between the two leaders. During this time, Khrushchev visited Beijing a few times, with both visits ending abruptly or being cut short because the two leaders could not get along. Additionally, when Beijing had a minor border conflict with India in 1962, the Soviet Union supported India and gave them weapons and

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<sup>145</sup> Lüthi, p.201

<sup>146</sup> Lüthi, p. 36

<sup>147</sup> Reuters, Russia-China Relations. (May 2008)

<sup>148</sup> Kucha, Glenn & Llewellyn, Jennifer. "Sino-Soviet Relations." 2015

<sup>149</sup> Ibid

fighter-planes.<sup>150</sup> These blatant actions reinforced Mao's decision that pulling away from the Soviet Union was in the best interest of China.

In addition to vying for power in the Communist Bloc, Moscow and Beijing had different views on every issue, including how to interact with other countries on a global level. After the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, Mao accused Khrushchev of being submissive to the United States due to their lack of action, and Khrushchev's statements after the fact.<sup>151</sup> Further, rising tensions on the Sino-Soviet border culminated with border clashes in 1969.<sup>152</sup> These border clashes effectively ended any remaining relations between the USSR and PRC, leading to the split in 1969.<sup>153</sup>

### **Summary**

While leadership, government structure, and key players in each administration were vital to the misunderstandings and changes in Sino-Soviet relations between 1949 and 1969, systems and global politics were major influences to the split as well. Mao's decision to vie for leadership within the Communist Bloc, the unequal economic situation under the Treaty of Friendship, and various levels of strength and weaknesses in regional and global political relations led to escalating tensions between the Soviet Union and Communist China. Although Mao distrusted Stalin on a personal level, he signed the Friendship Treaty to further the economic and political interests of China.<sup>154</sup> However, he later viewed it as a mistake when Khrushchev was in power. As loss of economic power and threats to Mao's leadership status in the Communist Bloc became more apparent, tensions between the Soviet Union and China resulted in border clashes. "Between 350 and 700 soldiers, most of them Chinese, were killed in the intermittent fighting in Xinjiang. For a time, the Soviet leadership even considered using nuclear weapons against its

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid

<sup>151</sup> Ibid

<sup>152</sup> Reuters, Russia-China Relations. (May 2008)

<sup>153</sup> Farley, February 2016

<sup>154</sup> Lüthi, p. 219

former ally.”<sup>155</sup> The ultimate outcome of these tensions, clashes, and political issues was an end to friendly Sino-Soviet relations in 1969.

## **Part V: Integration and Conclusion**

### **Ultimate Decision Unit Flowchart<sup>156</sup>**

Using Mao’s background, his psychoanalysis, and our understanding of domestic and foreign influences, we can determine why and how Mao would make these two decisions. Before analyzing the decision-making process, we need to establish that the PRC in 1949 and in 1969 was extremely polarized and prone to groupthink using the “Decision Tree Illustrating the Key Variables and Three Basic Paths Reflecting Different Group Dynamics and Their Consequences for Solutions”<sup>157</sup> (Figure 5). Members in the PRC Government were very loyal to the group during the period from the establishment of the Communist Party of China.<sup>158</sup> Next, in the PRC leaders (and to an extent group norms) discourage disagreement or conflict between groups. These two paths lead to an extreme groupthink environment and polarized opinion. The outcome is almost always that of the leader, in the case of these two questions, the outcome is either influenced by or decided by Mao.

After examining the members of the group, we need to determine if Mao, a group, or multiple autonomous actors is the ultimate decision unit (UDU) in China during 1949-1969. We do this by following the “Ultimate Decision Unit” flowchart (Figure 6) and examining Mao’s leadership characteristics.<sup>159</sup> For the first decision to sign a treaty with the Soviet Union after 1949, we begin by identifying an immediate substantive problem that the regime has recognized. Mao had just come to power as the Chairman of the People’s Republic of China. The PRC was a newly established government in a country that had just finished a civil war. The first immediate substantive problem that Mao and the regime saw was the need for recognition in the

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<sup>155</sup> Kucha, Glenn & Llewellyn, Jennifer. “Sino-Soviet Relations.” 2015

<sup>156</sup> Hermann, Margaret G., Hermann, Charles F., Hagan, Joe D. “How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy: Development of a Model.” 1991.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid

<sup>158</sup> Lüthi, p. 235

<sup>159</sup> Hermann, Margaret G., Hermann, Charles F., Hagan, Joe D. 1991.

international sphere. The Nationalists, supported by the United States, had fled to Taiwan, and were threatening an attack on the PRC.<sup>160</sup> Because the U.S. would not support the new Communist Chinese government, Mao and the PRC needed to look elsewhere for legitimization as well as economic and military support.

