

Liberty University

“The Soviet Union is Different from us”
The Sino-Soviet Relationship and Split from the Chinese Perspective

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Abstract

The thesis demonstrates and explains the complex relationship between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (PRC) from the late 1940s to 1969. The period of the Sino-Soviet relationship was marked by initial military and economic cooperation followed by increasing ideological divergence and political and diplomatic tensions. The paper briefly introduces the historiography of the Sino-Soviet relationship. The thesis starts with the establishment of the PRC in 1949 and the subsequent alliance with the USSR, rooted in shared communist ideologies and mutual strategic goals. The paper shows the gradual deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship after the death of Joseph Stalin, followed by the regime of Khrushchev. It provides a comprehensive view of the Sino-Soviet relationship due to the multiple perspectives of the sources. The thesis addresses key historical events, such as the Korean War, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policies, the Sino-Indian War, and the Sino-Soviet confrontation over Zhenbao Island. It also assesses the Sino-Soviet relationship on global communist movements and connects the Sino-Soviet relationship with the current Sino-Russian relationship in the Weltpolitik.

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The Sino-Soviet Relationship: Introduction

The rising Sino-Russian relationship is a popular topic in twenty-first century Weltpolitik. After the Cold War, the Sino-Russian partnership in the world arena became a new challenge to the West and the United States. Today's Sino-Russian partnership and the historical Sino-Soviet relationship display notable distinctions in their historical backgrounds, relation dynamics, and strategic goals, even though both share common motives in countering perceived Western dominance. Like nowadays, the Sino-Russian relationship, their relationship in the Cold War often challenged the West from the early 1950s to the early 1970s. In the Cold War era, the Soviets and the Chinese worked jointly in ideological, economic, technological, and military domains. Under the communist ideology, the Sino-Soviet relationship maintained a collaborated relationship from the late 40s to the late 60s. The Sino-Soviet relationship transitioned from a strategic partner, to a diplomatic rival, and then became a public enemy after the Zhenbaodao Incident in 1969. This relationship played a complex and crucial role in the dynamics of the Cold War, significantly influencing global politics.

Sino-Soviet relations before the Cold War were equally fraught with complexity and transitions, early treaties and attitudes created a rivalry that never really subsided, ideological similarities and agendas masked continuing disagreements and strong personalities led to a deteriorating relationship. However, this deteriorating relationship was not a new topic that developed in the twentieth century or the Cold War; it was a centuries-long conflict between China and Russia. The mainstream historiographical interpretations and the newly revealed Sino-Russian archives and documents supported that the Sino-Soviet conflict was a continuation of the Sino-Russian rivalry that started from the late seventeenth century.

Comparatively, the historiographical interpretations of the history of the Sino-Russian relationship have fewer debates and perspectives on the relationship among the historians of Russian

and Chinese history. For instance, compared to the multiple perspectives of the French Revolution, historians from multiple regions similarly interpreted the history of the Sino-Russian relationship.

The historiographical interpretations of the two countries reveal a similar historical development process. Specifically, their diplomatic history traces its origin to the Mongolian invasion in the thirteenth century. Although the two people had little knowledge about each other, they were both under the Mongolian yoke for over a hundred years. They experienced absolute monarchs in the eighteenth century, struggled to Westernize their nations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and they experienced Communist Revolutions in the twentieth century. Despite their similar historical development, interpretations of their relationship revealed a history of rivalry from the Treaty of Nerchinsk in the 1690s until the end of the Cold War in the 1990s.¹ However, historians divide the history of the Sino-Russian relationship into three categories—the Qing dynasty and Imperial Russia; the Cold War alliances and breakup; and the post-Cold War era. Ka-ho Wong narrates the Sino-Russian relationship history, "Over the past one and a half centuries, there were other three instances of Russia pivoting away from Europe to Asia. These include the construction of the Trans-Siberian railway by the Russian Empire, the spread of socialism in the early Soviet period, and Gorbachev's 'new thinking' before the collapse of the Soviet Union."² Thus, even though the history of the Sino-Russian relationship has been interpreted in agreeable ways, the underlying rivalry has always existed.

In addition, most historiographical accounts agreed that the Chinese under the Qing dynasty stopped Russian chauvinism in the Treaty of Nerchinsk in the late seventeenth century, but the

¹ "Treaty of Nerchinsk, the first treaty between Russia and China, concluded." Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library, accessed June 26, 2024, <http://www.prlib.ru/en-us/History/Pages/Item.aspx?itemid=658>.

² Ka-ho Wong, Review of Russia's Turn to East and "Asymmetrical" Sino-Russian Relations: History and Facts, by Gilbert Rozman and Gaye Christoffersen, *China Review* 23, no. 4 (2023): 287–314, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48750789>.

resulting treaty had a complicated ambiguity. V.S. Frank asserts, "The territorial terms of the Nerchinsk Treaty, which were to remain in force for something like 160 years, are extremely ambiguous, and an analysis of a number of discrepancies between the Russian translation and the Latin text of the treaty reveals reason for the ambiguity."³ The ambiguity of the Nerchinsk set a misty political relation among the Central Asian nations. After China and Russia dislodged Mongol influence, they developed separately for a couple of centuries. Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, a historian who focused on the history of the Sino-Russian relationship and taught at the University of Pittsburg, describes the first clash between China and Russia in the late seventeenth century, "A defeat of Russian forces near the junction of the Sungari and Amur Rivers (1658) checked their initial advance; there would be further military clashes before the 1680s when a concerted Qing attack on the Russian fort at Albazin forced a negotiated border in the Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689)."⁴ From this conflict, they signed the first Sino-Russian diplomatic treaty—the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689, drafted by Jesuits in Latin and later published *Sbornik dogorov Rossij s Kitajem* (Petersburg 1889).⁵ This treaty settled the early Sino-Russian dispute in the late seventeenth century.

The Treaty of Nerchinsk resulted in a monumental diplomatic settlement of the early Sino-Russian relationship for nearly two centuries. It was a military victory for the Chinese in stopping Russian encroachment in Manchuria and the Amur River region. Jeremy Black notes that, "In 1685 a Qing army captured Albazin, a Russian outpost on the Amur River, abandoned it, and then recaptured it the following year. The Russians sued for peace, leading to the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689. With the Russians diplomatically neutralized, Kangxi turned to western China where the

³ V. S. Frank, "The Territorial Terms of the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk, 1689," *Pacific Historical Review* 16, no. 3 (1947): 265–70, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3635997>.

⁴ Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia: Cross-Border Perspectives* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2015), 92.

⁵ Felix M. Wassermann, "Latin as a World Language: The Treaty of Nerchinsk." *The Classical Weekly* 46, no. 6 (1953): 83–84, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4343294>.

Zunghar leader Galdan was gaining power."⁶ In the encirclement of the Russian fort in Albazin, the Manchu forces outnumbered the Russian defenders. The Russian defeat was more symbolic than strategic for Imperial Russia and the Qing dynasty. Through the defeat of the Amur region, the Russians realized that they could only capture the region by maneuvering massive resources and a large army that could match the Qing army. Christopher Ford states, "A confrontation at Albazin turned ugly in 1685–1686 after Russia built forts there and at Karmarskai-Astrog, precipitating a brief border war."⁷

However, the Amur region was not Russia's top priority in territorial expansion. Peter Perdue narrates, "Russian rulers entered into contact with all the other players in the Central Asian Great Game: Kazakhs, Turkestanis, Chinese, Siberian tribal leaders, Mongols, etc. Treaty negotiations with the Chinese in 1689 (Nerchinsk) and 1727 (Kiakhta) had delimited the border in Siberia and Manchuria between the Russian and Chinese empires and ensured regulated border trade."⁸ Along with the Treaty of Nerchinsk, the Treaty of Treaty of Kyakhta maintained the status quo of the Sino-Russian relationship in the eighteenth century. The Russians experienced strong resistance from the Chinese after the Treaty of Nerchinsk,⁹ and the Russian leaders transformed their strategy in the Far East from territorial expansion to commercial trade. The Russians secured their land bordering Manchuria and signed a trade agreement with the Chinese 150 years before the Anglo-French army forcefully opened the Chinese trade in the Opium Wars in 1840 and 1860.

In addition, the Treaty of Nerchinsk succeeded in the Sino-Russian relationship because it was signed under Sino-Russian mutual interests. The Russian defeat at Fort Albazin in 1685 had modified

⁶ Jeremy Black, *War in the Early Modern World* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 98.

⁷ Christopher A. Ford, "The Prehistory of Foreign Engagement," *In The Mind of Empire: China's History and Modern Foreign Relations*, (University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 109, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2jchmn.11>.

⁸ Peter C. Perdue, "Military Mobilization in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century China, Russia, and Mongolia." *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 4 (1996): 757–93, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/312949>.

⁹ "Russian-Chinese Treaty of Kyakhta signed," Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library, <https://www.prlib.ru/en/history/619680#:~:text=The%20Treaty%20of%20Kyakhta%20of,middle%20of%2019th%20century>.

Muscovite's grand diplomatic strategy from acquiring territory in the Far East to dealing with diplomatic affairs with its neighboring countries in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. H. J. Beattie asserts, "The result, in 1689, was the famous treaty of Nerchinsk, in which a system for the conduct of trade and settlement of disputes was worked out."¹⁰ Muscovite Russia had faced more urgent diplomatic relationships with neighboring nations in the 1680s. For instance, the 1680s was a diplomatically disastrous decade for Muscovite Russia because of Prince Vasily Golitsyn's failed expedition of Crimea, the defeat at Fort Albazin in the Amur basin, and the petition for liberation of Orthodox Christians in Eastern Europe under the Turkish yoke. Ian Grey describes, "Meanwhile, the Crimean Khan had renewed his raids. In the first three months of 1688, his Tatars had carried off 60,000 prisoners to sell into slavery and had advanced within striking distance of Kiev and Poltava."¹¹ The urgent diplomatic affairs around Moscow meant that Russia had to make quick peace with China in 1689.

Although the Qing forces' siege on Fort Albazin in 1685 thwarted the Russian territorial dream to take the whole Amur region, it secured the interests of both nations in the regions. Despite the military defeat in the Amur region, the Russians secured the territories gained before the treaty and signed trade agreements with China and other central Asian nations. Also, through the Treaty of Nerchinsk, Muscovy temporarily transformed China from a potential territorial rival into a trading partner in the Far East. The treaty made Imperial Russia realize that the Qing dynasty was militarily undefeatable for a limited time.

However, after its defeat in the Crimean War in 1856, Russia turned to the "Sickman in Asia"—the Qing dynasty in the mid-nineteenth century- as the Chinese had experienced external and domestic instabilities, such as the Opium War in 1840 against the Franco-Anglo forces and the Taiping Rebellion

¹⁰ H. J. Beattie, *Modern Asian Studies* 8, no. 2 (1974): 266–67, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/311641>.

¹¹ Ian Grey, *Peter the Great*. (Place of publication not identified: New Word City, 2015), VI.

in 1850. The Chinese Empire was weakened much more than it was in the eighteenth century. The Russian Empire forced China to sign an unequal treaty—the Treaty of Aigun in 1858, annexed territory three times the size of France.¹² Robert Nield narrates the significance of Aigun, "In 1858, distracted by the Taiping Rebellion and the Anglo-French invasion, China signed the Treaty of Aigun, ceding the entire left bank of the Amur River to Russia, land equivalent to the size of France. In 1860, with China weakened by the conflict, the Treaty of Peking transferred the remaining territory as far as the ocean to Russia."¹³

Historians recognize that the Treaties of Aigun in 1858, Beijing 1860, and Tarbagatai in 1864 signified the Sino-Russian relationship transformation, with the Chinese Empire was no longer an “equal” power with Russia. Russia, with its aggressive, chauvinist diplomacy, had transformed the Sino-Russian relationship into a new age—an age of imperial colonization. Jeanne Wilson narrates, “Russia procured some 665,000 square miles of land, extending Russian territory in north- western Xinjiang and in the region of the Amur and Ussuri rivers in northern Manchuria to the Pacific Ocean, through the Treaty of Aigun in 1858, the Treaty of Peking in 1860, and the Treaty of Tarbagatai in 1864.”¹⁴ Historians synchronously argued that the Treaty of Aigun opened the Pandora’s box of Russia annexing the Qing dynasty territory and Chinese territory. Nield describes it thusly, "In 1858 the Treaty of Aigun determined part of the border along the Amur River, but the Treaty of Tientsin of the same year recognized that the entire border question must be settled. The 1860 Treaty of Peking was a further attempt at border delineation."¹⁵ With the Treaty of Aigun and the Treaty of Beijing, the

¹² Group 3, “The Treaty of Aigun,” Russia in Global Perspective, accessed June 26, 2024, <https://russiaglobal.omeka.fas.harvard.edu/items/show/23>.

¹³ Robert Nield, “Aigun.” *In China’s Foreign Places: The Foreign Presence in China in the Treaty Port Era, 1840–1943*, 1st ed., 23–24. Hong Kong University Press, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt17w8gkt.10>.

¹⁴ Jeanne Wilson, *Strategic Partners : Russian-Chinese Relations in the Post-Soviet Era*, (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), 15, accessed June 24, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁵ Robert Nield, “Treaty Ports And Other Foreign Stations In China.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 50 (2010): 123–39, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23891203>.

Russian Empire officially annexed large territory through a series of unequal treaties with China.¹⁶

The Sino-Russian diplomatic relationship in the late Qing dynasty reached an unequal position until the October Revolution.

Historiographical interpretations viewed the Sino-Soviet relationship in the 1920s and 1930s as an era of romance. Both countries felt each other's revolutionary romance because they had just overthrown the monarchy. Elizabeth McGuire describes, "Whereas historians have noted the ebb and flow of popular enthusiasm for the Sino-Soviet alliance, these individual romances reveal something very different: an emotional history of revolutionary geopolitics."¹⁷ Different from the Imperial era, the Sino-Soviet relationship had enjoyed a compromising relationship, and was comparatively peaceful. McGuire continues, "The relationship between the Russian and Chinese revolutions during the 1920s and 1930s can be seen as a romance, emphasizing an emotional history of elite revolutionary geopolitics."¹⁸ The Sino-Soviet relationship in this era experienced no major conflict but a little concern. When the first stage of the Chinese Civil War broke out from 1927 to 1937, the Soviets intervened in the Chinese Civil War during this era. McGuire claims, "By 1927 he felt powerful enough to openly discard the Soviet program, which, after all, called for an eventual communist revolution to replace his so-called bourgeois-nationalist regime."¹⁹ The Soviets supported the early Chinese communist movements in China, but they did not directly involved in the conflict. Thus, the overall Sino-Soviet relationship was comparatively peaceful.

Furthermore, the historiographical interpretation of the Sino-Soviet relationship during the Cold War showed outward signs of agreement for some historians and journalists. However, David Floyd, a

¹⁶ "The Convention of Peking of 1860 is concluded," Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library, <https://www.prlib.ru/en/history/619718>.

¹⁷ Elizabeth McGuire, "Sino-Soviet Romance: An Emotional History of Revolutionary Geopolitics." *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no. 4 (2017): 855, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26416637>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

renowned British journalist and historian, points out the gap between the Soviets and the Chinese in *Mao Against Khrushchev* (1964). He analyzed the gap between the two largest communist nations in the aspects of economic and military comparisons, territorial disputes, ideological differences, and political goals in *Weltpolitik*. Floyd concluded the main Soviet diplomatic strategy during the Cold War, "Khrushchev made a desperate and expensive effort in these years to bring Communist China under Moscow's control. He failed."²⁰ The early scholars of the Sino-Soviet relationship recognize the ideological and political differences between the two communist powers. Although they had worked cooperatively during early stage, the ideological diversity and political rivalry caused later Sino-Soviet deterioration.

The succeeding historians interpreted it similarly to Floyd. Lorenz M. Lüthi supports Floyd's argument in *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist* (2008): "This brings us to Lüthi's central claim regarding the wellspring of the Sino-Soviet split, his assertion that disagreement over ideology rather than nationalism, national interest, domestic politics, personality clashes, or territorial disputes was the prime factor that generated the conflict."²¹ The mainstream historiographical interpretation of Sino-Soviet agrees that the gap between the two largest communist nations existed in economic and military competition, territorial disputes, and ideological disagreement. Thus, the different interpretations and applications of the communist ideology, diplomatic and leadership suspicions with the alliance, and political ambitions in *Weltpolitik* caused the great dissolution of the Sino-Soviet alliances in the 1960s.

Odd Arne Westad is a renowned historian who specialized in the Cold War history. He also focused on the Sino-Soviet relationship and split during the Cold War. In the work *Brothers in Arms*

²⁰ David Floyd, *Mao Against Khrushchev: A Short History of the Sino-Soviet Conflict* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 61.

²¹ Roberts, Priscilla, Steven I. Levine, Péter Vámos, Deborah Kaple, Jeremy Friedman, Douglas A. Stifoer, and Lorenz Lüthi, "Forum: Mao, Khrushchev, and China's Split with the USSR Perspectives on The Sino-Soviet Split." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 1 (2010): 120–60, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26923063>.

(1998), he argues the Sino-Soviet split through a comprehensive view. He examines the Sino-Soviet ideological differences, military rivalry, leadership discords, and domestic policies. His research on the Sino-Soviet relationship provided a clear picture, explaining the factors that caused the Sino-Soviet eventual split in 1969. Westad's scholarship was praiseworthy because he comprehensively presented both Soviet and Chinese perspectives of the Sino-Soviet split.

The more recent historiographical account of the Sino-Soviet relationship are the works by the prominent Chinese historians, Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, who focused on the Sino-Soviet relationship. Their Chinese background helped them to understand the contextual information of the Chinese sources. In their research of the Sino-Soviet relationship, they provided a comprehensive view of the Sino-Soviet relationship from historiographical perspective and utilized numerous newly opened Chinese and Russian archives. Their multi-viewpoint demonstrates a deep understanding of the subject. They viewed the Sino-Soviet relationship through ideological differences between the Soviet Union, the political and leadership rivalries, domestic and international policies, and cultural aspects of the Sino-Soviet relationship and deterioration. In *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Partnership (2015)*, their arguments were built on the previous historiographical arguments, and they provide new interpretation of the Sino-Soviet relationship with more primary sources and new discoveries. For example, they emphasized the significance of North Korea in the Sino-Soviet relationship. Although their arguments followed the mainstream interpretations, their interpretations provided a deep insight of the subject.

The historiographical interpretations of the Sino-Soviet deterioration identify the split was caused by ideological differences, the Sino-Soviet political approach in the post-Stalin era, mutual leadership suspicions, and territorial disputes inherent in the Sino-Russian history. Despite both being communist states, China and the Soviet Union developed significantly in their ideologies, economies, and diplomatic and political strategies, affected by their distinct national characteristics and history.

The Sino-Soviet split is complicated and needs more research and study because it is critical for the history of the Cold War. The Sino-Soviet relationship is relevant to today's Sino-Russian relationship and tomorrow's geopolitics. The current Sino-Russian relationship is the upgraded continuation of the Sino-Soviet relationship, and studying it could help people today gain the historical context of this relationship and a comprehensive understanding of Weltpolitik among great powers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Chapter One introduces the early Sino-Soviet relationship during the Stalinist era. The Stalinist era was characterized by Soviet political domination, economic and technological assistance, and shared communist ideologies. Under the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in 1950 and the Soviet support in the Chinese Civil War, the Sino-Soviet relationship under Stalin and Mao was comparatively stable. Although China was dissatisfied with the Soviet "intrusion" in Manchuria and Xinjiang, the Soviets helped the Chinese politically and militarily in the Korean War. It also examines the interpersonal relationship between Mao and Stalin.

Chapter two reveals the ideological agreements and disagreements between the PRC and the USSR. It explains the complicated deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship after Stalin's death. It examines Khrushchev's reign and his de-Stalinization policies. It shows how the CCP and CPSU interpreted the Lenin-Marxist ideology differently. The chapter talks about the ideological split and explains how this split evolved into political and diplomatic disagreements.

Chapter three demonstrates the public split of the Sino-Soviet relationship. It discusses the causes of the Sino-Soviet relationship deterioration. The chapter includes some key historical events, illustrating why the Chinese had to compete with the Soviet Union and how the Soviets breached the Chinese sovereignty and national security from the Chinese perspective. The chapter includes the final blow of the Sino-Soviet relationship during the Cold War, changing the Cold War situation

between communism and capitalism.

This paper follows the mainstream historiographical accounts of the Sino-Soviet relationship and split in post-WWII era. The Sino-Soviet relations during the Cold War were characterized by complexity and transitions. Early treaties and initial attitudes sowed the seeds of a rivalry that persisted, despite ideological similarities and shared agendas that masked ongoing disagreements. Strong-willed personalities, ambitions in the Weltpolitik, and cultural and historical differences further contributed to the deteriorating relationship. With these ideas in mind, we now examine the origins of the Cold War in Asia.

