

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

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February 15, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*
SUBJECT: Your Meetings with Mao

Attached is a paper prepared by my staff that I think you will find helpful in preparing for your meetings with Chairman Mao-Tse-Tung.

This paper distills some of Mao's major philosophic and political themes drawn from his writings, statements and actions throughout his life. It seeks to give you the flavor of the man and his mind. And it suggests some of the topics that he is likely to discuss or you would find profitable in raising yourself.

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MEETINGS WITH MAO TSE-TUNG

Mao Tse-tung's stature as one of the 20th century's outstanding political figures derives from a combination of personal assertiveness, charismatic self-confidence, and a creative native intelligence. This man knows where he wants China to go, and has been pushing his country's social revolution for more than fifty years.

Mao's personality style combines audacity and the activist impulse with a skillful sense of political tactics: He has repeatedly shown a unique capacity to judge when to press, when to retreat and adopt a humble posture, how to build a broad coalition of support, and also an unflinching willingness to attack his opposition when his own position is strong. As he expressed this political style to Party leaders after surviving an attack on his policies in 1959:

"I shall not attack unless I am attacked; if I am attacked, I will certainly counterattack; I counterattack only after I am attacked. Up to now I have not given up this principle.

"I have now learned the art of listening. I always listen to others with forbearance for one or two weeks before I hit back. I advise you comrades to heed what others say. You may agree or disagree with me; that is your business. If you disagree, I'll make a self-criticism if I am wrong."

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Mao's peasant background is evident in his direct and earthy humor, which he often used to ridicule or disarm opponents. As he observed to his comrades after the 1959 political battle: "Now you'll all feel better after you break wind and empty your bowels." As well, however, he has the sensitivity to write appealing poetry, displays a good working knowledge of Chinese history, and has a capacity for insight and abstract social analysis which has produced a number of philosophical writings and a clear (if not necessarily attainable) vision of his country's future.

In your discussions with Mao, the Party Chairman is likely to approach issues at a general, philosophical level (leaving the details to Chou En-lai), and in a style that will reflect the above-noted personal characteristics.

Following are a series of social and political issues which we know to be of interest to Mao, given his strong expression of views on these matters. You are likely to find these views expressed in a variety of ways in his discourse, or as themes which may catch his interest.

I. Mao on the United States

Mao Tse-tung's general perspective on the United States might be characterized as follows: A once revolutionary power has degenerated as "the people" have lost power to the "monopoly capitalists." The U.S. ruling circles have transformed America into an imperialist country, but "the people" are now becoming politically conscious of their plight, and a revolutionary trend in the U. S. is beginning to develop.

Mao's earliest view of the United States was of a country that had successfully overthrown British colonial rule in a "protracted war" (such as Mao was to lead against the Japanese). In 1936, Mao told Edgar Snow that he "had first heard of America in an article which told of the American Revolution and contained a sentence like this: 'After eight years of difficult war, Washington won victory and built up his nation'." Mao also claims to have been exposed to the views of Lincoln, although some measure of the degree to which the Chinese leaders view American history in Marxist terms may be gauged by their interpretation that the American Civil War was fought by "capitalists" because they wanted to ensure a free labor market for exploitation at low wages. Had the slavery system been maintained, so this argument goes, the northern capitalists would have been faced with a labor shortage, while southern slave owners would have been at a competitive advantage because of their free labor supply.

During the mid-1940s, Mao--then the leader of a small but disciplined Communist insurgency fighting the Japanese in an uneasy "united front" with Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Government--sought to gain American material assistance for guerrilla operations (and to strengthen his position against the Nationalists). When the U. S. rebuffed his overtures for assistance, Mao's attitude turned toward hostility.

Mao has characterized the U. S. as an "imperialist" power since the late 1940s, when it was clear that we would continue to give exclusive support to Chiang Kai-shek. In his view we interfered in the Chinese civil war in 1948 when we transported Chiang's troops from Chungking to China's coastal cities, and gave the Nationalists weapons for their life and death struggle with the Communist armies.