Keeping in mind the history of Sino-Soviet relations up to 1949, Mao knew that Stalin did not personally or politically approve of him, and also that the Soviet Union had helped the Nationalists before realizing the Communists were going to win the civil war.<sup>161</sup> However, the need for the PRC to have legitimacy and support when they were newly established was vital, and the Soviet Union was willing to recognize a fellow communist country.

Next, still working with Figure 6, I determined that Mao was the single individual in the regime with the power and authority to agree to and enforce a Sino-Soviet Treaty, regardless of opposition by others.<sup>162</sup> While others in Chinese government at the time were not necessarily against a relationship with the Soviet Union, if they had been, Mao could have still enforced his decision to sign the treaty. After determining this, I asked if Mao has actively been interested and involved in foreign and defense issues. The answer was yes based on actions such as during the Civil War when Mao and the leaders of the Nationalist group determined they could put aside their differences to unite against Japan. Further, Mao made the decision to sign a treaty with the Soviet Union knowing the foreign and defense issues that were involved. After this determination, I examine whether Mao was actively involved in the decision process or if others were included and if they had a 'veto' choice over the decision. Mao was very active in all decisions, the Sino-Soviet Treaty being one of these decisions. Further, while some in the PRC voiced their opinions, if they were not in line with what Mao believed or wanted, then that person was usually under threat of ostracization. Additionally, we know that leadership in the PRC is extremely groupthink oriented, meaning many people would very rarely voice opposing opinions. Thus, in 1949 Mao is the Ultimate Decision Unit (UDU).

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<sup>160</sup> Ford, "Calling the Sino-Soviet Split"

<sup>161</sup> Ibid

<sup>162</sup> Hermann, Margaret G., Hermann, Charles F., Hagan, Joe D. 1991.

By examining the group dynamics in 1969, I determine that most of the members are the same just in different positions, and Mao has just returned from the “political wilderness” to reclaim his official position as Chairman. Further, China is in the midst of the Cultural Revolution, and Khrushchev is leader of the Soviet Union. Internationally, Mao believed that there was a power vacuum left in the Communist Bloc after Stalin’s death, and that Mao and the PRC should be the ones to fill it (something Khrushchev opposed).<sup>163</sup> With tensions at home and abroad, the decision to split from the Soviet Union had been coming to a head for some time.

Regarding 1969, we return to the flowchart (Figure 6), Mao was still the single individual in the regim with the power and authority to agree to and enforce a split. While there may have been some insignificant backlash, tensions had been growing along the border between the Soviet Union and China for a few years, indicating that a split would not have been unexpected. During this time, Mao was very interested in foreign policy and defense issues, speaking on these topics at events in Moscow and other Communist Bloc countries. Additionally, because there had been border issues between the Soviet Union and China, Mao was aware of defense issues. Next, Mao was actively involved in the decision process and still did not give others “veto” power over decisions. He had learned his lesson after the Great Leap Forward when he took a step back. Even when Mao was in the “political wilderness” he held sway as the “great helmsman” who united China and established the PRC.<sup>164</sup> Anyone who was opposed to his decisions stepped away from any hint of conflict. Finally, we are still dealing with a strong groupthink government, and Mao remains at the head as the Ultimate Decision Unit (UDU).