Chapter I: The Signs of Sino-Soviet Deterioration

The rise of communism as a significant global ideology was initiated in the mid-nineteenth century, rooted in the ideas of communist thinkers from the French Revolution such as Pierre Leroux, Théodore Dézamy, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. In their communist ideology, they criticized the capitalist methodology. In Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, first published in 1848, unified communist thought into a singular, dominant ideology known as Marxism. This ideology became the leading theory for communist supporters for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Friedrich Engels' efforts in promoting and expanding Marxism further solidified its influence. With the advent of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, the struggles between communist and capitalist ideologies significantly dominated the history of the second half of the twentieth century. Although the communist ideology originated neither in Russia nor China, it drastically changed and transformed the two nations economically, politically, and diplomatically. The two nations shared a similar history of communist governance, but developed differently in their ideological interpretations compared to Marx's original thoughts. However, because of their communist roots and the Cold War's political uniqueness, they found common ground in fighting against Western influence and capital doctrine in the twentieth century. The partnership between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Soviet Union throughout the 1940s and 1950s was a multifaceted bond that shared ideological similarities and geopolitical strategies. China underwent a significant transformation during this era, emerging from the ruins of World War II, civil war, and Cold War intense hostilities.

When Japan signed the unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945, ending the greatest conflict in the twentieth century—WWII, the Allies claimed their victory. However, the Soviet Union and the West had separate agendas for the new world order. World history entered a new chapter at the end of

World War II. The conclusion of World War II separated most nations into three ideological categories—communist ideologies, free capitalist ideologies, and later emerged non-aligned group. After WWII ended, the free West and the communist bloc entered the Cold War era. The new Weltpolitik situation caused the West and the communist countries to antagonize each other politically. As Winston Churchill predicted the postwar political situation, included an "iron curtain" had descended across the continents, stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic, but the same could be said in the Pacific. Holding to their ideologies, the Soviet Union and the United States strategically coerced, or enticed, nations to join them, creating competing blocs. In Asia, the Soviets played cautiously to not antagonize the West's influence, imposing its communist ideology in the Asian countries. The Soviet strategies in Asia were characterized by ideological ambitions and pragmatic geopolitical maneuvering. The Soviets had political and territorial ambitions in China. Later, the Soviet ambitious approach to Chinese politics in the late 40s and early 50s foreshadowed the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet diplomatic relationship.

First, the Soviet approach to Chinese domestic politics and civil war foreshadowed the Sino-Soviet deterioration. At the beginning of the Cold War, Stalin enforced a diplomatic strategy that mainly benefited the Soviets rather than helped the Chinese to stabilize the political chaos. Instead of promoting a united China under Communist or Nationalist rule, Stalin advocated a decentralized and divided China that favored the Soviet political blueprint in the Far East. Raymond L. Garthoff asserts, "On the other hand, it is entirely possible that he wanted to keep China divided for a long period and, therefore, preferred to aid both sides in different way."²²After Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration and surrendered in September 1945, the political situation in Asia changed dramatically. Chi-Kwan Mark narrates, "Although the Truman administration aimed to prevent the outbreak of civil war, it also wanted to contain Soviet influence in Manchuria. Thus, from the outset, the US policy of ' neutrality ' in the GMD – CCP

²² Raymond L. Garthoff, "Sino-Soviet Military Relations," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 349 (1963):83, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1035699>.

struggle was compromised."²³ As a result, when the majority of the Japanese land forces officially surrendered to the Soviet Red Army in Manchuria, the Chinese Civil War renewed. The war was significantly vital for the Soviets and the West because it would change the Asian geopolitical situation. Thus, the Soviet policies in China made the manipulation of the Chinese Civil War optimal. Steven Levine claims, "Courted by both the Communists and the Nationalists, the Soviet Union shifted its weight first to one side and then the other while seeking to extract a maximum of economic and political influence from its presence in Manchuria."²⁴ By its military and material supremacy, the Soviets exploited the Chinese instability to make diplomatic policies that favored the Soviets. Stalin preferred to create two North and South as in the Korean Peninsula. Sergey Radchenko supports, "For example, Stalin advised Mao to accept the Guomindang's offer of peace talks, which Mao was extremely reluctant even to consider."²⁵ However, neither the CCP nor the Chinese Nationalists (KMT) had the military or economic power to prevent the Soviet infiltration into Chinese territories during the inception of the Cold War. The Soviet political intention injured Chinese national unity and it attempted to elongate the process of unification, weakening China further. Thus, although the USSR accomplished its political aim in the Far East, its approach failed to satisfy either Chinese political party.

The KMT and the CCP had fought to control mainland China since the late 1920s. Although the KMT had several advantages and gained the upper hand in the conflict, the CCP, in a series of decisive battles from 1947 to 1949, won significant victories in Manchuria and Northern China, eventually capturing Beijing. In late 1949, the CCP defeated the KMT, emerging to control China. China became the Soviet Union's most important "ally" in Asia, superficially. However, Stalin was reluctant to see a united and centralized China as the Soviet

²³ Chi-Kwan Mark, *China and the World since 1945 : An International History* (New York, 2012), 11.

²⁴ Steven I. Levine, "A New Look at American Mediation in the Chinese Civil War: The Marshall Mission and Manchuria." *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 4 (1979): 349–75, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24910221>.

²⁵ Sergey Radchenko. Review of Sino-Soviet Relations and the Emergence of the Chinese Communist Regime, 1946–1950: New Documents, Old Story, by Andrei Ledovskii, Raisa Mirovitskaya, and Vladimir Myasnikov. *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9, no. 4 (2007): 115–24, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26926083>.

Union's neighboring country. In the correspondence between Mao Zedong and Stalin, Stalin expressed the Soviet Union's stance on China's internal affairs. *The Works of Mao Zedong* narrates Stalin's correspondence to Mao Zedong, it records, "The letter contains only one point that confuses us, which is: 'At the time of the final victory of the Chinese revolution, following the models of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, all political parties other than the Chinese Communist Party should disappear from the political stage, thereby greatly consolidating and strengthening the Chinese revolution.'"²⁶

In the Chinese Civil War, Stalin preferred that China remain divided between the Nationalists and the Communists. When Stalin noticed that Mao wanted to establish one-party politics in China like the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, he prevented Mao from doing this. Raymond L. Garthoff asserts, "The Soviet object was to keep China weak through a nominal Nationalist rule in which the Soviets had powerful leverage through the Communists-and through other elements such as dissidents in Sinkiang and various war lords."²⁷ In the Far East strategies, Stalin thought that a divided China would serve the Soviet's best political interest.

Stalin directly involved and interfered in the Chinese Civil War to create a multi-party political system in China. Although the Soviets supported the CCP militarily, economically, and materially, Stalin's grand plan for the Chinese political situation was to set up a peace treaty between the Nationalists and Communists. *The Works of Mao Zedong* records Stalin's words to Mao, "We do not agree with this approach. We believe that the opposition parties in China, representing the middle class of the Chinese people and opposing the Chiang Kai-shek group, will continue to exist for a long period."²⁸ Stalin disagreed Mao's approach to unite China under

²⁶ "信中只有一处让我们疑惑不解, 即"在中国革命最终胜利的时候, 将仿照苏联和南斯拉夫的模式, 除了中国共产党之外的所有政党都应当从政治舞台上消失。从而极大地巩固和加强中国革命。" in Chinese Marxist Library 中文马克思主义文库, *Maozedong zhuzuo* 毛泽东著作: 苏联解密档案选, [The Works of Maozedong: Selected Declassified Soviet Archives], 2017, https://www.marxists.org/chinese/pdf/chinese_marxists/mao/20200712e.pdf, 25.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸ "我们不同意这样做。我们认为, 代表中国老百姓中间阶层和反对蒋介石集团的中国各反对派政党还将在很长的时期内存在。" in Ibid, 25.

the CCP. Stalin instructed Mao not to establish one party-system in the Chinese politics.

Alexander V. Pantsov and Steven I. Levine states, "Mao was appalled by Stalin's 'treachery,' but he had to submit and go talk to Chiang. 'I was compelled to go since Stalin insisted,' Mao said later."²⁹ Before the CCP successfully pushed Chiang and the Nationalists to Taiwan, Stalin had continually influenced the Chinese Civil War and sought to establish a multi-party system in the Chinese political system.

However, Georgi Dimitrov's diary provided a different view of Stalin's intervention in the Chinese Civil War from the Soviet perspective. He narrated that Stalin's reason to stop the communist attack was that he did not believe that the CCP would win. He recounted, "I also doubted that the Chinese could succeed, and I advised them to come to a temporary agreement with Chang Kai-shek."³⁰ In Mao's view, Stalin had interfered Chinese domestic politics. But, in the Soviet view, Stalin did not believe Mao would win the Chinese Civil War.

Donggil Kim records Stalin's telegram to Mao, "We would like to respond to as follows: the Soviet Union has always been and is in favor of the termination of war and establishment of peace in China. However, before accepting the mediation proposal, we would like to know whether the other party, the CCP, is willing to accept the Soviet Union as a mediator."³¹ The Soviets wanted to balance political power among the Soviets, Nationalists, and Communists. Garthoff describes, "The Soviet object was to wring concessions and influence for the Soviet Union from a weak China."³² The Soviet participation in the Chinese Civil War was marked by a strategy controlling the conflict's progression; the Soviet political approach complicated the Sino-Soviet relationship. The Soviet maneuvers in Manchuria and strategies altered the power dynamics between the Nationalists and Communists, which led to further Soviet involvement in

²⁹ Alexander V. Pantsov and Steven I. Levine. *Mao : The Real Story*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1974582&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

³⁰ Georgi Dimitrov and Ivo Banac, *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov, 1933-1949*.(Yale University Press, 2003), 443.

³¹ Donggil Kim, "Stalin and the Chinese Civil War," *Cold War History* 10, no. 2 (2010): 185–202, doi:10.1080/14682741003619447.

³² Ibid.

Chinese domestic politics. By ensuring the Soviet's best interests in Sinkiang, Manchuria, and Mongolia, the USSR infiltrated Chinese land since the beginning of the Cold War. W. Atkinson George states,

“A prosperous China would be a strong China, capable of resisting Soviet infiltration in border regions such as Sinkiang, Inner Mongolia, and Manchuria. Soviet trading agencies and their inevitable political implications were already well established in Sinkiang, until their dramatic withdrawal in 1946, and are now reported to be regaining their foothold.”³³

By manipulating the political instability, the Soviets gained political, territorial, and economic success in China during the commencement of the Cold War.

Secondly, the USSR's mixture of Russian chauvinist and communist ideology caused the deterioration of the Sino-Russian relationship in the early 50s. One may define Chauvinism as patriotism that is unreasonable or excessive, synonymous to jingoism. In the Russian sense of the word, it applies even though the Soviets had a communist ideology because they also possessed a Russian chauvinist mentality in dealing diplomatically with their neighbors. Although the Soviets and Stalin denounced the chauvinist ideology within the Soviet Union, the Soviet diplomatic actions were a threat to other nation. Meanwhile, the USSR's and Stalin's ultimate political and ideological goals were chauvinistic in nature. Geroid Tanquary Robinson supports, "This amounts to saying that before the stateless Communism of the future can attained, the world as a whole will first have to be united in a single Soviet state."³⁴ As a result, the Soviets inherited Russian territorial insecurity and the Russian enforcement of the mixture of communist and Russian chauvinist ideologies caused the dissolution of the Sino-Soviet alliances in the next decade.

Historically, the Russian Empire had territorial and political ambitions towards the Far East since Peter the Great. The practice of Russian chauvinism was continually revived by the

³³ W. Atkinson George, “The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance,” *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 23, no. 3 (1947): 357–66. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3017226>.

³⁴ Geroid Tanquary Robinson, “Stalin's Vision of Utopia: The Future Communist Society,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 99, no. 1 (1955): 11–21, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3143688>.

Imperial Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although the Romanov dynasty ended in 1917, communist Russia adopted many of the policies and attitudes of Imperial Russia, including Russian superiority. David Floyd narrates a Russian chauvinist Count Muraviev-Amursky in his ambition for China's northeast border, "Count Muraviev-Amursky, who did more than any other Russian to extend Russia's influence to the Far East, said in 1854: 'to preserve Siberia it is necessary now to preserve and strengthen for us Khamchatka, Sakhalin and the mouths and navigation of the Amur and to obtain a solid influence over neighbouring China."³⁵ Count Muraviev-Amursky's statement served as the motto for Imperial Russia since 1854. Four years later, in 1858, the Russians forced the Qing dynasty to sign the Treaty of Aigun, annexing approximately 231,660 square miles of land, which was three times bigger than France.

Furthermore, the Soviets had their territorial ambition in Xinjiang and Manchuria. The main reason that the Soviets entered Manchuria was to fight the Japanese in August 1945; however, they also desired to control the railways in Manchuria, especially the Chinese Eastern Railway. B. P. states, "American correspondents have reported that Soviet engineers have restored the broad gauge on the main line of the former Chinese Eastern Railway from Manchuli to Pogranichnaya."³⁶ Although the Soviet occupation was not mentioned in the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, it was acquiescent that the Soviets would take control of it. Also, the Soviets began to infiltrate Xinjiang before the Germans launched Operation Barbarossa in June 1941. The Soviets already took control in some parts of Xinjiang under the Nationalists. The Soviet ambition was revealed in Xinjiang according to Hsiao-Ting Lin. He advocates, "As the India office explained to the government of India in March 1943, if the Chinese were ousted, the Soviets would exploit their access by way of the Turkestan railway to integrate Xinjiang with

³⁵ David Floyd, *Mao Against Khrushchev: A Short History of the Sino-Soviet Conflict* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 4.

³⁶ B. P., "Imperial and Soviet Russia in Manchuria," *The World Today* 2, no. 9 (1946): 429, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40391958>.

their other Central Asian territories."³⁷ The Soviets would take Xinjiang if the Nationalists did not act in taking back Xinjiang. Thus, the Soviets' ambitious action caused Chinese territorial insecurity before and after WWII.

In addition, Stalin continued his dominating diplomatic strategy towards China at the beginning of the Cold War. Hiroaki Kuromiya describes, "Stalin was successful because he knew how willingly the Japanese imperialists relied on force....The Soviet occupation of Manchuria made it into a bastion of Communism from which to take over China as a whole."³⁸ The Soviet territorial ambition in Manchuria and Xinjiang had begun with the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689 and existed until the reign of Stalin and later Khrushchev. Historians, especially Western historians, argue that Stalinist foreign diplomacy was an alternate continuation of Tsarist Russia. Hu Shih narratively describes Stalin's grand foreign strategy,

What seems to differentiate China from the seemingly much easier conquests in Central and Eastern Europe has been the much greater complexity and difficulty of the conquest, which made it necessary for Stalin to resort to the most cunning forms of secret diplomacy to overcome the resistance that Nationalist China had been able to summon for over two decades.³⁹

However, when the CCP established a new China in 1949, Stalin still recognized his communist comrade in the Far East. Stalin and his successors desired to turn China into a satellite nation in Asia, like Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary in Europe. Arthur Adams concludes the Soviet foreign policies, "The answer is that on fundamentals the Soviets have not changed."⁴⁰ This reinforcement of Russian chauvinist ideology in the Soviet foreign policies since the establishment of communist China in 1949 paved the way for a future separation. Nevertheless, the interpretation of a Soviet scholar's perspective is worth mentioning. He argues that the Soviet foreign policy was unrelated to imperialism or chauvinism. The argument claims

³⁷ Hsiao-Ting Lin, "From Rimland to Heartland: Nationalist China's Geopolitics and Ethnopolitics in Central Asia, 1937-1952," *The International History Review* 30, no. 1 (2008): 66, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40109957>.

³⁸ Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Stalin, Japan, and the Struggle for Supremacy over China, 1894-1945* (Abingdon, Oxon ; Routledge, 2023), 448.

³⁹ Hu Shih, "China in Stalin's Grand Strategy." *Foreign Affairs* 29, no. 1 (1950): 11-40, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20030812>.

⁴⁰ Arthur Eugene Adams, *Readings in Soviet Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Boston: Heath, 1961), 312.

that the seemingly “chauvinism” was a self-defense mentality. Karl Radek was Stalin’s chief publicist on international affairs in the 1930s. He asserts, “The Soviet Union is opposed to imperialism. It is opposed to an imperialistic war. It recognizes as equitable only one war, the war for the defense of socialism, the war of the enslaved peoples for their liberation.”⁴¹ In the paper, Radek justifies war for peace. He explains that starting a “righteous” war for securing peace is justified. Controversially, he again emphasizes that peace was important to the socialist type of states. He continues, “The Soviet Union follows the policy of peace because peace is the best condition for building up a socialist society. Fighting for the maintenance of peace. . . the Soviet Union has at the time raised the military preparedness of the country to a level which answers the demands of national defense and the requirements of modern warfare.”⁴² Although the article explains Soviet foreign policies and claims it had abandoned imperialist thinking, Radek still cannot justify many Soviet intrusions into other nations’ sovereignties, such as Poland and Hungary. Nonetheless, the Soviet interpretation is worth mentioning to demonstrate the Soviet perspective viewing Russian “chauvinism.”

Since the establishment of the PRC, Mao had been aware of Stalin and Soviet political and territorial ambitions toward China, from Stalin’s intervention in the Chinese Civil War to interference in Chinese internal politics. Mao had always possessed a negative attitude towards Soviet ambition and chauvinism. Zhisui Li narrates Mao’s political comment on the Soviets, “He believed that the Soviet Union was the greatest threat to China, with the ultimate goal of annexing China.”⁴³ Although Stalin and the Soviets had supported the Chinese in the early establishment of the PRC, Mao had constantly guarded against Soviet infiltration and had determined to surpass the Soviet Union. Li continues, “In contrast, Mao held a deep contempt

⁴¹ Karl Radek, “The Bases of the Soviet Foreign Policy” in *The Soviet Union, 1922-1962; a Foreign Affairs Reader*, Philip E. Mosely, ed., (New York: Published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Praeger, 1963), 108.

⁴² *Ibid*, 113.

⁴³ “他认为苏联是中国的最大威胁，最终目的是吞并中国。”in Zhisui, Li 李志绥, "Maodedong sirenyisheng huiyilu" 毛泽东私人医生回忆录 [The Private Life Of Chairman Mao : The Memoirs Of Mao's Personal Physician] New York: Random House, 1994, 7.

for the Soviet allies. Mao was determined to surpass the primitive Soviet model with a Chinese version of socialism and to elevate China to the level of advanced Western countries."⁴⁴ Thus, Soviet chauvinism laid the groundwork for the future breakdown of Sino-Soviet relations.

In addition, by signing the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with the KMT in August 1945, the Soviets continually exploited its political influence by advocating for Outer Mongolia to gain independence from the Chinese government.⁴⁵ The agreement highlighted the significance of upholding Outer Mongolia's political sovereignty and the wholeness of its borders. The treaty states, "The Soviet Government with satisfaction takes note of the above Note of the Government of the Chinese Republic and declares on its degradation of the art that it will respect the State independence and territorial integrity of the Mongolian People's Republic."⁴⁶ Although the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance stipulated that the Soviets would offer military hardware and additional resources to the Chinese Nationalist government and acknowledged Manchuria's position as a component of China, affirming respect for China's sovereignty over these regions and upholding their territorial wholeness, the Soviet manipulated the independence of Outer Mongolia to become the buffer zone between China and the USSR.

Nevertheless, even though the Nationalists reluctantly compromised on the independence of Mongolia in 1945, the Soviets failed to provide the assistance that they promised in the treaty. One analysis says, "It is evident that many of the terms of the treaty and the agreements are not being put into effect, partly owing to its dislocation was caused by the continuation of the civil war in China, but to a much larger extent because of downright bad faith on the part of the Soviet Government."⁴⁷ The Chinese National Government thought it would gain Soviet support

⁴⁴“毛立志要以中国式的社会主义超越原始苏联模式，并将中国提升到先进西方国家水准。” in Ibid, 3.

⁴⁵ Office of the Historian, "The Treaty of Friendship and Alliance," *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The Far East, China*, Volume VI, accessed June 26, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v07/d692#:~:text=The%20treaty%20of%20friendship%20and,violation%20of%20peace%20by%20Japan.>

⁴⁶ "The Sino-Soviet Treaty." *Chronology of International Events and Documents* 1, no. 8 (1945): 182,

[http://www.jstor.org/stable/40544851.](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40544851)

⁴⁷ Ibid.

by granting the independence of Mongolia as a Sino-Soviet buffer zone; KMT failed to win the support of the Soviets. Although the Soviets indirectly helped the CCP by barely enforcing the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, the action showed the Soviet territorial ambition and insecurity in the Far East.