Perhaps Mao's most powerful statement on the U.S. role in the Chinese revolution--revealing his capacity for biting irony and polemical attack--was made in September 1949. As his armies were sweeping to victory, Mao turned the knife on America's unsuccessful China policy by spurning Dean Acheson's view that because of China's population pressures the Communist revolution in China has an uncertain future:

"Do revolutions arise from overpopulation?... Were China's many revolutions in the past few thousand years also due to overpopulation? Was the American Revolution against Britain 174 years ago also due to overpopulation? Acheson's knowledge of history is nil. He has not even read the American Declaration of Independence. Washington, Jefferson and others made the revolution against Britain because of British oppression and exploitation of the Americans, and not because of any overpopulation in America."*

While there might have been some possibility of normalizing relations with the newly formed People's Republic of China in the early 1950s, the abandonment of the Truman/Acheson "let the dust settle" policy toward the Communist revolution after the onset of the Korean War locked the U.S. into two decades of confrontation with the PRC. In Mao's view, America has denied him final victory over his bitter adversary of more than 50 years of civil war.

Current Chinese Views of the U.S.

Mao's decision of late 1970 to extend to you an invitation to visit Peking, and to seek through negotiations a normalization of Sino-American relations, basically derives from a desire to deal with China's own security problems (in the form of a Soviet military threat, and Japan growing into an economic, political, and potentially military power) and to resolve the Taiwan issue. Yet he and Chou En-lai seem to feel that the current situation in which the United States finds itself is favorable to a limited Sino-American rapprochement.

Mao and Chou En-lai have expressed the view that the U.S. has learned the hard way that it cannot manipulate political affairs in Asia to its own advantage. They look at the unsuccessful efforts of the Roosevelt and Truman Administrations to prop up Chiang Kai-shek's Government in the 1940s, the military stalemate in Korea, and the Vietnam quagmire, as events which have so soured the U.S. on its active role in Asia that the political climate is now right for a substantial American withdrawal from the region.

* The full text of this revealing article is appended at Tab A.

Since the early 1960s the Chinese leaders have seen the possibility of weakening the Western alliance system. Their establishment of diplomatic relations with France in 1964 was designed to encourage trends to "national independence" among America's allies. Similarly, as Marxists, the Chinese probably assume that conflicts of economic interest between the U.S. and Japan provide a line of cleavage that can be struck to divide opponent states. By your visit the Chinese may seek to play on such trends.

In this same vein, the Chinese seem aware of American distrust of the Soviet Union as a lever which can be used to convince us that we share a common enemy. Undoubtedly their hope is that we can be persuaded that China constitutes no threat to the U.S., as does the Soviet Union, and that we will redeploy our forces from China's eastern flank to the Middle East and Europe. In this way China will no longer face a two front threat, while Russia will be confronted with a strengthened U.S. opponent on southern and western frontiers. China will then be in an improved position to deploy her limited nuclear forces against the Soviet threat on her northern border.

The Chinese, ever sensitive to areas of internal division within a country ("contradictions," in Mao's parlance) that may weaken an opponent's strength, are also paying close attention to racial tensions in the U.S., and to the political ferment on American campuses. Chou En-lai told an American student group that visited China in July 1971:

"In recent years Chairman Mao himself has paid attention to the American situation and he has also asked us all to note the fact that it can be said that the United States is now on the eve of a great storm. The question of how this storm develops, however, is your task, not ours. We can only tell you something of our hopes..."

Mao and Chou have indicated as well, however, that any anticipated social revolution in American is a long-term prospect. They realize China's immediate concerns can be dealt with most effectively through contacts with your Administration. They are sensitive enough to the American political scene to realize that your trip to China is likely to

be a positive benefit to your leadership. Mao and Chou have both observed to foreign visitors that they see your visit in relation to the 1972 Presidential campaign. They feel there is popular pressure in the U.S. for an improvement in Sino-American relations, and they see you motivated in part by a desire to respond to those pressures in order to win re-election. By extending to you an invitation to visit their country, they evidently view the prospect of your re-election as both likely and favorable to their interests. Mao Tse-tung is reported to have remarked:

✓ "Bad things can change into good things, and bad persons can become good persons. I like a person such as Nixon, but I do not like Social Democrats or Revisionists. These kinds of people say one thing and do another. Although Nixon has his cunning side, he is not as bad as the others, for his policy is more open."

✓ Both Mao and Chou, viewing our country in Marxist terms, assume you represent the "serious" and powerful economic interests which are the "real" source of power in the United States. This being the case, you can speak from a position of authority with directness. Mao told Edgar Snow that while you represent the "monopoly capitalists," the problems in Sino-American relations "would have to be solved with Nixon." Thus your visit is viewed as an occasion for substantial and authoritative discussions, the building of a longer term relationship with your Administration, and an opportunity to directly exchange views on a wide range of issues. And, as noted, Mao (and Chou) enjoy a direct intellectual scrap.