### **Contextual Information Sensitivity**

Mao was the Ultimate Decision Unit for both of these decisions. I now would like to suggest that Mao is not sensitive to contextual information (i.e. he does not act based on the

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<sup>163</sup> Ford, “Calling the Sino-Soviet Split”

<sup>164</sup> Lüthi, p. 103

situation, he acts based on his desires) by referring to Figure 7 “Theories Embedded in Decision Unit Models.”<sup>165</sup> Mao, as established, had a strong personality developed from his numerous life experiences. He had a belief that his personal version of communism (Maoism) was the way to create a better China and recover from the century of humiliation.<sup>166</sup> While Mao was aware of contextual situations (i.e. the Communist Bloc needing leadership, Khrushchev denouncing Stalin’s cult of personality - what that could do to Mao’s own cult of personality, etc.), I do not believe he was sensitive to them. If Mao was aware of any situation he used it to his (and China’s) advantage. Thus, Mao was insensitive to contextual information because although the situation determined some aspects of the decision, the decision was always based on Mao. Using this information we can use the flowchart in Figure 8 “Decisions Tree for Principled Predominant Leader Decision Unit With an Expansionist Orientation” to examine what led to Mao’s decisions in 1949 and 1969 regarding the Soviet Union.

### **Principled Predominant Leader Decision Unit With an Expansionist Orientation<sup>167</sup>**

[This entire portion will use flowchart Figure 8]

In 1949, Mao knew at this time Stalin and his country supported the PRC, thus he did not view the Soviet Union as a threat or the source of the PRC’s problems with the Nationalists, economy, United States, or even establishing a new country. Thus the Soviet Union was not viewed as a problem or a threat at the time. While Mao would never have admitted this, it had to have been obvious to Mao and the PRC leaders that in 1949 the Soviet Union was more established and a stronger nation to form an alliance with. I believe that Mao would only ever state that the PRC was stronger and better than the Soviet Union. This belief is based on his comments that his ideology is superior over the Soviet version of Communism (an excuse he uses to start the Great Leap Forward).<sup>168</sup> However, even if Mao and 1949 PRC leaders viewed themselves as ideologically superior, they would have been fully aware that the Soviet Union

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<sup>165</sup> \*Handout from Class: Table 1: “Theories Embedded in Decision Units Model”

<sup>166</sup> Lüthi, p. 79

<sup>167</sup> Hermann, Margaret G., Hermann, Charles F., Hagan, Joe D. 1991.

<sup>168</sup> Lüthi, p. 81

was economically and internationally superior than China was at the birth of their new nation. I would believe that Mao's view of the Soviet Union was as either Superior or Equal to the PRC in 1949, and he would view them as a friend. This would mean Mao would want the PRC to engage in diplomacy and take the initiative in policy regarding the Soviet Union. This is what ultimately lead to the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty.<sup>169</sup>

In 1969, however, tensions had been mounting. While in 1949 Mao was willing to push aside old differences to create an alliance with the Soviet Union because of his goals and desires for China, he never forgot the perceived "betrayal" of the Soviet Union.<sup>170</sup> Additionally, Khrushchev's outspokenness and open opposition to Mao at the Moscow conferences with the Communist Bloc did not sit well with Mao.<sup>171</sup> This animosity and China's improved standing in the world enabled Mao to bring up any and all past negative Soviet actions towards the PRC and blame domestic turbulence caused by the Cultural Revolution, international issues (i.e. Communist Bloc, U.S. and Soviet in the Cold War, etc.) on past issues with the Soviet Union.<sup>172</sup> Mao began by viewing the Soviet Union as superior in some ways. This was apparent in the negative rhetorical barrage Mao engaged in at the Moscow Conference, state visits, and other times.<sup>173</sup> However, I believe in the later 1960s there was an attitude change and Mao then believed that the Soviet Union was inferior to China in its capability. This led to conflict behavior with the Soviet Union in the form of border clashes.<sup>174</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Mao was central to these two decisions because of his ideology and the position of power he cultivated and held in the PRC. Mao spent decades shaping his political ideology from the farm where he grew up, to the Long March, and then to Beijing and beyond. However, he made

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<sup>169</sup> Farley, February 2016

<sup>170</sup> Lüthi, p. 89

<sup>171</sup> Ford, "Calling the Sino-Soviet Split"

<sup>172</sup> Ibid

<sup>173</sup> Hermann, Margaret G., Hermann, Charles F., Hagan, Joe D. 1991.

<sup>174</sup> Ford, "Calling the Sino-Soviet Split"

two very different decisions within twenty years. This paper illustrates how he came to make those decisions and why he did so.