Nevertheless, the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in 1950 was worth mentioning because the treaty was a milestone document in the Sino-Soviet diplomatic relationship.⁴⁸ The treaty first recorded the official Soviet help for the CCP in 1950; it signified the beginning of the honeymoon era of the Sino-Soviet relationship in the 50s. National Museum of China records, “After discussions between Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Soviet leaders including Stalin, on February 14, the two countries formally signed the "Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance" in Moscow.”⁴⁹ The Soviets helped with technology, military, political, and diplomatic support. Unlike the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance signed with KMT, the USSR in the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance incontrovertibly supplied materials for the CCP. Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia assess, “The CCP regarded the signing of the Sino-Soviet alliance treaty as a success in the early 1950s because it guaranteed a military alliance with the Soviet Union and direct loans to the PRC.”⁵⁰ The treaty confirmed the close relationship between the CCP and the Soviets in the early 1950s. The Chinese did rely on the Soviet help in the early stage of the Sino-Soviet relationship.

However, although the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance was viewed as a successful treaty between the Soviet Union and PRC at that time, it

⁴⁸ Office of the Historian, "Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, East Asia and the Pacific, Volume VI, accessed June 26, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v06/d157>.

⁴⁹ “经过毛泽东、周恩来同斯大林等苏联国家领导人会谈，2月14日，中苏两个在莫斯科签订《中苏友好同盟互助条约》。”in National Museum of China 中国国家博物馆, "Zhongsuyouhao tongmenghuzhu tiaoyue"《中苏友好同盟互助条约》 [The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance]. https://www.chnmuseum.cn/zp/zpml/gshww/202103/t20210331_249376.shtml.

⁵⁰ Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Partnership, 1945-1959 : A New History* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 62.

failed to keep the Sino-Soviet relationship due to the effectiveness of executing it when the Sino-Soviet relationship was getting worse. "Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty" declares, "The decision was taken by the Standing Committee of the Fifth National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China in April this year. The Chinese decision is due to great changes in the international situation and due to alleged violations of the treaty by the Soviet Union."⁵¹ Another reason that the treaty failed to maintain the relationship was that the CCP considered the treaty as an "unequal" treaty. Shen and Xia narrate, "The historian Yang Kuisong points out that Mao and Zhou, even after all their efforts, were not able to gain a completely equal treaty and agreement, specifically regarding some concrete issue (special privileges for the Soviets in Xinjiang and Manchuria)."⁵² Although the treaty was materially beneficial for the PRC, it, from the CCP's perspective, was an unequal treaty because it was hurting Chinese national and territorial sovereignty. In the CCP's mind, the Soviet special privileges in Xinjiang and Manchuria signified as the foreign intervention and intrusion of China's political sovereignty. From the Chinese perspective, although the Soviets had provided the CCP with technological and material aid, the CCP still viewed the treaty as "unequal" with the Soviets. Thus, several Sino-Soviet relationship historians like Yang argue that although the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance was materially helpful for China, it accelerated the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship due to the inequality nature of the treaty.

On the surface, this treaty appeared successful, but there were significant conflicts of interest between the PRC and the Soviet Union even during the signing process. Before the draft was signed, both sides made several revisions to the treaty, yet there were still many areas of dissatisfaction on both sides. Some parts of the treaty even irritated Stalin, and he personally revised the draft. Zhihua Shen narrates, "Although the handwriting is messy and difficult to decipher, it is evident that different individuals made the revisions, with numerous deletions and

⁵¹ "Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty." *Strategic Studies* 2, no. 4 (1979): 9–10. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45181308>.

⁵² *Ibid*, 63.

changes. Particularly noteworthy is a version reviewed by Stalin himself, where he nearly crossed out the entire content of the Chinese draft. The margin notes reveal Stalin's anger and frustration.”⁵³ From this, it can be observed that both the Chinese and Soviet sides miscalculated their own demands and the expectations of the other party. It continues, “In summary, when resolving the economic interest conflicts in the alliance with Mao Zedong, Stalin had a meticulous and comprehensive strategy for the Soviet Union's approach in the Far East.”⁵⁴ Thus, the initial discussion of the treaty was unsuccessful and revealed a lack of understanding between the Chinese and the Soviets.

The Soviets and the Chinese experienced numerous difficulties due to their significant interests in the Far East. The signing of the treaty was difficult because it involved fundamental interests for both sides. For example, maintaining the Soviet interest in the Far East without injuring the Chinese territorial sovereignty was a huge subject in the treaty. Shen illustrates, “Apart from the issue of the withdrawal of troops from Lüshun, the Chinese draft almost completely overturned the original Soviet proposals. This caught the Soviet side by surprise, leading them to conduct intensive studies and repeated revisions upon receiving Zhou Enlai's draft.”⁵⁵ On the issue of interests in the Far East, China and the Soviet Union engaged in intense debates. These intense debates revealed several economic and territorial disagreements and foreshadowed the Sino-Soviet diplomatic deterioration in the next decade. Shen demonstrates, “However, in the protocol, the Chinese proposed adding a clause concerning the transportation of Soviet troops along the Chinese Eastern Railway...The Soviet side could no longer tolerate

⁵³ “笔者在俄国档案文献中发现了对中方这一草案的四份不同的修改稿，尽管字迹潦草，不易辨认，但可以看出是不同人分别修改的，而且删改之处非常多，特别是斯大林本人批阅的一份文本，几乎把中方草案的内容全部勾划掉了，其字里行间透露了斯大林的恼怒和愤慨。” in Chinese Marxist Library 中文马克思主义文库, "Zhongsutiaoyue tanpanzhongde liyichongtu jiqijiejue" "中苏条约谈判中的利益冲突及其解决" [Conflicts of Interest and Their Resolution in Sino-Soviet Treaty Negotiations]. 2001. <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/reference-books/szh-2003/24.htm>.

⁵⁴ “总之，斯大林在解决与毛泽东结盟中的经济利益冲突时，对苏联在远东的战略方针是有缜密的通盘考虑的。” in Ibid.

⁵⁵ “除旅顺撤军问题外，中方的草案几乎完全推翻了苏方的原有设想，这是苏联方面感到非常意外的，以至收到周恩来的草案后苏方进行了紧张研究和反复修改。” in Ibid.

this, leading to heated debates between the two sides during the negotiations.”⁵⁶ Despite many areas of dissatisfaction, China and the Soviet Union still signed the treaty in 1950. Though this treaty made both sides appear harmonious, it essentially placed Sino-Soviet relations in a state of undercurrents and tension. Analysis of the treaty describes, “Through an analysis of the Sino-Soviet diplomatic negotiation process, it can be concluded that although the signing of the Sino-Soviet Alliance Treaty formally guaranteed the alliance between Beijing and Moscow, in reality, the mutual suspicion and dissatisfaction between Mao Zedong and Stalin were actually strengthened.”⁵⁷

Thirdly, the Soviet’s passive approach in the Korean War heralded the degradation of the Sino-Soviet relationship. The Korean War was the first proxy war fought during the Cold War. After WWII, the Korean Peninsula was divided into Communist North Korea and Nationalist South Korea. The war started when the Communist leader Kim Il Sung launched a surprise attack on South Korea in June 1950, and later, the UN forces under the commander of General MacArthur joined South Korea and defeated the Communist attack. Unlike the United States and the Soviet Union, who tried to prevent the war from becoming WWII, Mao and the CCP viewed the Korean War as a war to secure national safety and promote the Sino-Korean relationship. Mao stated, "To support the Korean people's liberation war, oppose the aggression of American imperialism and its lackeys, and thereby protect the interests of the Korean people, the Chinese people, and the people of all Eastern countries."⁵⁸

However, the Chinese were in a dilemma about joining the Korean War in the first place because the CCP had just won the Chinese Civil War and was preparing to take back

⁵⁶ "但在议定书中，针对苏军沿中长铁路调运的问题，中方提出增加一项条款，即中国的军队和军用物资也可以自由地沿苏联境内的铁路调运。对此，苏方不能再容忍了。于是，中苏双方在谈判中发生了激烈争论。" in *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ "通过对中苏外交谈判进程的分析可以得出这样的结论：中苏同盟条约的签订虽然在形式上保证了北京与莫斯科之间的盟友关系，但实际上毛泽东与斯大林之间的猜疑和不满反而加强了。" in *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ "为了援助朝鲜人民解放战争，反对美帝国主义及其走狗们的进攻，借以保卫朝鲜人民、中国人民及东方各国人民的利益。" in Chinese Marxist Library 中文马克思主义文库, "Geizhongguorenmin zhiyuanjun demingling" "给中国人民志愿军的命令" [Order to the Chinese People's Volunteer Army], 1950, <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-19501008.htm>.

Taiwan. Thus, it was venturesome to be involved in the Korean conflict. Jian Chen advocates, "Mao and the CCP leadership faced a dilemma on the Korean issue. Mao and his comrades were reluctant to see a war break out in Korea because they worried that might complicate the situation in East Asia and jeopardize the CCP's effort to liberate Taiwan, which was still occupied by Nationalist forces."⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Mao viewed the Korean War as an important key for securing Chinese national security. As a result, Mao instructed the Chinese People's Volunteer Army in North Korea; Mao stated, "Chinese and Korean comrades must unite as closely as brothers, sharing both joys and sorrows, living and dying together, and fighting to the end to defeat our common enemy."⁶⁰ Mao viewed the Korean War as a significant diplomatic opportunity to promote Chinese international prestige. From the CCP's perspective, the Korean War was also known as the war of "Resisting America and Assisting Korea." Gary D Rawnsley describes, "This is indicated by rhetoric that labelled the war the 'Great Movement to Resist America and Assist Korea', and presented Chinese intervention as a chance to 'Beat American Arrogance.'"⁶¹

Nevertheless, the Soviets' passive approach to the Korean War irritated Mao and the CCP because the CCP considered the Korean War a life-threatening war that needed to be dealt with more seriously. Stalin was cautious about participating in the conflict. Khrushchev recalled his astonishment in his memoir when he noticed Stalin's diplomatic decision in the Korean War. Khrushchev narrated, "I was astonished. Hadn't Stalin given his blessing to Kim Il-sung? Hadn't we given arms to Kim Il-sung? Weren't we on Kim's side?"⁶² Compared to Mao's and the

⁵⁹ Jian Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 54.

⁶⁰ "中朝两国同志要亲如兄弟般地团结在一起，休戚与共，生死相依，为战胜共同敌人而奋斗到底。" in Chinese Marxist Library 中文马克思主义文库, "Zhongguorenmin zhiyuanjun yaoaihu chaoxiande yishanyishui yicaoyimu" "中国人民志愿军要爱护朝鲜的一山一水一草一木" [The Chinese People's Volunteers Should Cherish Every Hill, Every River, Every Tree and Every Blade of Grass in Korea]. 1951, <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-19510119.htm>.

⁶¹ Gary D. Rawnsley, "'The Great Movement to Resist America and Assist Korea': How Beijing Sold the Korean War," *Media, War & Conflict* 2, no. 3 (2009): 285–315, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26000394>.

⁶² N. S. Khrushchev, (1970). *Khrushchev Remembers* (E. Crankshaw, Ed.; S. Talbott, Trans. [1st ed.]). Little, Brown, 370.

Chinese People's Volunteer Army's active involvement in the Korean War, Stalin was unwilling to fully support the war. From Khrushchev's perspective in his memoir, the North Koreans would have won the conflict if the Soviets had provided military aid. He continues, "If we hadn't refused him aid in qualified personnel to assess the distribution of forces and to direct operations, there's no doubt that North Korea would have been victorious."⁶³ The Soviet passive approach to the Korean War not only changed the political situation in the Korean peninsula but, as we shall see, also aggravated Mao and the Chinese.

However, the recently released Russian archival documents indicate that the Soviets had provided material help rather than sending troops to support the CCP and North Korea. Mineo Nakajima, "As will be noted later, China today makes the criticism that in the Korean War, the Soviets did nothing but sell weapons. Peking would not be making this complaint had there been an agreement on a division of labor."⁶⁴ The article indicates that there was no agreement between China and the USSR in the Korean War. The Soviets' political decision in the Korean War accelerated the degradation of the Sino-Soviet relationship during the 1950s.

Additionally, from the Soviet perspective, their main political objective was not to have a major war that might cause WWII in the Korean peninsula because the Soviet political interest was in Europe at this moment, and thus, they considered the war unworthy. Geoffrey Roberts explains, "The war undermined the efforts of the peace movement, complicated Soviet attempts to resolve issues in Europe, and encouraged massive programmes of rearmament by the United States and its allies. The war itself was expensive and distracting for Stalin."⁶⁵ The Soviet Union was blamed by both Americans and the Chinese as the manipulator of the Korean War. Joel Campbell describes, "For the Soviet Union, the Korean Conflict was definitely the wrong war. Officially neutral, the Soviets nonetheless were vilified by both sides. U.S. officials

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Mineo Nakajima, "The Sino-Soviet Confrontation: Its Roots in the International Background of the Korean War." *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 1 (1979): 19–47, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2159072>.

⁶⁵ Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953* (Yale University Press, 2006), 366.

saw Stalin as the puppet master for the Communist side, while the Chinese resented being the water carrier for the socialist camp and grumbled about inadequate Soviet supply efforts."⁶⁶ The Korean War became the Soviets' diplomatic dilemma. Although the Soviets wanted to participate in the war, they feared it would become a major conflict that might cause WWII. As a result, the CCP blamed the USSR for barely helping the conflict on the peninsula, which caused the degradation of the Sino-Soviet relationship. Mineo narrates, "First of all, we should take note of the fact that Peking is now beginning to openly criticize the Soviet position in the Korean War in relation to that of China. These attacks clearly indicate how repugnant the Soviet attitude in the war in the eyes of the Chinese."⁶⁷ Although the Soviets did not intend to degrade the Sino-Soviet relationship, its political decisions caused Chinese discontentment.

The Soviets were unwilling to fully support revealed Stalin's calculations in the Far East. Stalin had plans for the Soviets in the Far East—one of them was to build a perennial warm water port in the Pacific Ocean. Zhihua Shen asserts,

If Stalin had to accept Mao Zedong's conditions for forming an alliance treaty but did not want to lose his access to the Pacific and its ice-free ports, and if he had to seek a remedial measure to ensure or maintain the realization of the Soviet Union's traditional strategic interests in the Far East, then on the map in Moscow, controlling the Korean Peninsula was the only way to somewhat satisfy Stalin's desires.⁶⁸

If the Soviets had provided adequate assistance to North Korea and the Chinese Volunteer Army, according to Khrushchev's reminiscences, the Korean peninsula would be stabilized under the control of North Korea and China. This situation was not Stalin's diplomatic intention in the Far East. The fully committed Volunteer Army formed a distinct contrast with the cautious Soviet Union. The Soviet diplomatic caution annoyed the Chinese because the Chinese had paid a tremendous price in the Korean War. The Korean War was a perfect illustration of

⁶⁶ Joel R. Campbell, "The Wrong War: The Soviets and the Korean War, 1945-1953." *International Social Science Review* 88, no. 3 (2014): 1–29. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/intesocsciirevi.88.3.01>.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "如果斯大林必须接受毛泽东缔结同盟条约的条件而又不想失去其在太平洋的出海口和不冻港，如果斯大林必须寻求一种补救措施来保证或维持苏联在远东这一传统战略的实现，那么在莫斯科的地图上，只有控制朝鲜半岛可以在某种程度上满足斯大林的愿望。" in Ibid.

the ideological confrontation between the extreme pragmatist Stalin and the extreme nationalist Mao.

Despite not committing their military support in the Korean War, the Soviets irritated Mao by asking the Chinese to pay for the military support they received. Chen narrates, “What really offended Mao and his comrades, however, was the Soviet request that China pay for much of the military support Beijing had received during the war, which added to China’s long-term economic challenges.”⁶⁹ If said that the Soviet passive attitude in the Korean War dissatisfied the Chinese, this Soviet request for military payment aggravated Mao and China. Therefore, the disagreement between the Soviets and the Chinese was demonstrated in the Korean Conflict in the 1950s, which planted the seed of greater deterioration in the 1960s.

Last but not least, the weakness of personalizing the political relationship in the communist regimes deteriorated the Sino-Soviet relationship. Under the communist regimes, communist leaders like Stalin, Mao, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev often represented the regime. If the leaders did not have a good personal relationship with another leader, the relationship between the two nations would probably not end well. One example was Mao’s relationship with Stalin. Li describes the situation when Mao visited in Moscow, “In the winter of 1949, when he went to the Soviet Union, he was met with extreme coldness. After staying for two months and finally becoming furious and wanting to return to China, Stalin met with him and signed the treaty.”⁷⁰ Mao’s visit Moscow from 1949 to 1950 was unpleasant. William Wallace describes, “He kept Mao waiting in Moscow for ten weeks in the winter of 1949-50 before yielding him a treaty of friendship. It was later that Mao was to complain of the 'struggle' for a treaty that guaranteed China against an unlikely Japanese attack.”⁷¹ In narrating the Stalin-Mao relationship, Wallace senses Stalin’s uninterested attitude towards Mao and newly-emerged

⁶⁹ Ibid, 61.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 7.

⁷¹ William V. Wallace, “Sino-Soviet Relations: An Interpretation.” *Soviet Studies* 35, no. 4 (1983): 457–70, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/151254>.

communist China. Like the monarchs during the *Ancien Régime*, whose diplomatic relationship was solely based on their personal relationship with other nations, the bad personal relations between Mao, Stalin, and Khrushchev foreshadowed the breakup between the Chinese and Soviets. Andreï Andreevich Gromyko recounted his wife's words in his memoir describing the relationship between Mao and Stalin, "As we were leaving the room, my wife, who had been sitting next to them, whispered to me, 'Stalin and Mao didn't seem to say much to each other.'"⁷² This indicated that Stalin was not very enthusiastic about Mao's arrival. Thus, with Stalin's tepid attitude toward Mao, the relationship between Soviet and communist China became more utilitarian than profiting help for the communist comrades.

Moreover, the mutual suspicion between the two leaders accelerated the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations. Although Stalin and Mao were strong communist leaders and claimed to be the successors of Marxism-Leninism, they were mutually suspicious and distrustful of each other. Stalin often feared Mao's political stance in the Cold War even Mao openly opposed American imperialism. Chinese Marxist Library asserts, "Stalin did not trust Mao Zedong; he was always worried that the Chinese Communist Party would follow the path of Titoism. He was particularly resentful of the development of the new China's relations with the United States."⁷³ Due to the distrust, Stalin often worried that Mao might lean towards the United States. Thus, in Stalin's view, Mao was difficult to control and was not a loyal partner of the Soviet Union.

Despite Stalin's worries about Mao's political stance in the *Weltpolitik*, he also viewed Mao as a "dissident communist." In the early 30s, Stalin refused to acknowledge Mao as the authentic Marxist in China. Sheng Michael describes Stalin's view of Mao, "Therefore, Stalin had good reason to distrust Mao...Garver believes that Stalin regarded Mao as a 'dissident

⁷² Andreï Andreevich Gromyko, *Memoirs*. Internet Archive (New York: Doubleday, 1989), accessed June 25. <https://archive.org/details/memoirs0000grom/page/248/mode/2up>.

⁷³ "斯大林对毛泽东是不信任的，他一直担心中共会走铁托式的道路，特别是对新中国与美国关系的发展耿耿于怀。" in *Ibid*.

communist' who frustrated Stalin's intention to sacrifice the CCP's revolutionary interests in order to meet the need for Soviet security."⁷⁴ Although, on the surface, Mao recognized Stalin as great communist leaders and praised his ideological contributions to domestic China, both Soviet and Chinese sources indicate the fragile relationship between Mao and Stalin in the 40s and 50s. As an observer of the relationship between Stalin and Mao, Khrushchev wrote in his memoir, "Stalin properly criticized Mao for this deviation from true Marxism."⁷⁵ In Stalin's perspective, he did not view Mao as a pure Marxist, but Stalin viewed Mao as a "heretic" of the Marxism-Leninism due to Mao's political approach during the Chinese Civil War.

In the Soviet point of view, Mao had twisted the Marxist ideology because he relied on the peasants rather than the workers. According to Khrushchev, the relationship between Stalin and Mao had gradually transformed when Mao became the communist leader in China. He recounts, "After Mao came to power, his relations with Stalin soon became strained at the level of trade and industrial cooperation as well as at the level of ideology."⁷⁶ The superficial relationship between Stalin and Mao continued until the death of Stalin in 1953. Therefore, the entrenched leadership suspicions between the Soviet Union and communist China led to the later Sino-Soviet deterioration in the late 50s.

From Mao's point of view, Stalin was a complicated figure. Stalin in Mao's perspective changed with the passage of time. During China's War of Resistance against Japan, Mao saw Stalin as a good friend of China. Mao claimed in 1939, "Stalin is a loyal friend of the Chinese people's liberation cause. The Chinese people's respect for Stalin and their friendship with the Soviet Union are entirely sincere. Any attempts at sowing discord, spreading rumors, or slandering will ultimately be futile."⁷⁷ Not only because the Soviet Union provided resources

⁷⁴ Michael M. Sheng, "Response: Mao and Stalin: Adversaries or Comrades?" *The China Quarterly*, no. 129 (1992): 180–83, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/654603>

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 462.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 463.

