

IN THE WORLD

China seeks alliance against USSR

By David Milton

It would appear that China faces a troublesome and uneasy transition into the post-Mao era. Devotion to production rather than politics has now become the major theme of the Peking and provincial press, and likewise the need for centralized authority to replace the decentralized political and industrial system that grew out of the Cultural Revolution.

However, if there is a tendency on the part of China's leaders to move away from Mao's domestic policies, there is nothing to suggest that they are ready to jettison his foreign policy.

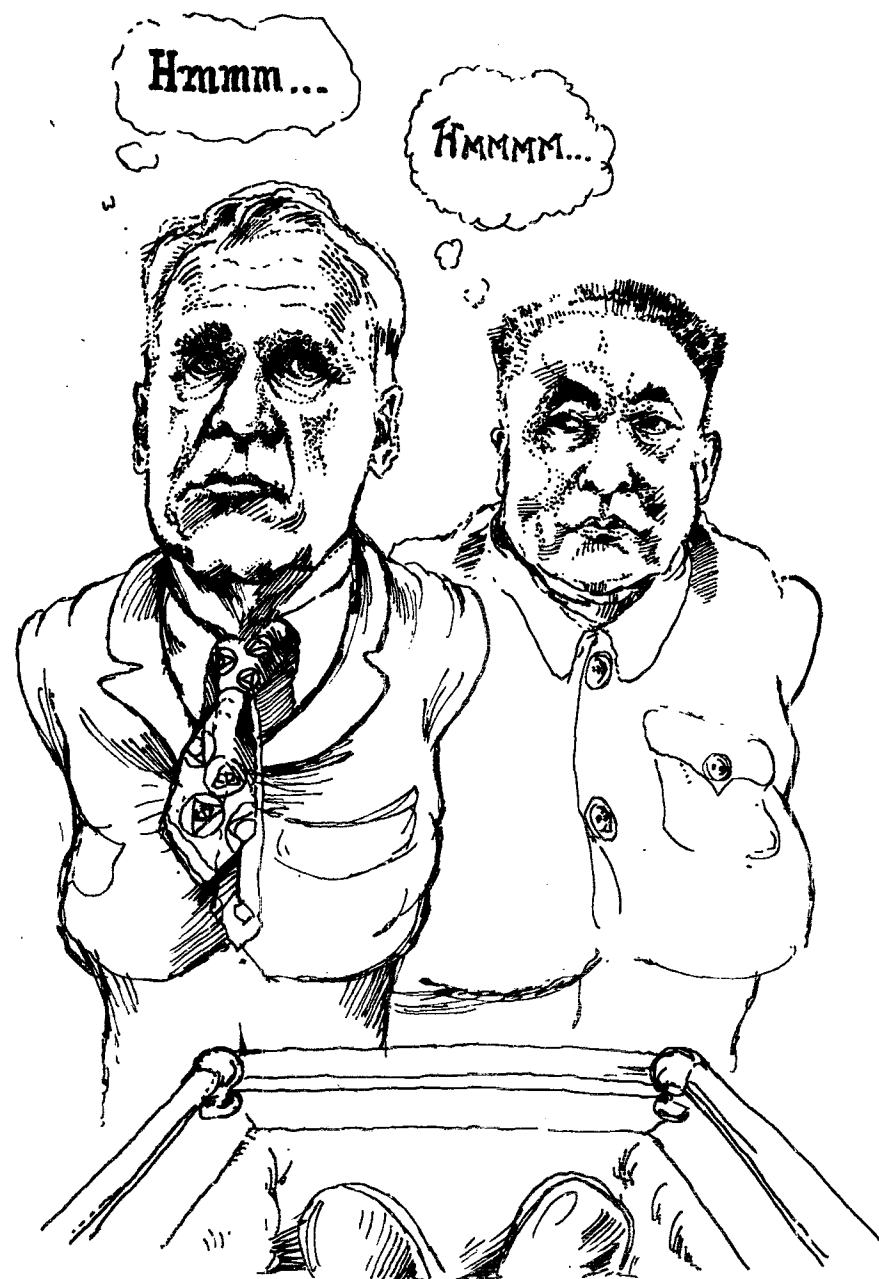
Despite growing evidence that China's foreign policy formulated in the early 1970s has lost its relevance to a complex international system, the new Peking leadership clings to its axiomatic prediction of an inevitable third world war and the repeated warning that the Soviet Army is about to sweep over Europe.