In 1949, Mao was the newly minted Chairman of the PRC, the revolutionary hero who rose to power during the Long March, who created a Maoist way of thinking to improve China, and who mobilized the masses. He could do no wrong. The group that he led had fought alongside him through the revolution, and in addition, most had close ties or experiences with the Soviet Union. Mao made a calculated decision in 1949 to sign a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union based on the PRC's needs at the time. He knew the negative history the Communist Party of China and the Soviet Union held, but the times dictated an alliance with an established world power, and the only one available was the Soviet Union.<sup>175</sup> Additionally, at that time Stalin was willing to engage with another perceived Communist state that would essentially serve at the pleasure of the Soviet Union.<sup>176</sup>

Between 1949 and 1969 many things changed. Mao continued to show his prowess as Chairman, choosing to depart ideologically from the Soviet Union and kick off the Great Leap Forward. This disastrous campaign resulted in Mao's somewhat political exile, when he was the great Helmsman only in name, not in power. Returning to power fully in the 1960s, Mao was well aware of not only his political standing, especially with the Cultural Revolution in full swing, but also of China's international standing. Mao wanted to be leader of the Communist Bloc and be well respected. Mao's resentment towards the Soviet Union regarding Chinese treatment, Khrushchev's anger over the Great Leap Forward, and Mao's personal desires for power in the Communist Bloc led to further breakdown of relations between the countries. Because Khrushchev was so blatantly opposed to Mao's actions as chairman of the PRC, the steps from a tense alliance based out of necessity, to border skirmishes, and then the Sino-Soviet split, were not unreasonable.<sup>177</sup> "Furthermore, [for Mao] while ideology was central, it

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<sup>175</sup> *ibid*

<sup>176</sup> Lüthi, p. 45

<sup>177</sup> Ford, "Calling the Sino-Soviet Split"



increasingly became entangled in internal politics. Leadership conflicts led Mao Zedong to exploit the worsening of Sino-Soviet relations for his own goals, abroad and at home.”<sup>178</sup>

Mao was a complex man who Chinese view today as 80% good 20% bad.<sup>179</sup> He grew from a humble farmboy to an international leader. His intelligence and personality influenced his political aspirations and he became a force that influenced all aspects of Chinese culture, society, and government. His decisions altered the way Chinese domestic and international politics as evidenced in these two diverse examples. In effect, Mao Zedong literally changed China and the world through his personality and political dogma.

### **Figures 1-8**

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<sup>178</sup> Lorenz M. Lüthi

<sup>179</sup> Michael, Franz. 1977.

Leadership Style as a Function of Responsiveness to Constraints, Openness to Information, and Motivation			
Responsiveness to Constraints	Openness to Information	Motivation	
		Problem Focus	Relationship Focus
Challenges Constraints	Closed to Information	<b>Expansionistic</b> (Focus is on expanding one's power and influence)	<b>Evangelistic</b> (Focus is on persuading others to accept one's message and join one's cause)
Challenges Constraints	Open to Information	<b>Incremental</b> (Focus is on maintaining one's maneuverability and flexibility while avoiding the obstacles that continually try to limit both)	<b>Charismatic</b> (Focus is on achieving one's agenda by engaging others in the process and persuading them to act)
Respects Constraints	Closed to Information	<b>Directive</b> (Focus is on personally guiding policy along paths consistent with one's own views while still working within the norms and rules of one's position)	<b>Consultative</b> (Focus is on monitoring that important others will support, or not actively oppose, what one wants to do in a particular situation)
Respects Constraints	Open to Information	<b>Reactive</b> (Focus is on assessing what is possible in the current situation given the nature of the problem and considering what important constituencies will allow)	<b>Accommodative</b> (Focus is on reconciling differences and building consensus, empowering others and sharing accountability in the process)

Figure 1

Table 2: General Alignment of Traits with Orientations

Orientation	In-Group Bias (Nationalism)	Belief in Ability to Control Events	Need for Power	Conceptual Complexity	Self- Confidence	Distrust	Task (versus Affect) Orientation
Expansionist	Hi	Hi	Hi	Lo	Hi	Hi	Hi
Active Independent	Hi	Hi	Lo	Hi	Hi	Lo	Hi
Influential	Lo	Hi	Hi	Hi	Hi	Lo	Lo
Mediator/Integrator	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Lo	Lo
Opportunist	Lo	Lo	Lo	Hi	Lo	Lo	Lo
Developmental	Hi	Lo	Lo	Hi	Hi	Lo	Lo