⁷⁷ "斯大林是中国人民解放事业的忠实的朋友。中国人民对于斯大林的敬爱，对于苏联的友谊，是完全出于诚意的，任何人的挑拨离间，造谣污蔑，到底都没有用处。" in Chinese Marxist Library 中文马克思主义文库，"Sidalinshi zhongguorenmin depengyou" "斯大林是中国人民的朋友" [Stalin was a friend of the Chinese people],

during the War of Resistance against Japan, but also because Mao hoped to gain Soviet support and aid during this period. Due to the Battles of Khalkhin Gol in 1939 and the increasing threat from Japan in the Far East to the Soviet Union, the Soviets needed the Chinese help to contain the Japanese threat in the Far East. Hence, Mao held a positive view towards Stalin during the early stage of China's War of Resistance against Japan.

However, Mao changed his view of Stalin in the Chinese Civil War. Mao later concluded that the early failure of the Chinese Red Army in the Chinese Civil War was because of Stalin blindly intervening. Li claims, "Mao believed that the early failures of the Red Army were entirely due to Stalin and the Comintern's interference."⁷⁸ Mao summed that the early defeat of the Red Army was Stalin's unadvisable direction. The incident contributed to Mao's negative view towards Stalin.

In addition to that, Mao was upset with Stalin's political advice being willing to divide China into Northern and Southern parts during the Chinese Civil War. Mao often expressed his dissatisfaction with Stalin. Kim recounts Mao's own words in alluding to Stalin's political position in the Chinese Civil War in 1949. He narrates, "Up until to the year of 1949, when we were about to cross the Yangtze River, there was still someone who prevented us from doing so. It was said that we absolutely could not cross the river."⁷⁹ Mao was alluding Stalin's interfere of the Civil War and blamed him for his ill-advised direction.

Despite the world viewing Stalin and Mao were alike, the two figures looked down on each other. In fact, Mao and Stalin were alike in political decisions. For example, they promoted the "cult of personality" in domestic politics. Li describes, "The whole world saw Mao as China's Stalin. Like many ordinary Chinese people, Mao viewed himself as the savior of the nation."⁸⁰ Mao, in some ways, followed the political path of Stalin. However, the two leaders

1939, <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist-org-chinese-mao-19391220.htm>.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 79.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ "全天下都认为毛是中国的史达林。和一般中国人一样，毛视自己为民族救星。" in Ibid, 53.

held each other in contempt. Stalin despised Mao's political ideology. Li states, "However, they were unaware that as early as the 1930s, he had been regarded as a "heretic" by the CPSU and Stalin, being considered a "white-hearted, red-skinned radish."⁸¹ Although they had numerous similarities, Stalin still disregarded Mao's political approach. Like Stalin's disdain, Mao also despised Stalin's political deeds. Mao disliked Stalin's diplomatic approach in the Far East, especially China. Li expressed his surprise when he noticed that the bad relationship between Stalin and Mao. Li writes, "In fact, Mao despised Stalin. I was very surprised when I heard Mao describe his poor relationship with the former Soviet leader."⁸² Thus, the mutual suspicions between the Soviet and Chinese leadership contributed to the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1950s.

In conclusion, the Soviet ambitious approach to Chinese politics in the late 40s and early 50s foreshadowed the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet diplomatic relationship. The two nations' collaboration was officially documented through the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in 1950, symbolizing their united front against Western powers, particularly the US. Despite the apparent solidarity, the relationship was problematic in several ways. Although the Soviets and the Chinese had experienced a short period of collaborative relationship, they realized the fundamental inaccurate perceptions of each other. The divergence of interpretations and implementations of the communist ideology in the 1940s and 1950s, such as the Soviet territorial ambitions in the Far East and divergent political aims, caused diplomatic and economic suspicions about the alliance. The different approach of the Korean War in the 1950s also caused a great deal of disappointment in the Sino-Soviet alliance. The Sino-Soviet relationship was unique in history because it experienced numerous changes and transformations within several decades. Although both institutions were communist nations, they failed to unite

⁸¹ “五十年代初期，人们只看到他 与苏联订立了“中苏友好互助同盟条约”，号召‘一边倒’，但不知早在三十年代，他就被苏联共产党和史达林目为‘异端分子’，是‘白心的红皮萝卜’”。 in *Ibid*, 7.

⁸² "事实上，毛鄙视史。我听到毛形容他和这位前苏联领袖的关系不好时，非常惊愕。" in *Ibid*, 53.

ideologically, economically, and diplomatically due to their distinctiveness. Thus, after undergoing several unpleasant political incidents, the alliance eventually collapsed in 1969. It became a monumental incident during the Cold War and directly changed the course of the war.

Chapter II: The Decline of Camaraderie

The Sino-Soviet relationship enjoyed a honeymoon through the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in 1950, briefly after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This treaty resulted from Stalin recognizing the strategic and political significance of an alliance with communist China against the West. The Soviet Union, under Stalin's reign, provided considerable military and economic aid to the PRC to help rebuild the country after foreign and civil war and to support China's own communist reforms. Despite the political alliance, Stalin was alert to support Mao Zedong and the CCP. Although Stalin recognized Mao's China as a junior partner in the communist bloc of the world, he was often unwilling to share technology, especially nuclear technology, or fully support China's ambitions in Asia, reflecting a paternalistic attitude that Mao found patronizing. Nevertheless, the situation changed when Nikita Khrushchev came to power in 1953. The Sino-Soviet relationship underwent a fundamental change after the death of Stalin.

First, the Sino-Soviet relationship transitioned gradually from a defective ally to a public enemy after the Stalinist era. Despite both countries being communist states, they interpreted and performed differently in their ideological beliefs. The Sino-Soviet relationship transitioned from a wary alliance under Stalin to a significant rift under Khrushchev. Robert North declares, "According to reasoning, it would be an error to assume that Chinese policy is necessarily Russian policy."⁸³ Although under Stalin's USSR, the two nations demonstrated only a few signs of dissonance, however, the signs of disagreement transformed into significant issues that could lead to deterioration between the CPSU and the CCP during Khrushchev's control. It was worth mentioning that Khrushchev had foreshadowed the Sino-Soviet conflict in his memoir. He recounts, I remember that when I came back from China in 1954 I told my comrades, 'Conflict with China is inevitable.'⁸⁴

⁸³ Robert Carver North, *Moscow and Chinese Communists* (Stanford University Press, 1953), 270.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 466.

However, in 1953, the Soviet succession conflict involved Nikita Khrushchev and Georgy Malenkov. Malenkov was one of the few survivors during the Stalinist purge. After Stalin died in March 1953, he became the premier and first secretary of the Communist Party. He was Khrushchev's political opponent in the Soviet power struggle. Both of them wanted support from China. Therefore, from 1953 to 1956, the Sino-Soviet relationship enjoyed its camaraderie until Khrushchev published his Secret Speech in February 1956. N. I. U. Jun recounts, "Khrushchev indeed was prepared to enhance Sino-Soviet relations on this visit and he was determined to change almost all things that Chinese leaders thought were not conforming to internationalist principles."⁸⁵ The Sino-Soviet relationship had a good relationship because the CCP had supported Khrushchev in the political rivalry and won. Victor Baras asserts, "In summary, the Chinese seem to have favored Khrushchev throughout much of the succession struggle."⁸⁶ Through their collaboration, the Sino-Soviet relationship enjoyed their comradeship in the first three years of Khrushchev's rule.

The regime of Stalin and Khrushchev had fundamental differences in dealing with the Sino-Soviet relationship. Stalin had strong suspicion toward Mao and the CCP. However, this attitude was changed under the rule of Khrushchev in the beginning. At the beginning of his regime, Khrushchev viewed the CCP and Mao as his trustable ally. Odd Arne Westad describes, "Stalin's ideologically based distrust of the CCP prevented the civilian assistance program for China from becoming fully functional, but his successor Nikita Khrushchev knew no such boundaries. On the contrary, Khrushchev made a deepening of the alliance with the PRC a cornerstone in his rise to power after Stalin's death in 1953."⁸⁷ Thus, the Sino-Soviet relationship transitioned into a new era since Khrushchev came to power.

Khrushchev's rule was characterized by de-Stalinization policies, which included

⁸⁵ N. I. U. Jun, *The Cold War and the Origins of Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China* (Boston: BRILL, 2018. Accessed June 26, 2024), 302, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁸⁶ Victor Baras, "China and the Rise of Khrushchev." *Studies in Comparative Communism* 8, no. 1/2 (1975): 191, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45366787>.

⁸⁷ Odd Arne Westad, *Restless Empire: China and the World Since 1750* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 304.

criticisms of Stalin's rule and a move towards a more liberal form of governance. Axel Berkofsky depicts, "Khrushchev's reign was characterized by de-Stalinization policies, which included his 'Anti-personality cult speech' and open criticism of Stalin's domestic and foreign policies."⁸⁸ At the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956, Khrushchev publicly denounced Stalinist ideology—the “cult of personality.” Khrushchev states in the Secret Speech, “In a letter to the German political worker, Wilhelm Bloss, Marx stated: 'From my antipathy to any cult of the individual, I never made public during the existence of the International the numerous addresses from various countries which recognized my merits and which annoyed me.’”⁸⁹

In the Secret Speech, Khrushchev criticized Stalin's political and personal errors.⁹⁰ Through this criticism, Khrushchev especially attacked Stalin’s cult of personality. In Khrushchev’s mind, the “cult of personality” was not a part of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Khrushchev supports, "Allow me first of all to remind you how severely the classics of Marxism-Leninism denounced every manifestation of the cult of the individual."⁹¹ Therefore, after Khrushchev came to power, he discontinued the Stalinist ideology and denounced Stalin’s “cult of personality.” As a result, the abandonment of Stalinist ideology in the CPSU changed the Sino-Soviet relationship by affecting Chinese internal politics.

Additionally, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy—the Secret Speech and the Soviet attitude towards the Hungarian Revolution and Polish Crisis contributed to ideological and strategic divisions within the Sino-Soviet alliances. Destalinization caused significant changes under Khrushchev’s USSR, shifting from early camaraderie to a late ideological and political split. Their policies towards the West were accordant at the beginning of Khrushchev’s reign,

⁸⁸ Axel Berkofsky, “Russia and China: The Past and Present of a Rocky Relationship.” *Il Politico* 79, no. 3 (237) (2014): 108–23, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44735412>.

⁸⁹ Internet Archive. The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism: A Selection of Documents. "Concerning the “Cult of the Individual” (New York: Columbia University Press. 1956),3, <https://archive.org/details/the-anti-stalin-campaign-and-international-communism/page/1/mode/2up?q=Stalin>, accessed 20 June 2024.

⁹⁰ National Archives, "Khrushchev’s Secret Speech, 1956," *Cold War, State and Foreign Affairs*. accessed June 26, 2024, <https://text-message.blogs.archives.gov/2020/12/03/khrushchevs-secret-speech-1956/>.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 570.

but they later transformed after the Secret Speech. Compared to Stalin's uncompromising attitude in the Weltpolitik, Khrushchev, as a whole, pursued a peaceful coexistence with the West. Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia assert, "Sino-Soviet relations, which had improved after Joseph Stalin's death and Nikita Khrushchev's appointment in 1953 as first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), were unimpaired in the autumn of 1956."⁹² Khrushchev was also welcomed by the CCP and Mao initially because China still wanted Soviet technological and economic help to rebuild China. Thus, in the first three years of Khrushchev's reign, the Sino-Soviet relationship enjoyed *gemütlichkeit*, but it did not last long.

The Stalinist ideology of the "cult of personality" played a significant part in the rise of the CCP in China. Khrushchev recalls in his memoir, "Mao Tse-tung was following in Stalin's footsteps. Mao's own personality cult is a complicated phenomenon. A personality cult is a little like a religion."⁹³ Thus, during his regime, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy affected Chinese domestic politics by destroying the conception of Mao's "cult of personality" indirectly. "The cult of personality" was the core of the communist rule in the Soviet Union during the Stalinist era and Mao's China. Rana Mitter describes, "Among the Soviet leader's tools of control that were relevant to Mao was the way in which the image of Stalin himself as national leader had far outstripped the status of his contemporaries or even the Party itself."⁹⁴ Stalin and Mao were masters in using "cult of personality," and the latter was in no way inferior to the former.

However, at the 20th Congress in 1956, Khrushchev publicly denounced Stalin's "cult of personality." Although the attack was tagged on Stalin and his legacies, it indirectly attacked the Maoist political ideology in China. However, mainstream historiographical interpretations agreed in 1956 was the year that revealed the signs of Sino-Soviet deterioration. John Keay

⁹² Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, "New Evidence for China's Role in the Hungarian Crisis of October 1956: A Note." *The International History Review* 31, no. 3 (2009): 558–75, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40646919>.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution China's Struggle with the Modern World* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 177.

insists, "Ever since Moscow's posthumous denunciation of Stalin in 1956, the Sino-Soviet alliance had been slowly unravelling."⁹⁵ The attack on Stalin's "cult of personality" was the most recognized argument for the Sino-Soviet conflict. Albert Feuerwerker advocates, "The most important sources of the Sino-Soviet conflict seem to lie, first, in Mao's reaction to Khrushchev's attack on Stalin and the "cult of personality" in February 1956, which had the effect of weakening the legitimacy of Mao's position at a critical point in the domestic policy deliberations of the Chinese leader."⁹⁶

Historically, Stalin, Mao, and Kim Il-sung used the "cult of personality" to unite the nation. Graeme Gill asserts, "The role of the leader cult in rooting the individual leader in the symbolism of regime legitimacy is of paramount importance in the Soviet Union because of the amorphousness of the political arena at the apex of the system."⁹⁷ Mao possessed an identical view toward global communist ideology, and they shared the same ideological vision in the communist agenda that global politics was an ideological fight between communism and capitalism. Mao later admitted to Khrushchev and the Soviets that he was practicing the "cult of personality." Chinese Marxist Library describes, "We continue to promote a "cult of personality" and worship Stalin. We have never removed Stalin's photos."⁹⁸ Thus, there was no doubt that the Soviet attack on the "cult of personality" injured the Sino-Soviet relationship in 1956.

Even though Mao and Stalin had several disagreements over national pride, they had an identical dream for the communist world. David Shambaugh asserts, "As Soviet international

⁹⁵ John Keay, *China: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 526.

⁹⁶ Albert Feuerwerker, "Chinese History and the Foreign Relations of Contemporary China." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 402 (1972): 8, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1039201>.

⁹⁷ Graeme Gill, "The Soviet Leader Cult: Reflections on the Structure of Leadership in the Soviet Union," *British Journal of Political Science* 10, no. 2 (1980): 175, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/193478>.

⁹⁸ "我们照样搞“个人迷信”，崇拜斯大林，斯大林的相片我们从来不取消。" in Chinese Marxist Library 中文马克思主义文库, "Maozedongzhuxi, Liushaoqizhuxi debftibguojing woguode sulainzongli Kexijin tanhuajilu" "毛泽东主席、刘少奇主席等同过境我国的苏联总理柯西金谈话记录" [Record of Conversation between Chairman Mao Zedong, Chairman Liu Shaoqi, and Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin during His Transit through China], 1965, <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/mia-chinese-mao-19650212.htm>.

relations specialists began to view the world more in terms of nation-states rather than rival camps or systems, the Chinese opted for the rigid Stalinist interpretation."⁹⁹ Throughout Mao's rule in the CCP, he maintained Stalinism and built a "cult of personality." Their external and internal political visions were almost identical.

Both created a strong "cult of personality;" both launched severe political purges in the party; both Stalin and Mao wanted to modernize their countries through government planned economy and industrialization, such as the Five-Years Plan and the Great Leap Forward (GLF). The GLF movement in China was identical to Stalin's Five-Year Plan. China's economic development and the GLF directly caused the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship. Berkofsky claims, "Relations started again to deteriorate when Mao changed his priorities as regards China's economic development."¹⁰⁰ Khrushchev reminded Mao not to repeat the mistake of Stalin's Five Years' Plan. However, Mao did not listen to Khrushchev's advice. The result of the GLF was often criticized by Khrushchev. Hua-yu Li claims, "The political Stalinization of China is indicative of Mao's relationship with Stalin during this period."¹⁰¹ Li describes that the early Chinese political system was built according to the Stalinist model. Thus, when Khrushchev imposed his de-Stalinization and criticized Stalin's legacy, it was simultaneously attacking the CCP and Mao's political ideology. The key was that though Khrushchev's de-Stalinization helped him politically in winning the CPSU, it diplomatically injured the Sino-Soviet relationship by indirectly attacking Stalin's follower, Mao, and his political foundation and legitimacy in China.

In the CCP, Mao was the unshakable communist leader in China, as Stalin in the USSR. Li narrates, "As Wang Dongxing, the head of the Central Guard Bureau, said, 'Mao believed that

⁹⁹ Shambaugh, David. "The Soviet Influence on China's Worldview." *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 27 (1992): 151–58. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2950030>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Hua-yu Li, "The Political Stalinization of China: The Establishment of One-Party Constitutionalism, 1948–1954." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no. 2 (2001): 28–47. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26925120>.

anyone in the party could be dispensed with, but the party could not do without him."¹⁰² Peter S. H. Tang describes, "Stalin's analyses of the Chinese revolution's problems were instrumental in defeating opposing views and providing practical guidance for the Chinese Communists."¹⁰³ Mao did not immediately reject Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy because he also denounced Stalin's Soviet-centered communist ideology in the Cold War. However, Mao later changed his stance on Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy. Li describes Mao's political approach, "At the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956, there was a movement against Stalin and the cult of personality, which triggered a series of reactions within the Chinese Communist Party. Mao sensed from various signs that his position as the top leader of the entire party was being shaken, leading him to take a series of corresponding actions."¹⁰⁴ This ideological shift caused tensions with Mao's China, which favored a Stalinist centralized style of centralization. Li narrates, "Khrushchev's secret speech denouncing Stalin directly threatened Mao's rule and questioned his leadership. Mao was compelled to confront it head-on. James A. McAdams states, "To safeguard his personal standing, he also noticeably softened his criticisms of Stalin's cult and accused Khrushchev of going too far."¹⁰⁵ If Mao agreed with Khrushchev's attack on Stalin, it would pave the way for future anti-Mao movements. Mao would never allow this to happen."¹⁰⁶ Thus, by publishing the Secret Speech, Khrushchev indirectly created an intolerable opposition against Stalinism in the USSR and Maoism in communist China. Zhou avers, Zhou had a ready response: the Khrushchev leadership group denounced Stalin. Zhou firmly stated, "To completely denounce Stalin is essentially to fundamentally deny the Marxism-Leninism that

¹⁰² "正如中央警卫局局长汪东兴所说: '毛认为, 全党没有谁都可以, 可是不能没有他。" in *Ibid*, 8.

¹⁰³ Peter S. H. Tang, "Stalin's Role in the Communist Victory in China." *American Slavic and East European Review* 13, no. 3 (1954): 375–88, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2491819>.

¹⁰⁴ "一九五六年苏联共产党二十次代表大会上有“反史达林”，“反对个人崇拜”的运动，在中国共产党内引起一连串反应。毛从种种迹象感到，他作为全党的最高领导地位受到动摇，因而作出一系列相应的反应。" in *Ibid*, 7.

¹⁰⁵ A. James McAdams, "The Revolution Returns," In *Vanguard of the Revolution: The Global Idea of the Communist Party*, 354. Princeton University Press, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc77n41.16>.

¹⁰⁶ "赫鲁晓夫的那篇反史达林秘密报告，直接对毛的统治构成威胁，质疑毛的领导，毛被迫起而迎头痛击。如果毛同意赫鲁晓夫反史达林的攻击，等于为往后会有反毛运动铺路。毛决不容许此事。" in *Ibid*, 53.

Stalin once defended and developed."¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, although Khrushchev's Secret Speech did not mean to denounce the CCP purposely, it straightforwardly influenced the Sino-Soviet relationship by influencing Chinese domestic politics. It also demonstrated the transformation of post-Stalinist USSR politics. The USSR's political ideology had changed during the reign of Khrushchev since he actually came to power in 1956. James McAdams, "To safeguard his personal standing, he also noticeably softened his criticisms of Stalin's cult and accused Khrushchev of going too far."¹⁰⁸ The year signified the open decline Sino-Soviet relationship ideologically because Khrushchev had abandoned the Stalinist communist ideology without cooperating with Mao and the CCP. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy in the CPSU alarmed the CCP and reshaped the Chinese attitude toward the Soviets. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy, such as the "Secret Speech" in 1956 during the 20th Party Congress, marked a critical shift in the Soviet Union's approach to its political history and ideology.