II. China in the International Arena

Over the past thirty years, Mao Tse-tung has shown considerable movement in his approach to international affairs--with his constant concern being China's national independence and security.

1944-45, Undercut American Support for the Nationalists, Balance the U. S. and the Soviets. In the last days of the war against Japan, while the Communists were an insurgent political movement outnumbered by Chiang Kai-shek's forces by 3:1, and where the CCP had indications that Stalin would not directly back them in a civil war, Mao sought ways of undercutting the exclusive American support for the Nationalists. He found sympathetic observers of his guerrilla armies in American officers of the "Dixie Mission," assigned to Yen-an in the search for more effective Chinese opposition to the Japanese. In January of 1945, in the hope of gaining military assistance from the Roosevelt Administration (and thus undercutting the American backing of Chiang Kai-shek) Mao and Chou En-lai made a private offer to General Wedemeyer to come to Washington in order to "interpret and explain the situation in China" to the President. This overture was ignored by American officials who wished to see a strong, united nationalistic China emerge in Asia as a counterweight to Soviet and Japanese influence. Chiang Kai-shek seemed at that time to be the leader most likely to create such a China.

1949, China Will "Lean to One Side." Despite Stalin's opposition to the CCP promoting civil war, and the Russian treaty of 1945 with the Nationalist government, Mao pressed his military operations against Chiang Kai-shek's armies in 1947. Two years later, as the CCP neared victory, Mao's concern was that the U. S. might intervene in the last phase of the civil conflict, or that Stalin might not support his leadership of a Communist Chinese state. For these reasons, in July of 1949 Mao proclaimed that the new China would "lean to one side"; that is, that the PRC would join the "socialist camp."

Mao did not find that Stalin welcomed this new addition to the Communist world with open arms, however. In December of 1949, Mao went to Moscow to negotiate a new Sino-Soviet treaty. Years later the Chairman told Party leaders of the struggle required to gain Stalin's support:

After the revolutionary victory, [Stalin] suspected that China would be like Yugoslavia and that I would become a Tito. Then I went to Moscow to conclude the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance [signed on February 14, 1950], but this involved a struggle. He [Stalin] did not want to sign it, finally agreeing to do so after two months of negotiations. When did Stalin begin to have confidence in us? It began in the winter of 1950-51, during the Resist-America Aid-North Korea Campaign. He finally came to believe that we were not Yugoslavia, and that I was not a Titoist.

1958-60, The Break with the Soviets. This commitment of China to the bipolar world struggle between Communism and Capitalism was to last barely the decade of the 1950s. In 1956, Khrushchev's attack on Stalin and the "cult of personality" proved to be a political embarrassment for Mao in China, where certain leaders of the CCP felt that Mao himself was promoting a "cult." As well, Khrushchev's initiative was seen by Mao as a personal affront in that Khrushchev did not inform him of the move ahead of time. Sino-Soviet tensions increased further in the wake of the Hungarian and Polish uprisings triggered by "de-Stalinization" as the Chinese sought to promote greater freedom for Bloc countries within the "socialist camp," to the anger of the Russians.

Mao was further embarrassed in 1956 to find that Khrushchev began to promote a "peace" line--"peaceful coexistence," "peaceful competition," "peaceful transition to socialism"--which contradicted Mao's policy prescriptions for China. In the summer of 1958, in an effort to force the Soviets to stand up for Chinese interests on the Taiwan issue, Mao promoted the crisis over the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. This Chinese test of Khrushchev's "revolutionary commitment," and events which followed, led to a breakdown of the Sino-Soviet alliance. As Mao recalled for Party leaders in 1962:

In the second half of 1958, Khrushchev attempted to block the China seacoast, to launch a joint Sino-Soviet fleet to dominate the coastal area, and to blockade us. Khrushchev came [secretly] to China because of this problem [in late July 1958]. Thereafter, Khrushchev supported Nehru in attacking us on the Sino-Indian border problem in September 1959, and a statement to this effect was issued by Tass. Khrushchev came

to China in October [1959, just after his meetings with President Eisenhower at Camp David], to attend the tenth anniversary of our national day, and he attacked us when speaking at a dinner party. This was followed [by a series of international Communist meetings] all of which concerned themselves with the dispute between Marxism-Leninism and Revisionism. During 1960 we fought with Khrushchev. You see, even between socialist nations and with Marxism-Leninism, such a problem as this has arisen.