Figure 2

**TABLE 1: DESCRIPTION OF SIX POSSIBLE ORIENTATIONS TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>View of World</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Resulting Foreign Policy</i>
Expansionist	Interest in gaining control over more territory, resources, or people	Perceive the world is divided into "us" and "them," each intent on improving its condition at the expense of the other; thus, conflict is inherent to functioning in the international system	A wariness of others' moves; attempt to keep one step ahead of those considered the enemy; directive and manipulative in dealing with others	Generally focused on issues of security and status; behavior often hostile in tone and directed toward the "enemy"; favor use of low commitment actions unless perceived "backed into the wall"; not averse to using "enemy" as a scapegoat on which to blame problems; espouse short-term, immediate change in the international arena
Active Independent	Interest in participating in the international community but on one's own terms and without engendering a dependent relationship with another country	Want to be self-reliant but perceive importance of other countries to one's own continued existence so are determined to maintain close control over interactions with other nations to avoid any kind of dependent relationship	Seek a variety of information before making a decision; examine carefully the possible consequences of alternatives under consideration for dealing with a problem; cultivate relationships with a diverse group of nations	Generally focused on economic and security issues; behavior is nonaligned in nature, directed toward a wide variety of governments; behavior is usually positive in tone but involves little commitment since shun commitments that limit maneuverability and sense of independence; espouse need for long-term change in international arena

Figure 3

**TABLE 3: BEHAVIOR LEADERS WITH SIX ORIENTATIONS ARE LIKELY TO EXHIBIT IN POLICYMAKING PROCESS**

<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Nature of Advisory Group</i>	<i>Nature of Information Search</i>	<i>Ability to Tolerate Disagreement</i>	<i>Method of Dealing with Opposition</i>
Expansionist	Desires highly loyal staff whose primary purpose is seen as implementation; leader's preferences prevail	Information is sought that highlights preferred alternative under consideration; goals of leader drive information search processes and what situations are perceived as causing problems	Low; has tendency to view disagreement as challenge to his power and authority	Seeks to eliminate opposition by coercive means
Active Independent	Interested in having experts among staff; wants diverse range of opinion represented in advisors	Wants to make sure all options are considered; also wants to consider consequences of actions – how others will respond; willing to take small steps if there is any uncertainty about the possible consequences of a larger initiative	High; encourages disagreement on issues	Will try to coopt opposition into policymaking process
Influential	Will want supportive group around with members who will frankly appraise the situation; interested in advisors with ties to important constituencies that can be used in building consensus and in enhancing leader's authority	Seeks information on what others view as best way of dealing with situation; interested in political implications of any option	Moderate; wants to know if influential persons disagree	Will seek to pacify opposition

Figure 4

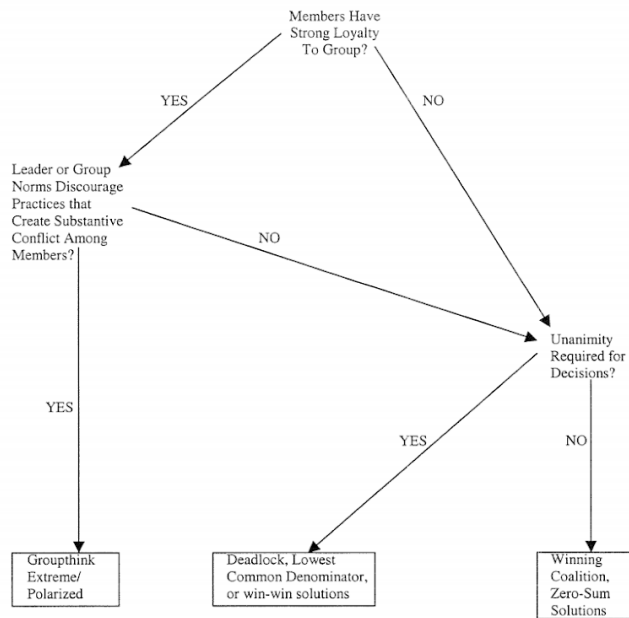


Figure 4. Decision Tree Illustrating the Key Variables and Three Basic Paths Reflecting Different Group Dynamics and Their Consequences for Solutions.