Khrushchev's de-Stalinization aimed to disassemble the "cult of personality" that had surrounded Stalin and denounced the abuses and crimes committed during his rule from the 1920s to 1953. Consequently, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization movement gained his political reputation and helped him to gain the support of the CPSU. Polly Jones describes, "Indeed, Khrushchev did not emerge as the winner of this power struggle until he performed his 'Secret Speech' about Stalin in February 1956."¹⁰⁹ Khrushchev's efforts included denouncing Stalin's purges, promoting limited freedom, and lessening the use of terror as a means of political manipulation. Unlike Stalin's tough rule in the USSR, which brought numerous criticisms from

¹⁰⁷ "周肯定地说'全盘否定斯大林，实际上就是根本否定斯大林曾经捍卫和发展的马克思列宁主义。" in Chinese Marxist Library 中文马克思主义文库, "Maozedongzhuyi hexindexidalinmixin" "毛泽东主义和新的斯大林迷信" [Maoism and the New Stalinist Orthodoxy], 1964, <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/fourth-international/ReviewChinaRevolution.htm#12>.

¹⁰⁸ James A. McAdams, "The Revolution Returns," In *Vanguard of the Revolution: The Global Idea of the Communist Party*, 354. Princeton University Press, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc77n41.16>.

¹⁰⁹ Polly Jones, "The Secret Speech." In *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953-70*, 17-56. Yale University Press, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt5vkvfn.5>.

the people and Soviet officials, Khrushchev's political policies reshaped the CCP and Mao's attitude towards the Sino-Soviet relationship in the mid-1950s. Chinese Marxist Library describes, "The 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, Khrushchev's report, and the political revolutions in Poland and Hungary had a profound impact on all Communist parties in the workers' states, including the Chinese Communist Party."¹¹⁰ The Chinese communists tried to fathom the Soviet political changes and utilized them to benefit Mao and the CCP. Thus, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy had significantly changed the *status quo* of the Sino-Soviet relationship during the Stalin era.

Internally, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy gained substantial political backing in the USSR. In this movement, Khrushchev attempted to remove Stalin's "cult of personality" and reinstitute new political ideology. Although the Soviets were divided by Khrushchev's de-Stalinization, many Soviet people and elites welcomed the political reform because they were suppressed under Stalin's rule. Robert Tucker narrates, "From the internal Soviet point of view, the *Stalinshchina* meant, to begin with, 'back to Stalinist normalcy...!' For the reimposition of Stalinism-as-usual was precisely what the Russian people as a whole did not want and did not expect in 1945."¹¹¹

Despite the Soviets holding different views and often criticizing Khrushchev's de-Stalinization, the denouncing of Stalin by the general public was welcomed because numerous Soviet bureaucrats could not stand with Stalin's repressive rule, and many victims of Stalin's purges suffered from his coercive policies. Marxists Internet Archives narrates, "Criticisms of Khrushchev like this would be very well received and popular among the

110 "苏联共产党第二十次代表大会、赫鲁晓夫报告和波兰与匈牙利的政治革命，对于所有工人国家的共产党都有深远的影响——包括中国共产党在内。

" in Chinese Marxist Library 中文马克思主义文库, "Sindalin zhuyide shuailuoyukuatai" "斯大林主义的衰落和垮台," [The Decline and Fall of Stalinism], 1957, <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/fourth-international/mia-chinese-fi-19571011-2.htm>

¹¹¹ Robert C. Tucker, "The Politics of Soviet De-Stalinization." *World Politics* 9, no. 4 (1957): 550–78, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009424>.

Communist Party members and workers in the Soviet Union and other workers' states. The open letter from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is correct in stating that the Soviet people certainly support de-Stalinization."¹¹² Also, the de-Stalinization saved the Soviet economic system to a great extent. Chinese Marxist Library discusses, "However, the Soviet economy still suffers from two imbalances caused during the Stalin era: on the one hand, the imbalance between heavy industry and light industry, and on the other hand, the imbalance between industry and agriculture."¹¹³ The de-Stalinization was an inevitable political event due to the unique role that Stalin played in the CPSU and the communist bloc. Tucker illustrates, "The curious course taken by de-Stalinization, a course marked by convulsive starts and stops, reflects, among other things, the fact that the Soviet regime has been divided from within during much or all of the period since Stalin's death."¹¹⁴ Khrushchev's de-Stalinization proceeded almost immediately after the death of Stalin; de-Stalinization represented a radical transformation in Soviet policy and had significant ramifications for Soviet internal and external politics. Therefore, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization, such as the "Secret Speech," significantly influenced Soviet internal and external political politics, especially the Sino-Soviet relationship.

Under Khrushchev, longstanding border disputes and Soviet reluctance to support China's nuclear program exacerbated tensions. Mao's private doctor Zhisui Li records Mao's view about the Soviets during this era, "The Soviet Union actually wanted to control us and prevent us from producing atomic bombs."¹¹⁵ The Soviets' withdrawal of support for China's nuclear weapons program in 1959 was a significant point of contention. The ideological and political disagreements between the two countries during Khrushchev's reign led to the Sino-Soviet Split

¹¹² "对赫鲁晓夫这样的批评在苏联和其他工人国家的共产党员和工人中间将是非常受欢迎和得人心的。" in Chinese Marxist Library 中文马克思主义文库, "Mosikehe Beijingdezhengzhi jiruxinjieduan" "莫斯科和北京的争执进入新阶段," [The Dispute between Moscow and Beijing Entered a New Stage], 1963, <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/fourth-international/mia-chinese-fi-19630725.htm>.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ "苏联其实是想控制我们，不要我们生产原子弹。" in Ibid, 86.

in the early 1960s. This split affected the global communist movement, separating communist countries into the Soviet League and the Chinese coalition. The gap became public and acrimonious, affecting communist parties worldwide.

Khrushchev's efforts to improve relations with the West, particularly through the policy of peaceful coexistence, further alienated Mao, who viewed such moves as betrayals of the communist cause. *The Resolution of the Fourth International's Reunification Congress* claims "The Soviets emphasized that it was possible to ensure peace even under the continued existence of capitalism, and they stressed the necessity of trying to cooperate with certain factions of the bourgeoisie, including some factions within American imperialism."¹¹⁶ This period saw China's beginning to pursue its own path on the international stage, increasingly in opposition to Soviet policies because Mao and the CPP cannot tolerate the Khrushchev and Soviet political path. The resolution declares, "The Chinese stance is entirely different. They cannot reconcile with imperialism, nor can imperialism reconcile with them, and there can be no mutual concessions between the two. As long as the Chinese workers' state continues to implement centralized planning, its foreign policy will inevitably be completely opposite to that of the Soviet bureaucratic group."¹¹⁷ This deterioration included ideological shifts, personality clashes, strategic disagreements, and geopolitical developments. This political revolution had profound implications for Cold War dynamics, affecting global alliances and conflicts.

In the first few years of Khrushchev's control, the collaboration of the Soviets and the Chinese was compact. Shen and Xia claim, "Thus, the ideological co-operation of the CPSU and the CCP helps to explain why Khrushchev, in his 'retirement' after 1964, recalled that, at the

¹¹⁶ "苏联人强调即使在资本主义仍旧存在的条件下也有可能确保和平，并且强调设法同资产阶级的某些派别、包括美帝国主义内部的某些派别合作的必要性。" in Chinese Marxist Library 中文马克思主义文库, "Zhongsuchongtu hesulianyu qitagongren guojiaxingshi" "中苏冲突和苏联与其它工人国家形势." [The Sino-Soviet conflict and the situation between the Soviet Union and other socialist countries]. 1963. <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/fourth-international/mia-chinese-fi-196306d.htm>.

¹¹⁷ "中国人的立场就完全相反了。他们不可能跟帝国主义和解，帝国主义也不可能跟他们和解，两者也不可能互相让步。" in Chinese Marxist Library 中文马克思主义文库, "Zhongsufenqi defazhan" "中苏分歧的发展," [The development of Sino-Soviet differences], 1964, <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/fourth-international/mia-chinese-fi-196412.htm>.

critical moment during the Polish and Hungarian crises, his first thought had been 'to consult with the other socialist countries - first and foremost with the fraternal Communist Party of China.'¹¹⁸ Shen and Xia elaborate that China played a significant role in Soviet political decisions during early Khrushchev's rule. The dynamics of Sino-Soviet relations changed when Khrushchev came to power. However, along with Khrushchev adopting his global diplomatic strategy and political ideology towards communist ideology, Mao and the CCP began to show concern for the USSR and reconsider their global communist strategy.

Khrushchev's ideological transition from creating a meta-communist state, which would lead, in theory, to a world communist victory, to "peaceful coexistence." Practically speaking, Khrushchev was more sophisticated with the Weltpolitik than Stalin and Mao. Khrushchev narrated the Soviet situation, "There may be two ways out: either war—and war in the rocket and H-bomb age is fraught with the most dire consequences for all nations—or peaceful coexistence."¹¹⁹ Khrushchev acknowledged the existing problems in the CPSU and wanted to reform. Thus, he left the Stalinist ideology behind. Tucker explains, "Moreover, Khrushchev rejected Stalin's 'subordination thesis' with respect to the monopolies-state relationship, and articulated the view that, while beset with economic problems and class conflict, capitalism (especially the American variant) was not in danger of imminent collapse."¹²⁰ Nevertheless, unlike Khrushchev, Mao had no choice but to continue Stalinism in China. Although the enforcement of the Stalinist in China brought the centralization of power, domestic and external politics became morbid. The economic and industrial growth was slower than Mao's and the CCP's expectations. Thus, Mao launched a Chinese version of the Five Years Plan, which was based on Stalinist ideology. Xizhe Peng describes, "Launched in the spring of 1958, the Great Leap Forward was China's alternative to Soviet-style development, an attempt to leap ahead in

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Philip E. Mosely, (Philip Edward), *The Soviet Union, 1922-1962; a Foreign Affairs Reader*. [1st ed.] (Published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Praeger, 1963), 399.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

production by reorganizing the peasantry into large-scale communes and mobilizing society to bring about technological revolution in agriculture."¹²¹ Many historians argue that the result of the GLF was disastrous. It led to a domestic unrest in China. Mao's enforcement of Stalinist ideology also caused Chinese diplomacy to be based on nationalism. Shen and Xia state the Chinese internal politics during the GLF, "Chen argued that Chinese foreign policymaking was driven by ideology, the perceived need to mobilize support for radical domestic policies, and a pervasive and deep-rooted sense that the country had long been a victim in international affairs—concerns that, he argued, often trumped straightforward national security interests."¹²²

Despite the vulnerable relationship between Mao and Stalin, the relationship between Mao and Khrushchev was even worse. Khrushchev recalled his first impression of Mao in his memoir. He writes, "Ever since I first met Mao, I've known--and I've told my comrades--that Mao would never be able to reconcile himself to any other Communist Party being in any way superior to his own within the world Communist movement."¹²³ Mao and Soviet leaders barely had good relationships throughout the history of the Sino-Soviet relationship. Whether it was Stalin, Khrushchev, or Brezhnev, Mao had conflicts with all of them to some degree. The personal conflicts between the Sino-Soviet leadership escalated into a political conflict between the two nations.

Mao did not hide his disdain for Khrushchev in the slightest. Like Stalin mistreated Mao during the visit in 1950, Mao humiliated Khrushchev in a personal meeting in 1958. Lorenz Luthi describes, "On the second day, Mao humiliated Khrushchev at the swimming pool at Zhongnanhai. . . The Chairman's deliberate insult to the secretary seemed to have been lost on the Soviets."¹²⁴ Mao had no good attitude towards Khrushchev not only because of politics but

¹²¹ Xizhe Peng, "Demographic Consequences of the Great Leap Forward in China's Provinces." *Population and Development Review* 13, no. 4 (1987): 639–70, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1973026>.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid, 462.

¹²⁴ Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split : Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 94.

also personally disliked him. Compared to Stalin's reaction to Mao's arrival in Moscow, the arrival of Khrushchev was like an act of revenge from Mao. However, Luthi describes it as looking like a Chinese diplomatic victory over the Soviets against Russian chauvinism, but it was a diplomatic failure. He continues, "The Chinese side instead prided itself for having 'stood up to Russian great power chauvinism.'"¹²⁵ From this incident, the personal relationship between Khrushchev and Mao started to go wrong because Mao genuinely disliked Khrushchev and his policies. Austin Jersild declares, "The personalization of politics in the Soviet Union and China via the cult of personality, a euphemism for personalistic dictatorship, meant that no institutional mechanisms, bureaucratic linkages, or societal connections were able to buffer the increasing animosity between Mao and Khrushchev."¹²⁶

From the Soviet perspective, Khrushchev had tried everything to reconcile with Mao. In his memoir, he expressed that he had lowered his posture toward Mao. Kuisong Yang records Khrushchev's view of the relationship between Khrushchev and Mao, "Comrade Mao Zedong couldn't persuade me, and I couldn't persuade Comrade Mao Zedong either."¹²⁷ Their bad personal relationship directly influenced the Sino-Soviet diplomatic relationship in the *Weltpolitik* in the 1960s. The interpersonal hostility among the Sino-Soviet leaders continued until the Sino-Soviet split in 1969. The CPSU and CCP were denouncing each other's leaders in the public. Zubeida Mustafa narrates, The Chinese described 'Khrushchev, Kosygin, Brezhnev and company' as the 'new tsars' who were hated by the Soviet masses. The Soviet press denounced Mao Tse-tung as 'a traitor to the cause of Communism... painted with human blood.'¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Austin Jersild, *The Sino-Soviet Alliance : An International History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 155.

¹²⁷ “毛泽东同志说服不了我，我也说服不了毛泽东同志” in Yang Kuisong 杨奎松. “Zouxiang polie” “走向破裂（1960—1963）—中共中央如何面对中苏关系危机” [The Deterioration, 1960-1963]. The Russian Research Center of Peking University, (2005).<https://www.russiancenter.pku.edu.cn/yjcg/kywj/258064.html>.

¹²⁸ Zubeida Mustafa, “The Sino-Soviet Border Problem” *Pakistan Horizon* 22, no. 4 (1969): 321–31. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41394679>.

Nevertheless, the increasing interpersonal hostility between Mao and Khrushchev and diplomatic and ideological divergences intensified the Sino-Soviet relationship. "Admittedly, in February 1960, Khrushchev, in a comment that quickly became notorious and that even some Soviet officials thought went too far, described Mao as 'a pair of old galoshes.' But such tactless remarks were by then almost a standard and recognized feature of Khrushchev's personal style in conducting politics."¹²⁹ From Mao's perspective, Khrushchev was unpardonable because he had attacked the Maoist ideology. Mao not only personally disliked Khrushchev but also politically disagreed with him. Mao accused Khrushchev of destroying the global communist movements in his peaceful coexistence with the West. Li declares, "Mao would never forgive Khrushchev for denouncing Stalin. Mao believed that Khrushchev's 'anti-Stalin report' in February 1956 and the 'Hungarian incident' in the autumn of the same year sparked a global anti-communist wave."¹³⁰ The increasing hostility between the two leaders and the growing gap in ideology accelerated the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship.

In addition, the horrible interpersonal relationship between Khrushchev and Mao was not the only factor that caused the intensified deterioration between the Soviets and the Chinese. After Stalin's death, the communist Chinese experienced a period of economic and technological improvement. In this era, the Chinese began to transform from a Soviet subordinate into a competitor of the Soviet Union, and Stalin-Mao relationship transform into the Khrushchev-Mao relationship. In some of the communist affairs, the Chinese acted negatively against the Soviet political actions and challenged the Soviets in the Weltpolitik, as well as Mao challenged Khrushchev in the Khrushchev-Mao relationship. Odd Arne Westad states, "The People's Republic of China, despite its substantial military and economic weaknesses, is now locked in a bitter struggle with the Soviet Union. It has already won some

¹²⁹ Roberts, Priscilla, Steven I. Levine, Péter Vámos, Deborah Kaple, Jeremy Friedman, Douglas A. Stifoer, and Lorenz Lüthi. "Forum: Mao, Khrushchev, and China's Split with the USSR Perspectives on The Sino-Soviet Split." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 1 (2010): 120–60. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26923063>.

¹³⁰ "毛认为一九五六年二月赫鲁晓夫的“反史达林报告和秋天的“匈牙利事件”形成全球性的反共风潮。" in *Ibid*, 84.

signal victories in Asia, particularly within the Communist movement, and it is now determined to make Africa the next major target."¹³¹ The Chinese and the Soviets competed in global politics in the 60s. Donald Zagoria narrates, "No one in the Communist world could have any doubts about who the 'anyone else' was after Chinese Premier Chou En-lai had failed to applaud Khrushchev's attack on the Albanians, implicitly condemned it two days later, and abruptly returned home before the Congress had concluded."¹³²

Also, Mao's refusal of Soviet help in exchange for securing Chinese sovereignty in the Soviet exploration of China led to Sino-Soviet degradation. The Sino-Soviet relationship was based on mutual assistance. Khrushchev always wanted to build a naval base that was controlled by the Soviets in China in exchange for sharing nuclear technology with China. However, Mao sensed his ambition and refused this purpose. Melvin Gurtov declares, "Mao already knew that any more substantial or direct kind of Soviet support carried an unacceptably high price tag. He let Khrushchev and his own military chiefs know this by rejecting proposals for military collaboration and opting for the development of China's own nuclear arsenal."¹³³ Mao directly rejected the Soviet proposal of helping the Chinese in exchange for a military base in China. As a nationalist, Mao was aware of and was sensitive to the Soviet ambition in China. "The crucial importance of the Strait crisis may therefore be that it helped shorten the timetable of Sino-Soviet cooperation, eventuating in Soviet abrogation of the October 1957 agreement in June 1959 and the withdrawal of all technical assistance in 1960."¹³⁴ Mao was unwilling to see intervention with the Chinese territorial sovereignty by the Soviets or other powers. It not only contradicted Stalinist ideology but also reduced the CCP's control over China. Thus, after the rejection of technological help in 1958, the Soviets withdrew their military and technological aid

¹³¹ Scalapino, Robert A. "Sino-Soviet Competition in Africa." *Foreign Affairs* 42, no. 4 (1964): 640–54, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20029719>.

¹³² Donald S. Zagoria, "Khrushchev's Attack on Albania and Sino-Soviet Relations." *The China Quarterly*, no. 8 (1961): 1–19. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/651662>.

¹³³ Melvin Gurtov, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis Revisited: Politics and Foreign Policy in Chinese Motives." *Modern China* 2, no. 1 (1976): 49–103. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/188813>.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

in China, which expanded to the Sino-Soviet degradation.

The Chinese and the Soviets disagreed with each other in many diplomatic affairs. Due to the ideological disagreements between the CPSU and the CCP, the two parties not only disagreed with each other in ideology interpretations but also challenged each other diplomatically in the Weltpolitik. For instance, the Sino-Indian War in 1962 accelerated the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship due to the Soviet military and diplomatic support to India. Historically, the Sino-Indian relationship enjoyed a good time during the early 50s. Arunabh Ghosh describes, "Worsening diplomatic relations between the two countries also played a part. Disagreements over the Sino-Indian border, which had existed since the start of the decade, began to dominate diplomatic exchanges as each side hardened its position."¹³⁵ However, the territorial dispute and political insecurity caused the Sino-Indian conflict, and the result of the Sino-Indian War led to the Sino-Soviet deterioration because the Soviets had supported India in the conflict. The CCP blamed the CPSU for the CPSU's political support to India. Chinese Marxist Library recounts Mao's query to Khrushchev. It describes, "Have we supported you less? You support the reactionary forces in India. You support the reactionary forces in India to fight against China, and this is your greatest fault."¹³⁶ The promotion of the Soviet-Indian relationship demonstrated the Soviet diplomatic modification and political strategy to change the balance of power in the region. Zubeida Hasan states, "The New Frontiersmen manifested a keen interest in promoting India as the leader of Asian nations, which implied acceptance of non-alignment...In any event, it was clear that massive arms aid to India would upset the power balance in the region."¹³⁷

The Chinese launched a war against India, to solve the territorial dispute with India. S. M. Burke describes, "The war ended with China unilaterally declaring a ceasefire and

¹³⁵ Arunabh Ghosh, *Making It Count: Statistics and Statecraft in the Early People's Republic of China* (Princeton University Press, 2020), 246

¹³⁶ "我们支持少了？你们支持印度反动派。你们支持印度反动派打中国，这是你们最大的痛处。" in Ibid.

¹³⁷ Zubeida Hasan, "Soviet Arms Aid to Pakistan and India," *Pakistan Horizon* 21, no. 4 (1968): 344–55, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41392937>.

withdrawal, achieving its limited objectives without advancing further into Indian territory."¹³⁸

However, the recent interpretations of the Sino-Indian conflict indicate the Chinese attack on India was a diplomatic strategy to intervene the promising relationship between the Soviets and Indians. Joseph R. Stauffer states, "The hypothesis has been advanced that Communist China does not particularly relish the development of close ties between the Soviet Union and India and would not hesitate to thwart and embarrass Soviet efforts to aid India."¹³⁹ The Sino-Indian War in 1962 was a Chinese diplomatic war to interfere the improving Indian-Soviet relationship.