In a world dominated by nuclear superpowers, the notion of a third power holding the balance stands as a relic of bygone ages. Despite the devolution and fragmentation of power in the global areas lying between the two superpowers, the Soviet-American nuclear relationship still retains its unique function determining the life or death of civilization as we know it.

► China courts American rightwing.

Mao and his successors envisioned a Sino-American alliance directed at tipping the balance against the Russians. To achieve this the Chinese courted American right-wing militarists, represented by James Schlesinger, Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan and Henry Jackson.

As the U.S. prepared for a change of administrations, James Schlesinger and his party of military consultants toured China's most sensitive frontier areas, military bases and army training centers. Schlesinger and his team were given the honor of viewing Mao's body lying in state at the Great Hall of the People. Upon returning to the U.S., Schlesinger flew directly to Peking to report to then President-elect Carter. Schlesinger presented Carter with his adventurous plan to achieve military superiority over the Soviet Union. Schlesinger's idea was to out-produce the Soviets in strategic missiles and overcome American inferiority in ground troops by a direct military alliance with China. The U.S. would provide the hardware and China the troops. But subsequent events indicated that Carter rejected Schlesinger's plan. Carter refused to appoint Schlesinger Secretary of Defense and then gave top priority to SALT negotiations with the Russians while assigning China an inferior position on the coming agenda. The cooler heads in the Carter administration were un-



doubtedly less than enthusiastic about a Chinese strategic scenario that might well lead to a massive nuclear exchange between the two superpowers while the Chinese, entrenched in hundreds of miles of tunnels underneath their great cities, calmly sit out the whole affair.

► No change in nuclear policy.

For one brief moment in February, it appeared that Peking might be rethinking a foreign policy that had produced few positive results in increasing China's influence either among the great powers, the Third World, or among the world left. Carter, soon after his inauguration, met with China's representative in Washington, Haung Ch'en. The American President told the press that in private conversations Haung had told him that China would like to abolish all of its stock of nuclear weapons.

This was a strong card, since China is

the only nuclear power that from the very beginning has stood for the complete abolition of the world stockpile of nuclear weapons and has repeatedly made public China's declaration renouncing a first-strike policy. For many years people on every continent had looked to Peking to lead a world campaign against the two superpowers' nuclear threat to mankind. Instead, China chose the option of playing the Russians and Americans against each other.

But the hope that China might take the initiative in the struggle for genuine nuclear disarmament was shortlived. Either Huang was talking for himself, or perhaps Peking decided to wait and see if Schlesinger and his allies might make a comeback.

Within a few days the *People's Daily* was warning President Carter not to get sucked into a Russian trap by continuing the SALT negotiations; the Sino-Soviet border talks broke down; and Peking

then joined Carter's human rights gambit by declaring that the Russian system of concentration camps had now surpassed in size and brutality the camps run by Himmler in Nazi Germany.

During February, Chairman Hua-Kuo-feng stressed the importance of modernizing China's armed forces and the Western press reported that the Chinese were shopping for advanced weapons in Europe. Whether the Army leaders in China are now demanding payment in full for their role as Kingmakers in the Chinese political realm remains to be seen.

► Great disorder under heaven.

Recently Chinese diplomats have reminded the new Carter administration that during official talks in China both Nixon and Kissinger had made a number of private agreements with Mao Tse-tung on American recognition of Taiwan and other matters. The Chinese suggested that the Americans might make a search for the notes of these meetings. The notes, however, appear to be conveniently lost.

The official reply to China came rapidly from presidential press secretary Jody Powell: "I can say neither the President, nor the Secretary of State, nor anyone in the administration was informed of any secret agreement with the People's Republic of China, nor are they aware of any agreement." Secretary of State Vance, soon to visit China, will arrive unencumbered by any previous American commitments. The Carter administration intends to begin its relations with the PRC with a clean slate.

The two superpowers will, no doubt, continue to deal with China from positions of strength as the Chinese continue to search for some method to escape the squeeze of their more powerful adversaries. In all fairness to the Chinese it must be stated that is not up to them to take the first step in reducing border tensions with the Soviet Union. Moscow, which continues to exert a continuous and unbearable nuclear and conventional military pressure on China's extensive frontiers, must prove its good intentions by reducing its offensively poised armies in Central and Northern Asia. China is not Czechoslovakia. However, Moscow like Washington enjoys great power and utilizes it to control other nations wherever and whenever the opportunity exists.