Figure 5

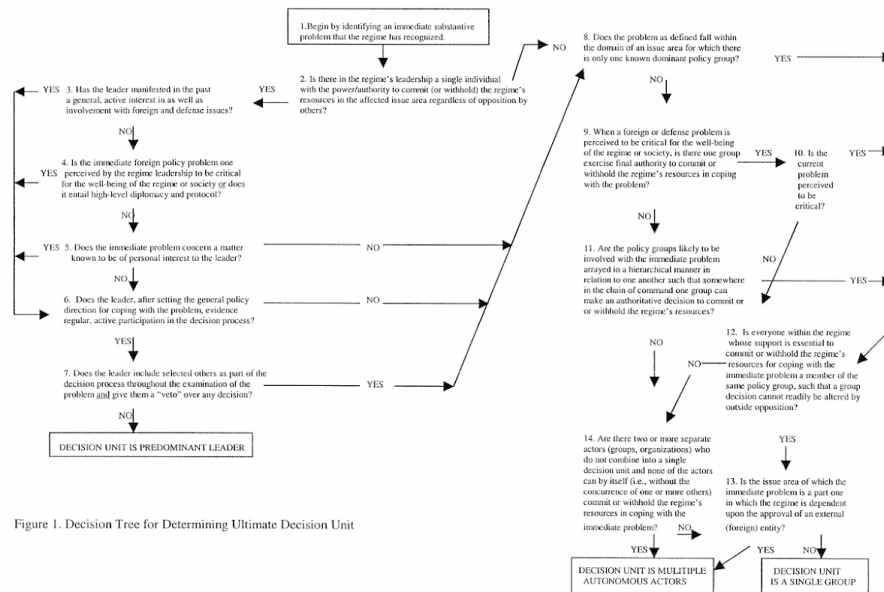


Figure 1. Decision Tree for Determining Ultimate Decision Unit

Figure 6

TABLE 1. THEORIES EMBEDDED IN DECISION UNITS MÔDEL

Type of Decision Unit	Condition of the Key Control Variable	Type of Theory Exemplified
Predominant Leader	Insensitive to Contextual Information	Top Down Information Processing (the "Cognitive Miser") (Character Determined)
	Sensitive to Contextual Information	Bottom Up Information Processing (the "Hypothesis Tester") (Situation Determined)
Single Group	Loyalty to Group	Group Concurrence Seeking ("Groupthink")
	Loyalty Outside Group with Working Majority (No Unanimity) Required for Decision	Coalition Formation
	Loyalty Outside Group with Unanimity Required for Decision	Bureaucratic Politics
Coalition of Autonomous Actors	Unanimity Required for Decision	Bargaining/Negotiation
	Working Majority (No Unanimity) Required for Decision with Accepted Rules Governing Process	Formation of Minimum Winning Connected Coalition
	Working Majority (No Unanimity) Required for Decision with No Accepted Rules Governing Process	Over-Sized or Under-Sized Coalition Formation

Figure 7

PL FIGURE 1  
EXPANSIONIST INSENSIVE

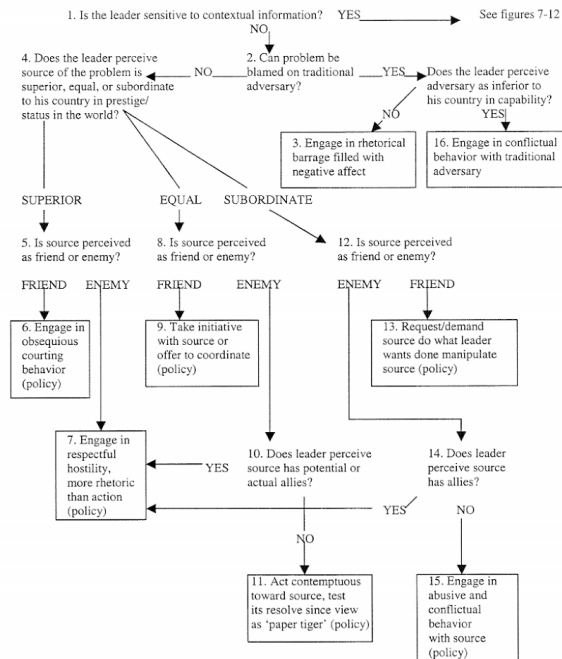


Figure 2. Decision Tree for Principled Predominant Leader Decision Unit With an Expansionist Orientation

Figure 8

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