For example, Khrushchev's visit to the United States in 1959 and the Soviet's attitude towards the Sino-Soviet relationship. Danhui Li and Yafeng Xia address, "Khrushchev's visit to the United States in September 1959 had been portrayed in the Soviet Union as a turning point in Soviet- American relations', and as 'open[ing] a new epoch in international affairs' and 'a new period in the evolution of world peace.'"¹⁴⁰ These diplomatic decisions complicated the Sino-Russian relationship in the 1960s. The Soviet visit to the US eased the US-Soviet relationship but created more distrust between China and the Soviet Union, even though the Chinese and the Soviets never really knew each other well. Frederick Charles Barghoorn records the Soviet reaction to the Sino-Soviet relationship, "One formed the distinct impression that, in terms of personal relations, Russians feel much more at home with Americans than with the Chinese communists. As one fairly high-ranking communist party official put it, 'We don't know anything about China.'"¹⁴¹ The ignorance of knowing each other and the disagreements among international communist affairs enlarged the gap between China and the Soviet Union in the 60s.

Additionally, the Soviet equivocate attitude towards the Sino-India border dispute

¹³⁸ S. M. Burke, "The Sino-Indian Conflict," *Journal of International Affairs* 17, no. 2 (1963): 200–211, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24381373>.

¹³⁹ Joseph R. Stauffer, "Sino-Indian Border Dispute--1962," *Naval War College Review* 19, no. 9 (1967): 81–117, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44640979>.

¹⁴⁰ Danhui Li and Yafeng Xia, "Competing for Leadership: Split or Détente in the Sino-Soviet Bloc, 1959-1961." *The International History Review* 30, no. 3 (2008): 545–74, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40110990>.

¹⁴¹ Frederick Charles Barghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive the Role of Cultural Diplomacy in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960), 155.

brought Sino-Soviet relations degradation. During the early 1960s, the Sino-Soviet relationship entered a sensitive period. The Soviets had temporarily stopped the military and technological help by withdrawing the Soviet aid from China. However, when China had a clash with India over the border dispute, the Soviets refused to support China militarily. John Lukacs states, "Khrushchev denounced Russia's military agreements with China; during a border conflict between China and India, he declared that both countries were friends of the Soviet Union."¹⁴² The Soviet political movement disappointed Mao and the CCP and ultimately blew the fragile relationship.

The Soviet cognition of the Chinese ambition in the communist bloc accelerated the Sino-Soviet deterioration. Since the death of Stalin and Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence," Mao always had the ambition to challenge the Soviet leadership in the communist bloc because he firmly disagreed with this policy. Donald S. Zagoria explains, "To the Chinese, Khrushchev's prospectus was vulnerable to the charge they had been making even before the Soviet Party Congress: that, since the Bloc already had decisive military superiority, it was not necessary to wait until 1970 to convert it into absolute political superiority."¹⁴³ Mao was a devout believer in the Marxist-Lenin ideology, and he despised Khrushchev's weak approach to the West. From this perspective, he rejected Khrushchev's peaceful coexistence because the Chinese were pursuing a different political path. "Resolution of the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International" reinforces this idea, "The fundamental cause of the Sino-Soviet conflict lies precisely in the differing needs of the two leadership bodies. One needed to express the demands of a fully bureaucratic apparatus situated in an economically developed country, while the other needed to lead a still very poor society that could not rely on substantial aid from the Soviet Union"¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² John Lukacs, "Great Leap Forward." In *A Short History of the Twentieth Century*, 183–205. Harvard University Press, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt6wpmch.18>.

¹⁴³ Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961* (Princeton University Press, 2015), 328, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400878994>.

¹⁴⁴ "中苏冲突的根本原因恰恰在于两个领导机构有不同的需要,一个需要表达居于经济发达国家领导地位的十足

In addition, Mao wanted the CCP to become the leader of the communist world. Michael M. Sheng insists, "The final portion of this article demonstrates that the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis and the GLF were closely related not just in terms of one serving the other's purpose; they were both derived from Mao's desire to challenge the Kremlin for leadership of the worldwide communist movement."¹⁴⁵ Although the Soviets had a stronger economy and military than the Chinese, Mao was eager to spread the Chinese influence and surpass the Soviets in the *Weltpolitik*. Mao's desire to exceed the Soviet Union caused the direct deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship. Jeremy Friedman describes, "With the world now aware of the nature and severity of the Sino-Soviet split, Moscow and Beijing were left with no alternatives to a naked competition for influence."¹⁴⁶ By this time, the Sino-Soviet competition had become known publicly, and because of this diplomatic rivalry, the Sino-Soviet relationship took a sudden turn for the worse.

The Sino-Soviet rivalry was also demonstrated in trying to win North Vietnam to their side. In the late 50s, the CCP began to look for communist allies in Asia and South East Asia. The CCP found the Vietnam Workers' Party (VWP) to become there and economically and militarily supported them. In the conflict with the US and later the Vietnam Civil War, the Vietnam leader in Hanoi followed Mao's approach in the Chinese Civil War. Garver narrates, "Throughout Hanoi's long war with the United States, it was important to Beijing that Hanoi cleave to Mao's military strategy."¹⁴⁷ However, the Soviets intervened in the Sino-Vietnam relationship since the Bucharest Conference in 1960. Lan You describes, "When the CPSU urged Communist parties from Europe to oppose the CCP, some VWP leaders privately

官僚机构的需求，另一个则需要领导一个还很贫穷的、不能指望从苏联得到大量援助的社会。" in *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁵ Michael M. Sheng, "Mao and China's Relations with the Superpowers in the 1950s: A New Look at the Taiwan Strait Crises and the Sino-Soviet Split." *Modern China* 34, no. 4 (2008): 477–507, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27746900>.

¹⁴⁶ Jeremy Friedman, "Battle for Supremacy: Competition and Adaptation, 1963–1965." In *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World*, 101–47. (University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 102. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469623771_friedman.7.

¹⁴⁷ Garver, John W., 'Revolutionary China's Quest to Transform Southeast Asia', *China's Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China* (New York, 2016; online ed, Oxford Academic, 24 Mar. 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190261054.003.0008>, accessed 26 June 2024.

expressed their dissatisfaction to China, arguing that the Soviet move was motivated by emotion rather than reason and would not solve any problems.”¹⁴⁸ The Sino-Soviet deterioration was also caused by the Soviet intervention in the VWP. The VWP eventually fell under the Soviet side, and it caused the CCP’s insecurity of its border.

In conclusion, like the first few years after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in 1950, the Sino-Soviet relationship enjoyed a honeymoon during the first three years of Khrushchev’s reign, yet Khrushchev’s a series of revisionist and de-Stalinization policies changed Stalin-Mao vision for the world communism and therefore transformed the Sino-Soviet relationship as a whole, which led to the later Sino-Soviet deterioration. They had maintained a good relationship due to the necessity of a stable ally. Like the Soviet Union under Stalin's reign, the USSR under Khrushchev continually had helped economically and militarily. Shen and Xia assess, "Khrushchev provided aid to China in developing atomic energy, including the atomic bomb and missiles, between 1954 and 1960. This assistance was initially motivated by Khrushchev's need for Mao's support in a domestic political struggle."¹⁴⁹ Khrushchev provided substantial military and economic aid to the CCP in exchange for its support in the Soviet domestic politics and Weltpolitik. Although both nations adopted communist ideologies, their interpretations and implementations varied significantly. During Stalin's leadership, the CPSU and CCP showed minimal signs of discord; however, under Khrushchev, these minor disagreements escalated into substantial conflicts that threatened relations. Khrushchev's era was characterized by de-Stalinization exertion, which involved criticizing Stalin's policies and moving towards a more liberal type of government. This shift contradicted the main communist beliefs and strained Mao and the CCP, which preferred a Stalinist approach to centralization.

¹⁴⁸ Lan You, "Hanoi's Balancing Act: The Vietnamese Communists and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1960–1965," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 25, no. 2 (2023): 64-92, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/900748>.

¹⁴⁹ Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, "Between Aid and Restriction: The Soviet Union’s Changing Policies on China’s Nuclear Weapons Program, 1954-1960," *Asian Perspective* 36, no. 1 (2012): 95–122, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42704782>.

Additionally, under Khrushchev, longstanding border disputes and the Soviet Union's hesitance to support China economically and militarily hindered the Sino-Soviet alliance. These ideological and political differences during Khrushchev's term culminated in the Sino-Soviet Split in the late 1960s, fundamentally altering the landscape of the global communist movement.

The division of the most communist nations transformed the Cold War political situation. The rift became widely recognized and contentious, affecting communist parties around the world. Khrushchev's attempts to foster better relations with the West through policies of "peaceful coexistence" further distanced Mao, who saw these revisionist efforts as a betrayal of communist philosophies. This era labeled as China's move towards creating its own distinct path on communism and the global stage, which often stood against the Soviet political movements.

Chapter III: The “Cold War” within the Cold War

After the Stalinist Era, the Soviet Union entered a new age that advocated de-Stalinization policies and detente with the West and the United States. Thus, the Soviet domestic modification changed the comparatively friendly Sino-Soviet relationship to the diplomatic opponent and political enemy in the Weltpolitik. The rise of Nikita Khrushchev in the mid-50s replaced the Stalinist influence in the late 20s and moved the USSR into a practical ideological coexist with the West. Mao, on the other hand, continued the Marx-Lenin view of communist ideology that Stalin had pursued. Khrushchev’s political reforms in the CPSU transformed the Soviet internal and external public affairs and alarmed Mao and the CCP. Mao and the CCP had begun to fulfill their ambitions in the Weltpolitik. However, this political ambition directly challenged the tacit Soviet Cold War policy—to swing the world balance of power to achieve the Soviet control.¹⁵⁰ During Khrushchev’s years of office, the Sino-Soviet relationship was remodeled from political alliance into diplomatic adversaries.

In the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party, Khrushchev moved to a policy to peaceful coexistence. Khrushchev tried to mitigate the Soviet relationship with the West, especially with the United States, throughout his reign. The great exception to this, of course, is the Cuban Missile Crisis, which temporarily halted the thaw in relations. However, the Soviet ideological and political modification had changed the initial Sino-Soviet relationship. Although the CCP and the CPSU enjoyed a few years of camaraderie while fighting the US and its ally in the Korean War and helping each other in the economy, military, and technology, the Sino-Soviet relationship reached a critical movement when the CCP and Mao managed to control the Chinese media to portray Soviets as having “betrayed” the Marx-Lenin ideology and their grand communist plan. Steven I. Levine narrates, “Mao criticized Khrushchev's revisionist communism by challenging the Soviet leadership through confrontation tactics within the international

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 321.

communist movement in the early 1960s.”¹⁵¹ Thus, Mao and the CCP severely criticized the CPSU for its “revisionist” ideology, changing the grand communist strategy. Based on these changes, the CCP and Mao finally implemented the political ambition they could not have during the Stalinist era. The competition between two great communist countries alternated the Weltpolitik during the Cold War. In the last few years of Khrushchev’s rule and the early term of Brezhnev, the Sino-Soviet relationship transformed from ideological differences to political adversaries in the Cold War.

First, the Sino-Soviet relationship developed into political adversaries in the late 1950s and 1960s because, from the Chinese perspective, Khrushchev’s revisionist movements caused the promotion of Chinese nationalism and recalled the Chinese fear of imperialist domination in the last two centuries. John W. Garver claims, "Chinese nationalism arose in response to the virulent Western imperialism generated, in part, by this mass nationalism in the West."¹⁵² Historically, China was a victim of nationalist and imperialist ideologies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the communist Chinese view of history, Western imperialists humiliated the Chinese since the Opium War in 1840. Zhihua Shen points out the Chinese perspective of the nineteenth century history, "Since the Opium War in 1840, China has increasingly fallen into a semi-colonial state, subjected to bullying and oppression by foreign powers."¹⁵³ Thus, from the establishment of the PRC, the CCP had fought and feared any imperialist movement that could injure China’s sovereignty and integrity. From the early Sino-Soviet alliance in the early 1950s, the Chinese CCP and the Soviet CPSU had shared the same communist ideology with minor differences, which envisioned a final triumph of the world’s proletariat. Mao and

¹⁵¹ Steven I. Levine, “Some Thoughts on Sino-Soviet Relations in the 1980s,” *International Journal* 34, no. 4 (1979): 649–67, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40201817>.

¹⁵² John W. Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations, 1937-1945 the Diplomacy of Chinese Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 1988), 3.

¹⁵³ “自 1840 年鸦片战争以来，中国就日益严重地陷于一种半殖民的被列强欺凌压迫的状态之中。” in Shen Zhihua 沈志华. “Zhongsu guanxi shigang” *中苏关系史纲：1917-1991 中苏关系若干问题再探讨* [Reviewing and Reconsidering the History of Sino-Soviet Relations 1917-1991]. Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe 社会科学文献出版社, 2007, 87.

the CCO viewed Stalin as a sound Marx-Lenin comrade. Moscow and Beijing had tied closely to fight their “imperialist” enemies—the West in the Korean War. Mineo Nakajima state, "The Korean War was seen as part of Stalin's overall international strategy, especially in relation to his postwar Asian policy and strategy towards China after the establishment of the People's Republic."¹⁵⁴ Odd Arne Westad describes,

“Underlying this sensitivity, though, was a strong 'victim mentality' that characterized Chinese revolutionary nationalism during modern times. This mentality had been informed by the conviction that the political incursion, economic exploitation, and military aggression of foreign imperialist countries had undermined the historical glory of Chinese civilization and humiliated the country. Consequently, it became natural for the Chinese Communists, in their efforts to end China's humiliating modern experiences, to suspect the behavior of any foreign country as being driven by ulterior, or even evil, intentions.”¹⁵⁵

The alternation of the Soviet attitude towards the West recalled the Chinese fear of Soviet “imperialist” nature. In several political incidents, the Soviets under Khrushchev offended the CCP and Mao regarding Chinese territorial and political sovereignty. For example, the Soviets did not support the Chinese in the Taiwan Crisis and territorial dispute with India. Khrushchev rejected politically aiding the CCP in those incidents in exchange for easing the relationship with the West and the United States. Thus, the CCP and Mao began to view Khrushchev’s “revisionism” as a betrayal of Marx-Lenin ideology and regarded the Soviets as a newly “imperialist” power. Westad asserts, "As a result, the deeply rooted but temporarily suppressed suspicion of and misgivings about Soviet 'chauvinism' inevitably revived, causing Chinese leaders to reconsider their political policy toward Moscow... This dynamic made the Sino-Soviet split inescapable by the end of the decade."¹⁵⁶ In the communist China political views, Mao viewed the influence of foreign powers besides communism as imperialist and chauvinist threats.

Unlike the Stalin era, when the Soviets had politically supported the Chinese and the

¹⁵⁴ Mineo Nakajima, “The Sino-Soviet Confrontation: Its Roots in the International Background of the Korean War,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 1 (1979): 19–47, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2159072>.

¹⁵⁵ Odd Arne Westad, *Brothers in Arms : The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1998), 270.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 203.

CCP under Marx-Lenin ideology, Khrushchev failed to meet the CCP and Mao's needs in Weltpolitik and technology. For example, the Soviets ceased nuclear assistance, refused to reinforce China's territorial claims in Taiwan and India, and requested China's help in building a Soviet-owned naval base in China. Thus, political and ideological disputes began to emerge when Moscow failed to satisfy Beijing's needs while trying to exploit the Chinese mainland. The Soviets failed to value the Chinese national sensitivity toward foreign influence within China. Therefore, after the Twentieth Congress, Khrushchev's "revisionist" political movements triggered the CCP and Mao's insecurity of "imperialist" Russian interference in China and changed the Chinese political attitude.

Furthermore, the CCP and Mao detested the Soviet military proposal to defend Chinese sovereignty. Mao refused Khrushchev to build long-wave radio stations in China that were not under Chinese control. In 1958, the Soviets proposed to improve the cooperation between the Soviets and the Chinese. They suggested building several long-wave radio stations in China jointly owned by the Soviets and the Chinese. Nevertheless, Mao held a negative view of the Soviet military "intrusion" in China. Westad narrates, "Mao came to consider these plans as a threat to China's sovereignty and integrity. He decided to accept building the stations but to pay all the expenses and to have exclusive ownership."¹⁵⁷ Although the CPSU proposed the plan and wished to own these stations jointly, the CCP and Mao highly suspected the Soviet motive. The Soviet military proposed building radio stations for a future Sino-Soviet combined fleet. When Mao heard that the Soviets planned to construct military installations in Dalian, Mao was irritated by Khrushchev and the Soviet scheme. Westad depicts, "Mao surveyed the history of the relations between the CCP and the Soviet Union, criticizing the fact that the Soviets had always treated their Chinese comrades from a stand of 'big power chauvinism.'"¹⁵⁸ According to Mao and the CCP, the Soviet military strategy in the Northeast of China was the continuation of the

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 230.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 234.

old Russian chauvinism.

Although the Chinese viewed the Soviets as the “Russian chauvinists,” the Soviets considered themselves innocent. From the Soviet perspective, they were extremely cautious in their diplomacy with China. Khrushchev argues, “We took great care never to offend China until the Chinese actually started to crucify us. And when they did start to crucify us- well, I’m no Jesus Christ, and I didn’t have to turn the other cheek.”¹⁵⁹ The Soviets and Khrushchev felt they were innocent throughout the Sino-Soviet diplomatic relationship. Khrushchev stated the Soviet harmless approach in the relationship, “But we have never accused you of not being anti-imperialist. However, you always say that we are not.”¹⁶⁰ The Soviets and Khrushchev felt they were falsely accused by the Chinese. Indeed, from the Chinese perspective, Khrushchev was a “revisionist.” The Chinese accused Khrushchev’s political policies and rejected his legitimacy. The Fourth International states, “The article went beyond its title, depicting the Khrushchev leadership group as the greatest separatists of all times, asserting that ‘the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party is the greatest revisionists, as well as the greatest sectarians and separatists in history.’”¹⁶¹ The Sino-Soviet relationship became a political victim in promoting the Chinese internal unity. Mingjiang Li supports, “By utilizing their monopoly of information and taking advantage of the political fervor nationwide, they supported and initiated ‘heroic’ actions among the Chinese masses, especially the youth, against the Soviet ‘revisionist’ demon.”¹⁶² Thus, in some degree, the Soviets were falsely accused by the Chinese. Thus, the asymmetry of information between both parties intensified, and it later led to the Sino-Soviet deterioration in the 1960s.

In addition, it was vital to explain why China was sensitive to the Soviet “intrusion” in

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 464.

¹⁶⁰ “但是我们从来没有指责你们，说你们不反帝。可是你们老说我们是这样” in Ibid.

¹⁶¹ “文章超出了标题的范围，把赫鲁晓夫领导集团描绘为一切时代中的最大的分裂主义者，断言“苏共领导是有史以来最大的修正主义者，也是有史以来最大的宗派主义者和分裂主义者。” in Ibid.

¹⁶² Mingjiang Li, *Mao's China and the Sino-Soviet Split : Ideological Dilemma* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 136, accessed June 17, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central.

mainland China, which caused the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship. From the Chinese and the CCP's view, the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship was directly caused by the Soviet intrusion of Chinese sovereignty and integrity. Thus, it was worth mentioning that Chinese nationalism played its part in Chinese politics during Mao's rule. As a reactionary history reader, Mao was a strong Chinese nationalist. Westad claims, "It is evident that the Chinese leaders held an ethnocentric view of foreign affairs."¹⁶³ In Mao's view of history, the West invaded and semi-colonized China in the mid-nineteenth century after the Opium War in 1840. The national humiliation by the West was mentioned in the Chinese history textbook to remind the Chinese people. The two 'Century' items were taken directly from the series preface to the multi-volume 'Never Forget the National Humiliation' history book series: 'China's early modern encounter with Western imperial powers was a history of humiliation in which the motherland was subjected to the insult of being beaten because we were backwards.'¹⁶⁴ Nationalism played a strong tie Chinese society together. Thus, China's characteristic nationalism was born to unite the nation and to fight together against Western imperial powers. Chinese nationalism became extremely vibrant at the end of the Korean War because it signified that China could win against the West under the leadership of the CCP.

Mao viewed Chinese nationalism as the key figure of Chinese unity. Tianbiao Zhu asserts, "Despite aligning with the Soviet Union in the 1950s, Mao's primary allegiance was to Chinese nationalism rather than being a puppet of the Soviet Union."¹⁶⁵ Even during the Stalin era, the CCP and Mao refused to become puppets of the USSR and rejected Stalin's overclaim in China. Mao's views of Stalin and Khrushchev were totally different. Mao thought Khrushchev was a weak leader who abandoned the Marx-Leninist path. Thus, when the Soviets under

¹⁶³ Ibid, 276.

¹⁶⁴ Gries, Peter Hays, Qingmin Zhang, H. Michael Crowson, and Huajian Cai. "Patriotism, Nationalism and China's US Policy: Structures and Consequences of Chinese National Identity." *The China Quarterly*, no. 205 (2011): 1–17. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41305191>.