One can only agree with the Chinese that the present international world can be described as a "great disorder under heaven." Whether that "situation is excellent," as Peking also states, is another question.

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Zaire

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problems for Angola. Mobutu even allowed some of his own soldiers to accompany FNLA guerrillas into Angola as late as the end of 1976.

► Angola gives green light.

Given Zaire's open violation of the accord, the Neto regime undoubtedly felt justified in giving the green light to the Katangese who certainly preferred returning home on the offensive to continued exile in a remote part of Angola or even the possibility of being delivered into their enemy's grasp as part of some future accord between Angola and Zaire. (The Angolan government would not, however, have had an easy time "delivering" the Katangese to Mobutu or even restraining them from attacking once they decided that they

had a chance for victory.) Their return momentarily solves the infiltration problem the Angolan government faced from Zaire. It forces Mobutu to channel his military equipment and soldiers away from the FNLA and FLEC and into the battle against the Katangese. It also rids itself of the potential threat to its own security that would have occurred if they decided to turn their military prowess against the Neto regime.

It is highly unlikely that the Katangese or anybody who may have advised them believed that the former gendarmes could march over 1,500 miles to the capital, Kinshasa, and depose Mobutu. They could deliver a severe, if not fatal, blow to the Mobutu regime, however, by simply holding key areas in Shaba.

Shaba is indispensable to Zaire because its copper mines provide between two-thirds and three-quarters of the nation's total foreign exchange earnings. Zaire

provides 67 percent of the world's cobalt, 7 percent of its copper and a third of the world's industrial diamonds. Most of this mineral wealth is located in Shaba, now under attack.

One reason why the Katangese may have been encouraged to attack at this time is the fact that, according to informed sources, there was almost no government force in Shaba, and the forces found there were viewed by the local people more as thieves than protectors of the public order. Irregular government payments to its soldiers help explain the years of unimpeded bullying and robbing by the army and police. The result is that today the Zaire national army is distinguished far more for its harassment rather than protection of citizens.

The humiliating defeats that Mobutu's troops suffered in Angola during the civil war there not only further demoralized the Zairean army but confirmed what Wash-

ington officials had been whispering for years; namely that the Zairean armed forces are still poorly organized, badly equipped, undisciplined and ineffective in battle. Even the large injection of Chinese arms and training since 1973 has not appeared to improve the performance of the Zairean army.

► Greeted as liberators.

There are other reasons for the Katangese to have believed that they would receive support in Shaba. Most of the Katangese soldiers belong to the Lunda-Chokwe ethnic group that is the predominant ethnic group in the Shaba province. Mobutu, hoping to neutralize this ethnic factor, flew to Shaba for a day where he met with the Lunda *Mwata Yamvo* (Lunda Paramount Chief), David Tshombe—a brother of the late Moise Tshombe. Nevertheless,

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THE MIDEAST

PLO National Council renews quest for state

By Russ Stettler
Internews

The State Department maintained that practically no change in policy occurred at the week-long Cairo meeting of the Palestine National Council. The official comment from the State department following the adoption of the Palestine Liberation Organization's new 15-point program merely noted that the exile parliament had failed to show any shift on the key question of Israel's right to exist.

Israel's own reaction was even sharper. Foreign minister Yigal Allon said the Cairo resolutions exceeded Israel's "darkest expectations."

But contrary to these interpretations, the final program did represent a position between past positions and a more moderate and flexible one.

►Shadow of Jumblatt's murder.

Very early in the conference, the hard-line Rejection Front faction of the Palestinian guerilla movement made an unexpectedly strong showing in the election of the speaker of the parliament. The moderate incumbent was predictably re-elected, but the Rejection Front candidate garnered over 28 percent of the vote—more than his own supporters had predicted. In addition, many of the early speakers among the delegates viewed as independents seemed to be taking a line much closer to the Rejection Front than to the so-called moderate majority grouped around the leadership of Yasser Arafat.