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China's full break with the Russians came in the summer of 1960, when at the height of the agricultural crisis created by the Great Leap Forward, Khrushchev suddenly withdrew all Soviet technical assistance personnel and aid programs from China. This was viewed by Mao as a great act of betrayal; it confirmed his view of Khrushchev's "revisionism," and compounded the Chinese economic crisis.

Mao's hatred of the Soviets remains as a key factor (if not the key factor) in Mao's thinking today, and extends as much or more to Khrushchev's successors than to Khrushchev himself. It was, of course, under Brezhnev and Kosygin that "more than a million Soviet troops" (a Chinese quote) have been massed on China's borders.

The 1960s, China in an Era of "Great Upheaval, Great Division, Great Reorganization." Mao's response to Khrushchev's betrayal of the Sino-Soviet relationship began in the early 1960s with efforts to promote factional polemics within the International Communist Movement to erode support for Soviet "revisionism." This was combined with attempts to encourage revolutionary struggles among "third world" countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Neither of these approaches was very successful from the Chinese perspective, although Mao's vigorous attacks on Khrushchev's policies probably contributed to the Soviet Premier's downfall in 1964, and prevented the Soviets from convening a world meeting of Communist Parties to chastise the Chinese for being "dogmatists."

On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, when China withdrew from the world to fight domestic battles, CCP media revealed Mao's perception of the breakdown of the bipolar world of the 1950s.

The characteristic of the present world situation is that... a process of great upheaval, great division, and great reorganization is taking place. The revolutionary movement of the

people of the world is surging forward vigorously. . . . Drastic divisions and realignments of political forces are taking place on a world scale.

It was only in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution that Mao found himself able to begin to cope with this "process of great upheaval" and seek to shape the realignment of world political forces in a manner suitable for China's interests. Since 1969, there have been three major themes in China's approach to international relations:

1. China will seek to be self-reliant. The slogan "regeneration through one's own efforts," is the new watchword of the PRC's foreign policy, as well as a guideline for internal affairs. (Note: this slogan was used by Mao Tse-tung in the Yen-an days.)

2. The Soviet Union is a "Social-Imperialist" State. In the wake of the Sino-Soviet border clashes of 1969, the Chinese characterized the Russian leadership as "the new Czars." Mao is seeking to construct a united front against the Soviets out of a combination of disaffected Eastern European states, non-ruling Communist Parties hostile to Moscow, and any non-Communist states who will join in opposition to Russian power.

3. China will Speak for the Interests of the "Third World." Mao now sees China's natural allies as the colored and underdeveloped peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. He and Chou En-lai proclaim that China will never be a "super power," bullying other states or interfering in their internal affairs. In the UN this fall, the Chinese delegation sought to cultivate the smaller unaligned states; and substantial efforts have been made to establish strong bilateral relationships (through aid agreements, and political support) in such countries as Ethiopia, Sudan, Zambia and Tanzania in Africa, and Peru and Chile in Latin America.

III. Mao and Nuclear Weapons

Mao has taken an attitude toward nuclear weapons that while they are indeed instruments of mass destruction, fear of nuclear war should not paralyze the fighting will of the "revolutionary forces." He is sensitive to the psychological inhibitions on nuclear powers which limit their willingness to use such weapons. As he once said: "They [nuclear weapons] will not be used lightly." He has taken a posture of aggressive and self-righteous willingness to promote revolution by means well under the nuclear threshold.

At the same time, beginning in 1958, Mao has pressed a program of atomic weapons development for China. He seeks to attain a nuclear force which will deter any attack on China proper, render the country immune from nuclear blackmail (which he feels China suffered in Korea and in the Offshore Island crisis of 1958), give pause to other major powers who would compromise China's international interests, and inhibit non-nuclear powers from turning to the U.S. for security under the American "nuclear umbrella." (Should such countries accept American nuclear weapons on their territory, for example, they would then themselves become potential targets of a retaliatory Chinese strike.)

In 1946, Mao told Anna Louise Strong that the atom bomb was a "paper tiger." He said that while it was true that the bomb was a weapon of "mass slaughter," wars were decided by people, not bombs, and that people with a revolutionary will would fight on despite atomic weapons. In this same period he sought to buck up the fighting spirit of his armies by pointing out that Japan had surrendered at the end of World War II because the Soviet Union sent troops against her, not because the U.S. had used two atomic bombs against Japanese cities. He criticized "some CCP comrades" for their fear of the atomic bomb and their belief in the theory that "weapons decide everything." Mao's eventual victory over Chiang Kai-shek's armies -- which were armed with American weapons -- convinced Mao that his "paper tiger" thesis was correct.