¹⁶⁵ Tianbiao Zhu, "Nationalism and Chinese Foreign Policy." *China Review* 1, no. 1 (2001): 1–27. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23461927>.

Khrushchev wanted to take advantage, Mao strongly rejected his proposal even though Khrushchev did not realize that he was violating Chinese national sovereignty in the Chinese's view. Hence, the radio station incident was that the Soviets unconsciously violated the Chinese national pride. In his memoir, Khrushchev recalls Mao reaction when he noticed the proposal, "No! We don't want anything to do with Murmansk, and we don't want you here. We've had British and other foreigners on our territory for years now, and we're not ever going to let anyone use our land for their own purposes again.' We never did get his permission for the submarine base."¹⁶⁶ Mao was furious about Khrushchev's proposal of building the radio stations in China, and he thought it was a intrusion of the Chinese sovereignty and dignity. China's National Conscription Network recorded the conversation between Mao and Khrushchev about the radio station incident; it records Mao's statement, "Do we still have any sovereignty? We are in the process of building our own submarine fleet. If Soviet submarines can come and go from our ports, wouldn't that be an infringement on our sovereignty?"¹⁶⁷ The action was serious because it had challenged the CCP's Mao's fundamental principles. The Chinese sensitivity to Western imperialism brought many political indeterminacies to the vulnerable relationship between the CCP and CPSU after the Stalin era, and these uncertainties became the foundation of the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship after several severe political disagreements within the Sino-Soviet relationship and the Weltpolitik.

The political dispute that followed the radio stations was the disagreement between the joint fleets of the Chinese and Soviets. Due to the Soviets having limited natural harbors in the Pacific Ocean, the Soviets proposed to create a joint submarine flotilla with the Chinese in the Pacific Ocean constructed in China's ports. The Soviet proposal triggered the CCP and Mao's nationalistic sentiments. During the reviewing stage, the CCP and Mao questioned the Soviet

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 473.

¹⁶⁷ "什么共同商量, 我们还有没有主权了? 如果苏联潜艇可以进出我国港口, 那不成了侵犯我国主权了吗?" in National Conscription Network of China 全国征兵网, "Maozedong jujue Heluxiaofu tichu zaihua jian qianting jidi" "毛泽东拒绝赫鲁晓夫提出在华建潜艇基地" [Mao Zedong Rejecting Khrushchev's Proposal to Establish a Submarine Base in China]. 2014, <https://www.gfbzb.gov.cn/zbbm/gfzs/201403/20140314/819952554.html>.

motives and frequently asked whether creating a “cooperative” was a prerequisite for Soviet aid to China. Mao was sensitive to the Soviet motive and military proposal. Westad continues, “He then repeatedly emphasized that the essence of the Soviet proposals of establishing long wave radio stations and a joint submarine flotilla lay in Moscow's attempt to control China.”¹⁶⁸ Due to China’s sensitivity to foreign influence and Mao’s unwillingness to compromise with the Soviets, the joint project of the Sino-Soviet combined nuclear submarine fleet. In this proposal, both sides had different appeals. The Soviets wished to expand their naval influence in the Pacific; the CCP and Mao wanted to keep China out of external influences. Thus, although Khrushchev did not intend to intrude on Chinese sovereignty during this particular event, Mao felt that the Soviets were injuring Chinese political sovereignty. Zhihua Shen narrates, “From the evidence above, we can conclude that the Soviet leaders had no ill intent, but the way they raised the proposal was too direct and they did not consider the nationalistic sentiments among the Chinese.”¹⁶⁹ The rejection of the Soviet proposal demonstrated the CPSU’s underestimation of Chinese nationalistic sentiments when making their strategies.

In addition, the failure to create a mutually beneficial treaty showed a lack of common interest and reciprocal understanding during this period. Khrushchev realized the difficulty of dealing with Mao and of collaborating with China. Mao and the CCP had no interest in building joint stock radio stations or a combined fleet with the CPS during the movement. Westad reports, “Mao emphasized that he was not interested in creating a Sino-Soviet ‘military cooperative’”¹⁷⁰ In Khrushchev’s view, he thought Mao and the CCP would take reciprocal proposals not only because the Soviets had been helping the Chinese economically, technologically, and militarily but also he considered it reasonable. However, Mao refused to compromise on nationalistic grounds. The Soviets were bitterly disappointed by the Chinese response. Shen describes, “The Soviets were ‘greatly depressed,’ realizing that they had absolutely no understanding of Chinese

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 276.

¹⁶⁹ Zhihua Shen, ed, *A Short History of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1917-1991* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 218.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 265.

policy and they had overestimated the importance of ideology and had underestimated the difference between the national interests of the two countries."¹⁷¹ Although the failed military proposal did not immediately lead to Sino-Soviet deterioration, the Sino-Soviet relationship revealed signs of a Sino-Soviet split. They disagreed on several prominent political issues and national interests.

In the first diplomatic dispute in 1958, the Soviets and the Chinese criticized each other's diplomatic stances and political actions. Three weeks after Khrushchev left China disappointed, he surprisingly heard that the CCP had bombarded Jinmen, Taiwan. He turned from disappointment to anger because the CCP and Mao failed to communicate with him during this big military operation. Dramatically, the CIA even thought that the Chinese bombardment was a Sino-Soviet joint operation due to the time perspective. In contrast, the Soviets were muddled by the Chinese action in Jinmen. Khrushchev often was confused with Mao's actions. John Lewis Gaddis supports, "Mao had neglected to consult the Russians, who were thoroughly rattled when he casually suggested to them that a war with the United States might not be such a bad thing: the Chinese could lure the Americans deep into their own territory, and then Moscow could hit them 'with everything you've got.'"¹⁷² Khrushchev was furious that not only had the Chinese violated the Sino-Soviet alliance treaty but also put the USSR into a political dilemma. Mao's and the CCP's enforced diplomatic toughness in the Taiwan incident. Mao recounted, "Taiwan is a domestic issue of China. We assert that we will definitely liberate Taiwan."¹⁷³ The sudden Chinese military action antithetically contradicted Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence" with the West. Shen states, "Khrushchev criticized the Chinese for having adopted a policy of adventurism in handling the Taiwan crisis in 1958 and was particularly upset with Beijing's failure to inform Moscow of its intentions in shelling Jinmen."¹⁷⁴ In the Taiwan Crisis in 1958,

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 217.

¹⁷² John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War : A New History* (Penguin Press, 2005), 115.

¹⁷³ "台湾是中国的国内问题。我们说，我们一定要解放台湾。" in Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Khrushchev blamed Mao's political gambit for threatening the Soviet's political interests.

Also, the Taiwan crisis in 1958 brought the first political confrontation of the ideological difference between the Chinese and the Soviets. The Chinese were no doubt a direct challenge to the Soviets' strategy of "peaceful coexistence." Thomas Bernstein and Huayu Li write, "While the timing of the two had primarily instrumental reasons, their simultaneity nevertheless symbolized a double challenge to the Soviet Union with regard to economic development and peaceful coexistence with the United States."¹⁷⁵ The Taiwan Crisis was the first Chinese political action during the Cold War that negatively affected the Soviet diplomatic relationship with other countries, especially the US. Khrushchev severely criticized Mao's actions and responded with political consequences. For instance, the Soviets reduced the nuclear help to the Chinese and eventually stopped because of this crisis.

Consequently, the Chinese argued bitterly with the Soviets. From the Chinese perspective, the Soviets ought to support the Chinese diplomatically and politically because the Chinese were the Soviets' allies and were fighting for the communist bloc by bombarding the American-supported Taiwan. More importantly, from a Chinese nationalistic point of view, Taiwan was part of China that should be taken back to China as soon as possible. Thus, when Mao and the CCP heard Khrushchev's response, they were irritated. Shen illustrates, "The Chinese leaders angrily rebutted Khrushchev's claims, claiming that not to use force in Taiwan had been an American position and that Khrushchev wanted to acquiesce to Washington's plot of creating 'two Chinas.'"¹⁷⁶ The Soviet reaction made Mao and the CCP bitterly disappointed. Compared to the success of the military operation in Jinmen, the CCP and Mao were expecting Soviet support in the incident. Nevertheless, the CPSU and Khrushchev severely denounced China's military action and claimed it had destroyed Khrushchev's peaceful negotiation with the West. Although the Soviets did not publicly condemn the Chinese, it severely injured the Sino-

¹⁷⁵ Thomas P. Bernstein and HuaYu Li, *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-Present*. Lanham (MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 41.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 140.

Soviet relationship. Despite Mao's rejection of the proposal for the Sino-Soviet alliance, the Sino-Soviet relationship was at its turning point.

As a result of the Jinmen Incident, the Soviets reduced the nuclear help to the Chinese and later ceased to aid the Chinese militarily and technologically. From the Soviet perspective, the Chinese had become uncontrollable, and they stopped their military assistance to China. The Soviets and Khrushchev realized that they valued more on the Chinese interest than the communist bloc. Bernstein and Li state, “Simultaneously, it also decided to reduce, and eventually abrogate, the transfer of Soviet know how and technology to the Chinese nuclear weapons project, including the delivery of a promised model A-bomb by 1959.”¹⁷⁷ However, the Taiwan Crisis signified the downturn of the Sino-Soviet deterioration. From this point, the Chinese began to gradually seek other ways than the Soviet Union. Li and Xia claim, “In late 1958 the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) began seeking to forge much stronger links with Communist parties elsewhere in the world.”¹⁷⁸ The Chinese and the Soviets moved on different political roads rooted in distinct ideological developments.

On the nuclear issues, Mao and Khrushchev held a different view. Khrushchev’s view was to reduce nuclear weapons to ease the relationship between the Soviet Union and the West. However, Mao’s view was to increase nuclear arms to frighten the West. Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia narrate, “The Twentieth CPSU Congress had proposed a transition to Communism through peace instead of war. Mao had always been against the view that nuclear war would destroy humanity.”¹⁷⁹ The Soviets and the Chinese, for the first time, were confronted with different political views in Weltpolitik in the midst of the Cold War. The Soviets and the Chinese, for the first time, were confronted with different political views in Weltpolitik in the midst of the Cold War.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, “Hidden Currents during the Honeymoon: Mao, Khrushchev, and the 1957 Moscow Conference.” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 11, no. 4 (2009): 74–117. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26922964>.

Correspondingly, the Sino-Soviet relationship worsened after the Sino-Indian border dispute in 1959. The Sino-Indian border dispute originated from the historical problem between China and the West. The Indian claim was based on the McMahon Line, established in 1914 during the Simla Convention between British India and Tibet, without Chinese involvement. However, the PRC and Mao never recognized the McMahon Line and claimed that it injured the Chinese nationalistic sovereignty. The border clash between China and India grabbed international attention, especially the USSR and the United States. The United States supported the Indian statement, but the USSR claimed neutrality. The Soviets publicly announced neutrality in the military conflict between China and India. The Soviet political response in the way proved Mao's suspicion of the USSR's political stance. Berstein and Li describe, "Likewise, simultaneous but unrelated Soviet attempts to seek a rapprochement with the United States were not warmly received in the PRC because Mao believed that Khrushchev was selling out socialist positions."¹⁸⁰ The action not only worsened the Sino-Soviet relationship after the Jinmen Incident but also aggravated the Sino-Soviet mistrust that caused the Sino-Soviet military confrontation in 1969. The diplomatic circumstance confirmed Mao's belief in Khrushchev. Karneev and Kozylov narrate, "Mao Zedong believed that Moscow was standing up for the 'Indian bourgeoisie, American and British imperialists.'"¹⁸¹ The mistrust between Moscow and Beijing developed uncontrollably. The Sino-Indian border conflict was significant to the Sino-Soviet relationship because it was the first time the Soviets publicly disagreed with the Chinese in Weltpolitik.

Consequently, the Sino-Indian border clash negatively affected the Sino-Soviet relationship. The diplomatic incident caused the Sino-Soviet relationship to deteriorate. Chinese Marxist Library records Khrushchev's response to Mao, "Do you really want us to support you

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Karneev An., Kozylov Is, "The Causes of the Sino-Soviet Split: Russian and Western Scholarship Perspectives." *RUDN Journal of World History*. 2023;15(4):393–402, <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8127-2023-15-4-393-402>.

in your conflict with India? To us, that would be foolish. We believe the Tibet incident was the fault of the Chinese Communist Party, not Nehru."¹⁸² The USSR rebutted the Chinese diplomatic strategy publicly for the first time. This was not only a disaster for the Sino-Soviet relationship itself but also affected their relationship within the communist bloc. As a result, Khrushchev canceled his scheduled visit to Chinese cities and continued to visit Washington in 1959. Li supports, "All previously scheduled visits to other Chinese cities had to be canceled. It has been argued that the meeting between Chinese and Soviet leaders in October 1959 was a critical turning point in Sino-Soviet relations. The meeting neither resolved any issues nor reached any mutual understanding."¹⁸³ The result of the Sino-Indian border clash was that neither the Chinese nor the Soviets wanted to reach an agreement. After the event, Khrushchev publicly treated the US more like a friend than China. The Sino-Soviet reached the lowest point since the Stalin era. More importantly, the public Sino-Soviet deterioration also promoted the Sino-Soviet competition in the communist bloc and international politics. It turned the underlying race between the Soviet Union and China into a public strive for hegemony. The Pandora's box of the Sino-Soviet rivalry had been opened by the Sino-Soviet first political confrontation.

After the public disagreement on the Sino-Indian border conflict, the Chinese and the Soviets turned against each other diplomatically in the 1960s. Although Khrushchev wanted to compromise with Mao and the CCP in the Sino-Indian conflict, they refused the Soviet concession. Michael Sheng, Qiang Zhai, and Deborah Kaple assert, "Mao, however, was not satisfied. He wanted 'to assert his own bid to boundless prestige as the embodiment of the world revolution, as its prophet and its warrior.' Mao thus kept criticizing Khrushchev's policy in Cuba and everywhere else, determined to end the alliance irrevocably."¹⁸⁴ Mao and the CCP began

¹⁸² "你们真的想要我们支持你们同印度的冲突吗? 对我们来说, 那是愚蠢的。我们认为, 西藏事件是中国共产党的错, 不是尼赫鲁的错。" in *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Michael Sheng, Qiang Zhai, and Deborah Kaple, "Perspectives on Sergey Radchenko's Two Suns in the Heavens," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 1 (2012): 96–106, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26924115>.

their plan to challenge the Soviet leadership in the communist bloc and wished to surpass the Soviets in world politics. In the Cuban Crisis and in the Twenty-Second Congress and the Bucharest Conference, the CCP decided to stand against the CPSU. In those communist conferences, the CCP spoke publicly against the CPSU propositions. Danhui Li and Yafeng Xia assert, "Because the new CPSU program, which the CCP regarded as revisionist, would be the guiding set of principles of world Communism, Chinese leaders decided to reopen ideological struggle with the CPSU."¹⁸⁵ In 1960, the CCP and Mao decided to restart the ideological struggle mentioned in Khrushchev's Secret Speech of the Twentieth Congress.

As a result, the world communist camp was divided politically and ideologically between the Soviet and the Chinese bloc since the Twenty-Second Congress. Although the CCP did not gain major support in these conferences, it demonstrated that their influence was nonnegligible in the communist bloc. Li and Xia describe, "At the June 1960 Bucharest Conference, only the Albanian, Indonesian, and Japanese Communist parties supported the CCP when Khrushchev stood against the Chinese delegation."¹⁸⁶ The political confrontation in the communist bloc proved Mao's intolerable attitude towards Khrushchev's "revisionism." Thus, the Sino-Soviet worsened after the Twenty-Second Congress, during which the CPSU and the CCP publicly separated from the communist bloc.

Moreover, the CCP and Mao wanted to replace the Soviet leadership in the communist bloc. With bad interpersonal relationships between Sino-Soviet leaders and diplomatic, ideological, and cultural differences, the Chinese contemplated the idea of replacing the Soviets to lead the global communist movements. Michael C. Brose and Antonina Łuszczkiewicz records, "In the 1960s, Mao Zedong (1893–1976) tried to prove that the Soviet Union was unsuited to leading the international communist movement, as it entered the path of ideological

¹⁸⁵ Danhui Li, and Yafeng Xia, "Jockeying for Leadership: Mao and the Sino-Soviet Split, October 1961–July 1964." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16, no. 1 (2014): 24-60, muse.jhu.edu/article/543724.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

revisionism, left the Leninist path of building socialism, and took to the restoration of capitalism."¹⁸⁷The Chinese no longer to become the “younger brother” of the Soviets and began to challenge and compete with the Soviets on the Weltpolitik during the 60s.

The Sino-Soviet relationship was damaged by diplomatic competition in the Third World. Throughout the 1960s, the Soviets and the Chinese competed to win the diplomatic support of the Third World. Due to his revolutionary rhetoric, Mao had an ideological advantage over Khrushchev in winning their support. Sergey Radchenko and Artemy Kalinovsky describe, “Moscow and Beijing competed for influence in Asia, Africa and Latin America, each claiming to represent the true aspirations of national liberation movements. China made important gains in this competition in the early 1960s, in part because Mao’s revolutionary rhetoric had a greater appeal in the Third World than Khrushchev’s timid platitudes of peaceful coexistence.”¹⁸⁸ The contest accelerated their contradiction and led to the later military and diplomatic confrontation in the late 60s.

Despite the ideological clash in the Twenty-Second Congress and diplomatic rivalry in the Third World, the first Sino-Soviet territorial confrontation in Xinjiang caused the deterioration of the sensitive relationship. The Tacheng Incident in Ili, Xinjiang, caused Sino-Soviet political tension. After experiencing the economic consequences of the Great Leap Forward, the economic condition in Xinjiang was stagnant. Thus, other ethnical groups like Kazaks, Kyrgyz, and Uighurs crossed the Sino-Soviet border to go to the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan for better economic opportunities. Vladislav M. Zubok depicts, “A joke circulated in Moscow: A Soviet commander in the Far East calls the Kremlin in panic, asking: ‘What should I do? Five million Chinese have just crossed the border and surrendered!’”¹⁸⁹ From the reaction,

¹⁸⁷ Michael C. Brose and Antonina Łuszczkiewicz, eds. *Sinology during the Cold War* (Abingdon, Oxon ; Routledge, 2022), 73.

¹⁸⁸ Artemy Kalinovsky and Sergey Radchenko , eds, *The End of the Cold War and the Third World: New Perspectives on Regional Conflict* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 6. accessed June 26, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁸⁹ Vladislav M. Zubok, *Failed Empire : The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 210, accessed June 17, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central.

the Soviets also demonstrated their surprise at receiving Chinese immigrants from the Chinese province of Xinjiang.

However, the emigration significantly damaged the already stagnant economy. According to historical data, there were more than 67,000 emigrants to Soviet Kazakhstan during the 1960s. Sheng Mao describes, "In the spring of 1962, a mass exodus took place in Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, the Sino-Soviet borderland in northwest Xinjiang. More than 67,000 border inhabitants, most of whom were ethnic Kazaks, managed to flee to the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan."¹⁹⁰ The Soviet immigrant policy threatened the Chinese domestic interest in Xinjiang and jeopardized Chinese national security, which alarmed sensitive nationalistic feelings.

Although there was no evidence to prove it was a Soviet-planned incident, the CCP and Mao still believed it was the Soviets who set up the emigration. Mao was highly irritated by the Soviets. Mao explains, "The Chinese leader Mao Zedong called the I-Ta Incident a 'conspiracy' of 'Soviet revisionism' and even called on his comrades to 'be prepared for a war.'"¹⁹¹ The Tacheng Incident caused the direct deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship. From the Chinese perspective, the incident not only damaged the Chinese population and economy but, more importantly, threatened China's national security. Shen illustrates, "As Sergey Radchenko has written, 'Chinese insistence that the Soviets somehow attempted to subvert Xinjiang points to the perception of the Soviet Union as an expansionist and predatory neighbor.'"¹⁹²

Following the incident, the Sino-Soviet relationship intensified because it also brought the Chinese nationalistic feelings towards the Soviets. It in some ways foreshadowed the Sino-Soviet military confrontation in the late 60s. Sheng Mao writes, "However, the deteriorating relations between China and the Soviet Union were a more direct cause for the mass exodus of

¹⁹⁰ Sheng Mao, "More Than a Famine: Mass Exodus of 1962 in Northwest Xinjiang," *China Review* 18, no. 2 (2018): 155–84, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26435651>.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

1962. The Chinese government responded to the worsening relations by preventing the Soviet government from repatriating Soviet nationals."¹⁹³The Chinese After the Tacheng Incident, the Chinese began to view the Soviets as the enemy of the PRC, and the mutual distrust continued to grow throughout the following years until the Sino-Soviet border clash in Zhenbao island in 1969.