Two external factors influenced the early mood of the meeting. Just before the deliberations began, President Carter had spoken for expanding the Jewish state beyond the borders of 1967. Even when Carter clarified his remarks, distinguishing between legal boundaries (i.e., the pre-1967 borders) and a wider defense perimeter where Israel might station troops without exercising regional political control, few Arab critics were satisfied.



The President seemed to be saying that his conception of a Mideast settlement might approve the long-term deployment of Israeli troops in occupied Arab lands. No Palestinian delegate to the parliament could endorse a *pax americana* based on anything less than full Israeli withdrawal to its pre-1967 borders.

A few days after the conference opened, the Palestinians' closest ally in Arab politics, Lebanese socialist leader Kamal Jumblatt, was assassinated. Arafat lost his composure as he announced the murder to the National Council. The professional style of the assassination suggested that it was the work of sophisticated foreign intelligence operatives, and it may well have been timed to evoke a tough response from the Palestinians.

Had it provoked a renewal of full-scale fighting in Lebanon, that would have far overshadowed the deliberations in Cairo.

As it was, the outbreak of fighting in Lebanon was curtailed, but the shadow of Jumblatt's murder hung over the council meeting—reminding delegates of a sinister, international conspiracy that had assassinated dozens of their militants, friends and allies in the Middle East and Europe.

►No recognition of Israel.

In spite of everything, the National Council

did manage in the end to confirm Yasser Arafat's leadership and to give him a broad enough mandate to maneuver diplomatically if the PLO is invited to participate in the Geneva peace talks this year. The 15-point program also called for escalating armed actions against Israel—though it remains to be seen whether this resolution will have practical effect on guerilla actions at a time when none of the Arab countries surrounding Israel allows the PLO to operate freely in border raids. More importantly, the National Council endorsed unofficial contacts with Israeli peace activists, speaking of "the importance of relations and coordination with democratic and progressive Jewish forces inside and outside of Israel."

The PLO did not dramatically announce its recognition of Israel or modify its National Charter to renounce the goal of establishing a democratic, secular state throughout all of historical Palestine. But no one seriously believed that the PLO would take such actions unilaterally, since they are the crucial bargaining chips if the PLO does involve itself in negotiations at some future point. The PLO argues that recognition is a matter for states to extend to one another. It cannot contemplate recognition of Israel until there is a Palestinian state.

On the key question of whether the

PLO should seek to create a Palestinian state on the West Bank, the National Council took decisive action. It resolved that "an independent national state" should be created on "national soil"—a formula that is much clearer than past programs that gave only vague endorsement to establishing Palestinian authority over territory liberated from Israeli occupation.

Inside the PLO, left-wing critics of the mini-state charge that it would be too dependent on outside forces—such as Jordan, which would control its trading access to the Arab world, and Saudi Arabia, whose oil wealth would subsidize the West Bank state and regulate its military budget. But in the wake of the civil war in Lebanon, the PLO's majority seems to feel that the organization has already reached its peak of dependence on outsiders and that any degree of national sovereignty would be an improvement.

And so, Arafat has been authorized to pursue the mini-state—even to go to Geneva, provided the PLO is invited and provided the framework of the negotiations is reformulated to speak of Palestinian national rights rather than simply the "refugee problem" mentioned in the UN Security Council's resolution 242 that now provides the basis of the Geneva talks.

The big question is whether the PLO will be invited, and that depends on whether the Carter administration is seriously planning a break from past policy on the Palestinian question. Despite official denials, Carter's remarks about the need for a Palestinian homeland and his brief handshake with the PLO delegate at the UN have been viewed around the world as signals of a new direction in American policy. In this global chess match, it may be months before anything happens; but the next move is clearly Carter's.

Zaire

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early reports on the fighting indicate that the Katangese have been greeted as "liberators" in some of the areas they have occupied.

Deterioration of living and economic conditions in Shaba in recent years can be expected to have engendered considerable resentment against the Mobutu regime among the local inhabitants. The people of the province used to buy most of their salt, sugar, cooking oil, kerosene, vegetables, tea, cloth and soap from Angola. Since the Angolan civil war, however, these products are no longer available across the border which means that most Shabans must do without them even if they have money to buy them.