Mao further sought to convince China's nuclear adversaries that because of his country's large population he did not fear an atomic attack:

I had an argument about [nuclear war] with Nehru [in 1954]. In this respect he is more pessimistic than I am. I told him that if half of humanity is destroyed the other half will still remain but imperialism will have been totally destroyed...

As late as 1965, Mao further reiterated the view that nuclear war would hardly mean the end of mankind. He observed to Edgar Snow that "he had read reports of an investigation by Americans who visited the Bikini Islands six years after nuclear tests had been conducted there... They found mice scampering about and fish swimming in the streams as usual... Probably there had been two bad years after the tests [Mao asserted], but nature had gone on. In the eyes of nature and the birds, the mice and the trees, the atom bomb was a paper tiger."

Such an attitude, it would appear, was designed to convey the message that China would not give up the revolutionary struggle because of a fear of nuclear weapons. In fact, however, the Chinese appear to have backed away from confrontations with the United States in Korea (in response to President Eisenhower's hint that atomic weapons might be used) and in the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1958, out of concern that atomic weapons might be used against them.

It was very likely in response to this sense of nuclear inferiority that Mao, in 1957, pressed the Soviets for assistance in developing an independent nuclear capability. When Khrushchev's partially positive response* indicated to Mao that the Soviets would use such assistance to control rather than to aid China, Mao pressed the Quemoy and Matsu confrontation of 1958 in hopes of discrediting Khrushchev's policy of "peaceful coexistence." When the U.S. turned out to be more than a "paper tiger" -- through its support for the Nationalists, and despite the Soviet nuclear protection of China -- Mao lost his calculated gamble. Khrushchev, in fear of Chinese adventurism, unilaterally cancelled the nuclear sharing agreement with China in June of 1959. Mao continued to press for the development of a Chinese nuclear weapons force, however. This effort first bore fruit with an atomic test in October 1964 -- on the very day that Khrushchev was ousted from power.

As China has developed her own nuclear weapons, official PRC statements have stressed four points:

1. China will never be the first to use such weapons. PRC officials have challenged the Soviets and U.S. to make similar "no first use" pledges.

*A Sino-Soviet nuclear sharing agreement was signed in October 1957. The Chinese later revealed, however, that they had asked the Russians "for a sample atomic bomb and technical data on its manufacture," but had been rebuffed on such direct aid.

2. The existing nuclear powers have no right to a "nuclear monopoly," and China's weapons program is designed to break that monopoly for her own defense and to create the circumstances in which negotiations might bring about the "complete, thorough, total, and resolute prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons."

3. The existing nuclear powers should dismantle their foreign bases, withdraw all their troops and atomic weapons to their home territory, and "adopt effective measures to prevent nuclear war."

4. China will never agree to participate in nuclear disarmament talks behind the backs of the non-nuclear countries. On an issue of such importance, all countries in the world, big or small, should have some say. China has a few nuclear weapons, but she will never join the so-called club of nuclear powers."

IV. Social Change Comes Only Through "Struggle"

Mao believes that social progress comes only through "struggle." In a philosophical treatise of 1937 he wrote that, "Changes in a society are due chiefly to the development of internal contradictions [in that society]." Mao seems to relish a good fight, and has shown a creative politician's ability to turn conflict situations to his advantage. In 1939 he wrote an essay entitled "To Be Attacked By The Enemy Is A Good Thing, Not A Bad Thing." He turned this perspective to the CCP's ultimate survival during the war against Japan by creating a united front against the foreign invader which prevented the Nationalists -- over-burdened with security problems -- from dealing their Communist "allies" in the united front a death blow.

Since coming to power, Mao has manipulated "class struggle" in Chinese society, and policy conflict among CCP leaders, so as to speed the modernization of Chinese society. This has been evident in a series of so-called "mass movements" -- such as the Great Leap Forward of 1958-1960, and the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1969 -- and also in Mao's political in-fighting and purging of leaders who have opposed his policies. As the Chairman observed in 1963: "The struggle between the socialist and capitalist roads [of national development] can become a driving force for social change." Mao rejects any abstract commitment to 'peace' as a political goal.