In 1963, like Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Mao issued an Open Letter with his twenty-five theses against the Soviet foreign and domestic policy. Philip Snow recounts, "On 24 June 1963 the CCP issued an Open Letter to the Soviet Party, with twenty-five theses aimed at both Soviet foreign and domestic policy and an explicit condemnation of the sacred Twentieth Congress."¹⁹⁴ In the letter, Mao "reminded" Khrushchev's "dangerous revisionist" ideology. The letter expressed Mao's concerns about the Soviet global diplomatic strategy and appealed for a public reconciliation with the CPSU. Consequently, the letter expanded the CPSU-CCP party split into Sino-Soviet state deterioration.

From a global Cold War perspective, the 1960s demonstrated Chinese political and territorial insecurity. The Soviets and Americans encircled and isolated China by allying with the Chinese neighbors. The Soviet Union allied with India and Vietnam, and the United States partnered with South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines. Covell F. Meyskens writes, "In the early 1960s, China was in a vulnerable geopolitical position. Since the 1950s, the United States had surrounded China with a ring of military bases in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, and Washington had forged security arrangements with several countries in Southeast Asia."¹⁹⁵ The national insecurity and Soviet-American encirclement caused the Chinese to view the Soviets as their enemy.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Philip Snow, *China and Russia: Four Centuries of Conflict and Concord* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023), 427, accessed June 25, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁹⁵ Covell F. Meyskens, "The Coming of the Third Front Campaign." Chapter. In *Mao's Third Front: The Militarization of Cold War China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 40–78.

Moreover, the China's south border incident in Laos also frightened the CCP. The CCP called for immediate action to deal with the event in Laos. Roderick MacFarquhar detailly recounts, "More concretely, Beijing was particularly concerned with American actions in Indo-China and disagreed with Moscow's tactical handling of the crisis in Laos. . . This was an issue of far more immediate significance for China's national security than Berlin, especially since there were several thousand remnant KMT troops in Laos."¹⁹⁶ The Chinese feared diplomatic and political encirclement. Even the Chinese's "faithful" ally, North Korea, began to turn away from China in 1966. Shen and Xia state, "As an August 1966 CIA analysis points out, 'In the past 18 months the Chinese have suffered their most serious setbacks in the Far East. The ruling parties of North Korea and North Vietnam have edged away from Peking, and the Communist Party in Japan can no longer be counted on for support.'"¹⁹⁷ China was indeed isolated by the neighboring countries in the 60s. Thus, this diplomatic insecurity caused the Sino-Soviet relationship to intensify after a sequence of diplomatic conflicts in the Weltpolitik.

With the ever-growing conflict between the Sino-Soviet relationship and the US rapprochement, Mao reciprocated to achieve reconciliation with the US and confronted the Soviets in 1969. For the Chinese, the Soviets were the biggest and most dangerous threat. Compared with the US's softened attitude towards China, the USSR seemed repulsive. Chris Tudda describes, "The August 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia and the border clashes between Chinese and Soviet troops in March and August 1969 forced Mao to gradually seek better relations with the United States because he now perceived Moscow to be the bigger threat to Chinese security."¹⁹⁸ Throughout the '60s, Soviet diplomatic policies threatened Chinese national security. Meanwhile, China was isolated from its neighbors. These factors

¹⁹⁶ Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution* (Published for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the East Asian Institute of Columbia University, and the Research Institute on Communist Affairs of Columbia University by Columbia University Press, 1974), 123.

¹⁹⁷ Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, *A Misunderstood Friendship: Mao Zedong, Kim Il-Sung, and Sino-North Korean Relations, 1949-1976* (Columbia University Press, 2020), 174.

¹⁹⁸ Chris Tudda, *A Cold War Turning Point : Nixon and China, 1969-1972* (Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 26.

caused the Chinese to adjust its diplomatic strategy in the Cold War. Through the olive branch extended by the Americans, the Chinese reconciled with the US and changed their Cold War policy.

Then, at the end of the 1960s, China's ever-worsening relations with the Soviet Union were paralleled by its tentative rapprochement with the West...US President Richard Nixon's visit in February 1972 initiated high-level discussions between the two governments and in 1973 a small liaison office was established in Peking to negotiate for the establishment of diplomatic relations.¹⁹⁹

However, from the Soviet perspective, the growing Sino-U.S. and Sino-European relationships also caused Soviet diplomatic insecurity. Although the Chinese were diplomatically isolated by their neighboring countries, they had always pursued their diplomatic relationships with Eastern and Western European countries. Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl states the Sino-European relationship, "This helps to explain the differences in their relations with the PRC, whose leaders were also motivated by political and economic as well as ideological reasons. Beijing notably wanted to gain a foothold in the Soviet empire, and to benefit from Eastern European goods and expertise for its development."²⁰⁰

Thus, the final blow of the Sino-Soviet relationship was the military confrontation on the Zhenabo island in March 1969, which directly caused the Sino-Soviet split. Since the first ideological disagreements, diplomatic competition, and political conflict, the Sino-Soviet relationship came to its epilogue. Alvin Z. Rubinstwein claims, "However, the Sino-Soviet rivalry that flared up dangerously in March 1969, abated somewhat in the early 1970s."²⁰¹ The Zhenbao island Incident was a miniature war between the Chinese and the Soviets. The war changed Mao's political attitude toward the US. Before the Zhenbao island Incident, the CCP and Mao viewed the US imperialists as worse than the Soviet "revisionists." It changed Mao's perception and convinced Mao to unite with his old imperialist enemy—the United States. The

¹⁹⁹ Beverley Hooper, *Foreigners under Mao: Western Lives in China, 1949-1976*. 1st ed.(Hong Kong University Press, 2016), 81.

²⁰⁰ Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl, et al., editors, *Europe and China in the Cold War: Exchanges Beyond the Bloc Logic and the Sino-Soviet Split* (Brill, 2019), 13.

²⁰¹ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet and Chinese Influence in the Third World* (Praeger, 1975), 120.

conflict changed China's diplomatic strategy to the end of the Cold War. Yutaka Kanda describes, "The Sino-Soviet confrontation reached its peak, which confirmed the need for a rapprochement between China and the United States."²⁰² The Sino-Soviet military clash in Zhenbao island catastrophically altered the Cold War situation. China, as the most communist country in the world, was willing to join the side of the US in opposing the Soviet Union. The Zhenbao island was not known for its destruction but for its political implication and influence. The Zhenbao incident was a sudden shock for the whole world. Kanda narrates, "For me, what happened was unbelievable.' At the time of Sino-US rapprochement in 1971, Kosaka candidly expressed his feelings: 'I was surprised, at a loss, and was unable to write a paper on this.'"²⁰³ Not only the United States, but the world was surprised by the Sino-Soviet clash in Zhenabo island. With the Sino-Soviet publicly denounced each other after the event, the Sino-Soviet relationship entered an irreversible situation. The Soviet blamed the Chinese for distorting the facts. "Statements on Sino-Soviet Border Clashes" narrates the Soviet Statement, "Repeating the tested devices of international provocateurs, the Chinese authorities try to distort the facts, to shirk responsibility for the perpetrated provocation to shift the blame to the Soviet Union."²⁰⁴ In response, the CCP also published a statement for the Zhenbao island incident. It declares, "It has thus committed a new grave crime against the Chinese people and incurred another debt in blood. The army men and civilians of our country in their hundreds of millions have expressed deepest indignation at this."²⁰⁵ Through these two statements, the world confirmed that the Sino-Soviet relationship during the Cold War came to its end.

The Zhenbao island Incident signified that the Sino-Soviet relationship was irretrievable. Not only because the Zhenabao island incident turned the two nations against each other on the battlefield but also because it caused strong insecurity in both nations. The Zhenbao island

²⁰² Kanda, Yutaka. *Japan's Cold War Policy and China: Two Perceptions of Order, 1960-1972* (London ; Routledge, 2020), 207.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 208.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Incident could evolve into a major conflict. Lorenz M. Lüthi supports, "Suddenly fearing a 'large-scale conflict,' the PRC wanted to limit the scale of the confrontation, as Zhou told Chen Xilian, the commander of the Shenyang military region: 'We are rational, . . . if we start war it will be part of a world war, we don't want to expand the conflict.'"²⁰⁶ The Zhenbao Incident gave the final blow to the fragile Sino-Soviet relationship in the late 60s.

The Sino-Soviet had one of the longest borders in the world, requiring more armies and resources to defend the border if the enemy were nearby. Urbansky Sören describes the Sino-Soviet border, "This was the longest land border in the world, extending from the Ussuri, Amur and Argun rivers in the east via the steppes and deserts along the border between Outer and Inner Mongolia, to the peaks of the Altai and Tianshan mountains in the west."²⁰⁷ Although both sides claimed they were victorious and right, the account of Zhenbao Island Incident needed more attention in eyes of Cold War historians. The result of the Zhenbao island directly and catastrophically shifted the triangle relationship of the USSR, China, and the US. Lyle J. Goldstein supports, "Thus, Thomas Robinson writes in *The Cambridge History of China*: 'The essential facts will probably never be known ...event did occur ... and the entire structure of relations within the Sino-Soviet-American strategic triangle changed accordingly'"²⁰⁸ The Zhenbao island conflict directly led to the rapprochement between China and the United States. The conflict modified the Cold War dynamics.

In conclusion, the Sino-Soviet relationship transformed from ideological differences to political adversaries in the Cold War. Although the Sino-Soviet was close during the Stalin era and the first few years of Khrushchev's office, ideological issues had existed during that time. The Sino-Soviet relationship was remodeled after the death of Stalin and the end of the Korean

²⁰⁶ Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split : Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 340, accessed June 17, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁰⁷ Sören Urbansky, "The Unfathomable Foe. Constructing the Enemy in the Sino-Soviet Borderlands, ca. 1969–1982." *Journal of Modern European History / Zeitschrift Für Moderne Europäische Geschichte / Revue d'histoire Européenne Contemporaine* 10, no. 2 (2012): 255–79, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26265973>.

²⁰⁸ Lyle J. Goldstein, "Return to Zhenbao Island: Who Started Shooting and Why It Matters," *The China Quarterly*, no. 168 (2001): 985–97, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3657368>.

War. In the Soviet view, China was no longer a weak ally that needed massive aid from the Soviets but a potential political competitor in the communist bloc. Also, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policies caused the CCP and Mao to rethink China's position in the post-Stalin era. As a nationalistic Marx-Leninist, Mao wished China to remain a Stalinistic model. He cannot incorporate Soviet's peaceful coexistence under Khrushchev, Thus, the ideological gap between the Soviets and the Chinese began to grow gradually in the Weltpolitik arena. Through couple of critical misunderstandings and political blunders, the Sino-Soviet relationship turned from close allies in the communist bloc into political adversaries in the Cold War.

Conclusion: the Sino-Soviet Partnership and the Sino-Russian Relationship

Although the ideological split between the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union seemed to be the presumed reason for the Sino-Soviet relationship's degradation, the relationship deterioration was due to the shift of Soviet global strategy after the Stalin era, mutual suspicions between leaders and in the *Weltpolitik*, and territorial and political disputes in the 1960s. The Sino-Soviet relationship was integral to the Cold War political dynamics and post-WWII history. The Sino-Soviet relationship demonstrates its uniqueness in the history field of study because the history of the Sino-Soviet partnership experienced numerous changes and transformations within just two decades. As *China's Neighbors* puts it, Over the years, Chinese and Russian relations have experienced precariously between friendship and conflict.²⁰⁹ Although both states were communist nations, they disagreed on ideology, how to develop their economy, diplomatic strategies, and territorial settlements due to their national distinctiveness. Therefore, knowing the historical context of the Sino-Soviet relationship could help one understand today's Sino-Russian relationship. In fact, historians and political journalists should regard the Sino-Russian relationship as continuing the Sino-Soviet Cold War partnership, but in a very different way.

Studying the Sino-Soviet partnership from the 1950s to the 1970s is not just a historical exercise. It provides crucial insights into the Cold War and contemporary global politics. Lorenz M. Lüthi supports, "Transformations in Sino-Soviet-American relations in the late 1960s and early 1970s changed the dynamics of the Cold War."²¹⁰ The historical issues between the Soviets and the Chinese continue to influence today's geopolitics, demonstrating the ongoing relevance of this research. While the thesis is based on historical analysis, the information included is applicable to understanding today's world, linking historical problems to current political events.

²⁰⁹ *China's Neighbors: Who Is Influencing China and Who China Is Influencing in the New Emerging Asia*. 3rd ed. (Springer, 2012), 77.

²¹⁰ Lorenz M. Lüthi, "Restoring Chaos to History: Sino-Soviet-American Relations, 1969," *The China Quarterly*, no. 210 (2012): 378, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23510691>.

The paper provides an emphasis of the under-analyzed Sino-Soviet relationship during the Cold War as Sarah Kirchberger points out, "One reason may be that in Western writings on Russia-China, the military-industrial and military-strategic aspects of the cooperation were for a long time somewhat under-analyzed."²¹¹

The Sino-Russian relationship in the twenty-first century is a variant continuation of the Sino-Soviet relationship of the twentieth century. Today, a partnership between China and Russia echoes the Sino-Soviet relationship during the Cold War. Jeanne Wilson asserts, "Despite these problems, Russian ties with China multiplied in the 1990s, leading to the establishment of a strategic relationship and the formal conclusion of the July 1991 Friendship Treaty. Russian interactions with China were not unidimensional but multidimensional: bilateral, regional, and international issues shaped their content."²¹² Like the Sino-Soviet alliance in the 1950s, the Sino-Russian coalition in the twenty-first century is tied together due to the continuous Sino-Russian hostility to the West. The Chinese and the Russians tied themselves for economic and political interests under a common ambition to affect the *Weltpolitik*. The Russian return to the alliance was welcomed by the Chinese. Gilbert Rozman supports, "Russia's tilt toward China as its strategic orientation is also welcome, as is the reinforcement being offered to China's efforts to change the world order."²¹³ The Sino-Russian alliance was a resemblance of the Sino-Soviet comradeship, but its variances are striking.

Through the Sino-Russian coalition in the 2010s, the Russians and the Chinese share mutually beneficial economics, like in the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in 1950. The President of Russia describes the Sino-Russian relationship in

²¹¹ Sarah Kirchberger, Svenja Sinjen, and Nils Wörmer, *Russia-China relations: emerging alliance or eternal rivals?* (Global Power Shift, 2022), accessed 24 June 2024.

²¹² Wilson, Jeanne. *Strategic Partners : Russian-Chinese Relations in the Post-Soviet Era* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group. 2004), 183, accessed June 24, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central.

²¹³ *International Relations and Asia's Northern Tier : Sino-Russia Relations, North Korea, and Mongolia*, edited by Gilbert Rozman, and Sergey Radchenko (Springer Singapore Pte. Limited, 2017), 20, ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=5087742>.

the twenty-first century, “The relevant agencies and ministries in our countries are implementing the programme for developing the Russia–Mongolia–China economic corridor signed in Tashkent in 2016.”²¹⁴ The history of the Sino-Soviet relationship is continually developing in the twenty-first century. Compared to the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance treaty, the treaty signed in Tashkent in 2016 was fair and beneficial to Russia–Mongolia–China. In the treaty in 1950, the Soviets provided the most help to the Chinese, but in exchange for the independence of Outer Mongolia. Thus, the geopolitics between the USSR and China developed the current Sino-Russian relationship in the 1950s.

Furthermore, studying the Sino-Soviet relationship is crucial for understanding the current Sino-Russian relationship, particularly in terms of how China and Russia navigate interpersonal relationships among other leaders. In contrast to the strained relationships between Stalin, Mao, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev, the interpersonal dynamic between Putin and Xi offers a promising outlook. Publicly, the two leaders maintain a strong interpersonal relationship, frequently communicating via telephone and exchanging ideas in the international arena. The Russian President’s Official Website affirms, “The two leaders expressed their satisfaction with the development of the strategic partnership between Russia and China and stressed their interest in further expanding ties in all areas and strengthening cooperation in the international arena.”²¹⁵ This positive relationship between Putin and Xi, in stark contrast to the deteriorating relationship between Mao and Khrushchev, bodes well for the future of the Sino-Russian relationship in the twenty-first century.

Nowadays, the Sino-Russian relationship is different from the Sino-Soviet relationship because the Sino-Russian relationship not only has the same ideological goal—to decrease the US influence in the world—but also diplomatically, politically, economically, and

²¹⁴ The Russian President’s Official Website, “Meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Mongolian President Khaltmaagiin Battulga,” 2018, <http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/351/events/57713>.

²¹⁵ The Russian President’s Official Website, “Telephone conversation with President of China Xi Jinping,” 2013, <http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/351/events/18347>.

propagandistically supports each other. Paul J. Bolt and Sharyl Cross state, Since 2014, Russia and China have also intensified efforts to enhance economic cooperation, and have begun working on integrating China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) with the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).²¹⁶ Unlike the ideological split in the mid-50s, China and Russia currently share the same political goal. Unlike the personal relationship between Mao and other Soviet leaders, the interpersonal relationship between Putin and Xi is close, at least in public. Unlike the Taiwan, Indian, and Zhenbao island incidents, the Chinese and Russians are acknowledging each other's claims and diplomatically and politically supporting each other. Compared to the Sino-Soviet relationship in the 60s, the *status quo* of the Sino-Russian relationship has a better relational prospect.

Furthermore, studying the Sino-Soviet relationship is significant in comprehending that the current Sino-Russian relationship is comparatively closer than the Sino-Soviet partnership because the Chinese and Russians agreed on their political views. Unlike the Soviets, who disagreed with the CCP and Mao's political decisions in the late 50s and early 60s, the Russians and the Chinese find a consensus in the current geopolitics. For example, the Russians discussed the Ukrainian issues with Xi in 2013 before the Russia-Ukraine War started. The Russian Official Website announces, "Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping discussed the exceedingly complex situation unfolding in Ukraine, noting their close positions. They expressed hope that the steps being taken by Russia's leadership will help decrease sociopolitical tension and ensure the security of the Russian-speaking population in Crimea and Ukraine's eastern regions."²¹⁷

Different from the Sino-Soviet deteriorated alliance practice, the "revisionist" relationship between Russia and China is closer than the Sino-Soviet partnership.

Both nations understand their national insecurity and nationalistic practices. Ren Yue

²¹⁶ Bolt, Paul J., and Sharyl N. Cross, *China, Russia, and Twenty-First Century Global Geopolitics* (Oxford, 2018; online edn, Oxford Academic, 22 Mar. 2018), accessed 25 June 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198719519.001.0001>

²¹⁷ The Russian President's Official Website, "Telephone conversation with President of China Xi Jinping," 2013, <http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/351/events/20372>.

narrates, “Additionally, the document suggests that Russia's support on the Taiwan issue is valuable to China, as it can count on Moscow's understanding due to similar ethnic conflicts in Russia's own backyard.”²¹⁸ Compared to Khrushchev’s rejection of supporting the CCP and Mao in the Taiwan Crisis in 1958, the current Russian ruler supports the Chinese political attitude towards Taiwan. The comparison between the Sino-Soviet partnership and the Sino-Russian relationship demonstrated that the Sino-Russian relationship has improved, and they have gained some mutual understanding.

Consequently, studying the Sino-Soviet relationship not only provides a historical context of the current Sino-Russian partnership but also explains the “revisionist” relationship between China and Russia nowadays. The historical studies of the Sino-Soviet relationship demonstrate that the Russians and the Chinese learned from past failures and worked concentrically to counterbalance the US influence in the Weltpolitik. Yu Bin states, “The recently published U.S. National Security Strategy, for example, defines China and Russia as 'revisionist powers' because they 'challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity.’”²¹⁹ Historiographically, while the ideological rift between the PRC and the USSR was often mentioned as the primary cause of the deterioration in their relationship, the actual decline stemmed from several other deep-rooted issues. After the death of Stalin, the Soviet Union's shift in global strategy, mutual suspicions between the leaders, and broader geopolitical tensions significantly influenced the relationship's breakdown. Territorial and political disputes in the 1960s further accelerated tensions between communist superpowers. Despite the former split during the late 60s, the current “revisionist” partnership establishes the need for further historical research on the Sino-Soviet relationship.

The research on the Sino-Soviet relationship is not only vital in understanding the

²¹⁸ Ren Yue, “New Geopolitical Thinking and the Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership,” *China Review*, 1998, 83–123, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23453335>.

²¹⁹ Yu Bin, “Between Past and Future: Implications of Sino-Russian Relations for the United States.” *Asia Policy* 13, no. 1 (2018): 12–18. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26403225>.

current international political situation but also helps one's understanding of the twenty-first century economic, ideological, cultural, and diplomatic Asian-European context. The newly revealed Sino-Soviet relationship documents and archives during the Cold War provide an excellent foundation for Asian history studies. The dramatic change in the Sino-Soviet relationship from the late 40s to the late 60s is a significant research template for the study of international relations. From a Western point of view, it makes up for the deficient research on Asian history studies during the Cold War other than the Soviet Union and provides a new emphasis on Asian-European interactional history in the twenty-first century. From the Chinese perspective, the study of the Sino-Soviet relationship is transitioning the research of Chinese history from a regional study into a global contextual exploration.

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