In 1974 the Zaire government took over most small businesses and plantations without compensating the previous owners. The spoils were generally divided among party leaders loyal to Mobutu. Many of these new property owners simply sold the merchandise in stock and pocketed the money, without reordering or paying outstanding bills. The result was a severe shortage of goods. The situation became so desperate that this past October Mobutu felt obliged to invite the expatriate businessmen, whose property and businesses had been expropriated, to return to run their former enterprises.

Public services in Shaba have deteriorated so drastically that the government recently asked Gecamines, the Zaire state mining company, to take over the main hospital and run a new luxury hotel in Lu-

bumbashi, the provincial capital of Shaba. Gecamines has also set up a school for the children of its own employees; and its teachers appear to be the only ones in the province who are paid regularly. The churches were also asked some months ago to resume administration of the schools.

Spiraling inflation has placed nearly all products that are available out of reach for most people in Shaba. Moreover, corruption of government and party officials in Shaba has reached such proportions that few residents respect or are loyal to the regime in Kinshasa. In sum, the Mobutu regime has done virtually nothing for the rural areas and very little for the cities in Shaba—not unlike the situation in the rest of Zaire.

►A liberal application of repression.

Mobutu has managed to keep the lid on this smoldering pot through a liberal application of repression. His regime has frequently been cited by Amnesty International for gross violations of human rights. More recently, a report on human rights released by the state department maintains that "the use of force and threat of force in the interrogation of suspected criminals is reportedly common practice in Zaire." The State department report lists allegations of brutal treatment of political prisoners, extended incarceration without trial, "and even death of prisoners under interrogation." President Carter is being pressured to help Gen. Mo-

butu—who epitomizes the very type of leader whom Carter has criticized before the UN and elsewhere for violations of human rights.

It will be extremely difficult for the Carter administration to rationalize more aid to Gen. Mobutu. In addition to the daily violation of human rights in Zaire, Mobutu has been unable to forge a responsible and effective military. Economic and living conditions in both the rural and urban areas have steadily declined under his tutelage and his general mismanagement of the economy has left the country almost \$2 billion in debt. It will even be difficult for the U.S. to argue that Mobutu at least shares American respect for private property since his wholesale expropriations of farms and small businesses without compensation ironically goes well beyond anything that has occurred in Marxist Angola—whose constitution allows protection for portions of the private sector.

►Not even a reliable U.S. ally.

It will also not be easy for the Carter administration to justify further aid on the grounds of Mobutu's political reliability. He has been a good American ally only when it suits his purposes.

It did not suit his purposes in early 1975 when Mobutu surprised many by leading the Organization of African Unity (OAU) attack against Henry Kissinger and his newly appointed Assistant Secretary of State Nathaniel Davis. Nor did it suit his purpose in June 1975 when he expelled the U.S. ambassador, accusing him of intervening in Zaire's internal affairs. Some Zaire officers were even arrested as part of an alleged American plot. In addition, since 1973 Mobutu has developed close relations with China which, predictably, has supported him verbally (and perhaps materially) during the present crisis.

Given Mobutu's close ties with the U.S. and China, many were shocked this past December to learn that a Zairean delegation spent ten days in Moscow discussing a variety of matters with Soviet ministers

and technicians. The delegation signed an accord with the Soviets that established the principles for future economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation. Commercial accords were also signed as well as an agreement on maritime navigation.

To justify aid to Mobutu, the administration may be seeking to establish a principle based on the fact that the invasion allegedly originated outside of the country. State department spokesmen have pointed to Angola's culpability for logistical support and possible training of the Katangese. But this would be a dangerous principle for the U.S. to adopt in Africa, where today 19 nations offer sanctuary to political refugees from neighboring countries. Most of these refugees entertain hopes of returning home and many are preparing to do this militarily.

Nor will it be easy to rationalize further U.S. aid based on U.S. opposition to the ideology or political orientations of the invading Katangese. They have embraced such a wide variety of political causes during the past decade and a half in order to survive that nobody can confidently predict what beliefs, if any, they may hold today or will hold tomorrow. If the superpowers have learned anything during the past two decades about Africa it should be that it is impossible to deduce the political ideology of any country or exile movement by the national origin of the military equipment and weapons they may employ at a given time. The Katangese epitomize this lesson better than anybody.

If President Carter truly seeks to establish a new American approach to foreign policy he will have to demonstrate in Zaire that he is prepared to question past policies and assumptions. Carter's initial responses to Mobutu's requests for aid are not encouraging.

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