Complementing his stress on struggle, Mao has attacked the Confucian stress on social "harmony," which he believes kept China's peasants for centuries in a position of exploitation by the elite Mandarin political class. One of the issues in the Sino-Soviet dispute has been Mao's assertion that the "peaceful transition to socialism" through parliamentary politics is unlikely, and hence that Communist Parties should not tie their hands regarding the use of violent struggle as a means of achieving power.

One of the most profound differences in Chinese and American views of international affairs remains Mao's belief that China has both the "right" and the "duty" to assist revolutionary movements in other countries in their struggles for power through political and material aid.

While he asserts that China -- unlike the U.S. and Soviets -- will not send her troops abroad, he does not accept Western notions of international relations limited solely to state-to-state dealings. Through "people's diplomacy" and contacts among Communist Parties, he seeks to encourage social change through revolution even if it means subverting "bourgeois" governments with which China has state relations. This view acquires greater urgency, of course, when the Chinese feel that by supporting a subversive movement they can exclude from a country Western or Soviet influence.

In regard to such "unfinished revolutions" as are embodied in divided Korea or Vietnam, Mao is likely to take the attitude that both China and the U.S. should keep "hands off" and let events take the course that is "historically inevitable." It is not known how he might respond to suggestions that violence in these areas will tend to pull in outside powers who see their interests threatened -- thus enlarging the conflict -- or to the view that political violence is not the most effective way to promote enduring social change.

V. Mao on the Race Issue.

overestimates.

While the Chinese are sensitive to the political unacceptability of racist attitudes (they publicly attack, for example, white racist governments in Africa), they also sense that being a "colored" people they can use subtle racial appeals to create a common cause with the poor underdeveloped (colored) peoples of the world against the rich (white) Americans and Russians.

An example of such a subtle racist line is Mao's 1963 appeal to the "workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals, enlightened elements of the bourgeoisie and other enlightened personages of all colors in the world -- white, black, yellow, brown, and so forth" to unite in opposition to racial discrimination in the U.S. Mao sees the race problem in America as a profound "contradiction" which can be stimulated to divide and weaken a major adversary, perhaps creating the potential for a revolutionary situation. His 1963 statement saw "a gigantic and vigorous nationwide struggle" mounting throughout the U.S. -- "and the struggle keeps mounting." Mao interpreted this conflict in Marxist terms:

The rapid development of the struggle of the American negroes is a manifestation of the sharpening of class struggle...within the U.S.; it has increasingly aroused the anxiety of the U.S. ruling circles.

Again, viewing the world in terms of China's revolution, Mao felt that the "internal contradictions" in American society provided a point of cleavage which could be stimulated to divide and weaken China's (then) major opponent.

VI. Accent on Youth

Reflecting Mao's own early years as a rebellious student, the Chairman sees youth as playing an important role in social change. Young people are assertive, audacious, and uncommitted to the status quo. Mao has also expressed concern, however, that China's younger generation might not carry on the struggle for China's modernization because they are growing up in a peaceful society. As this was expressed in 1963:

. . . the question of cultivating successors [to lead China's revolution] has become increasingly urgent and important. Internationally, imperialism headed by the United States has placed its hope of realizing "peaceful evolution" in China on the corruption of our third and fourth generations. Who can say that this way of thinking of theirs is not without a certain foundation?

In 1965 Mao told Andre Malraux that China's youth "has to be put to the test" in order to develop their revolutionary commitment. During the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1969 the Chairman sought to "steel" China's younger generation in struggle by organizing them as Red Guards to attack his opponents in the Party leadership.

These views shape Mao's perception of social change in the world beyond China. He and Chou En-lai have obviously interpreted the current student political unrest in the United States as holding the same potential for revolution which they knew in their youth. As Chou En-lai observed to an American student group that visited China in July of 1971:

In our country you would be considered high intellectuals, and you have a heavy responsibility. It is your responsibility to link general truth with actual practice . . . Some of you have said that foreign experience cannot be mechanically brought over to your country. That is right. Chairman Mao tells us that one must rely on his own efforts. We cannot impose on you; neither can you just mechanically copy from us. [But] you can see that

America's youth is gradually raising their political consciousness. According to our experience, it is always intellectuals who start [a revolution] because it is easier for them to accept revolutionary theory and revolutionary experience from books. But for the movement to succeed, you must go among the workers . . .

VII. Personal Distrust of Intellectuals

Despite Mao's accent on youth and the fact that, as noted above, university students are regarded as high intellectuals in China, Mao carries a deep personal distrust of intellectuals. As a university student in Peking just "up from the provinces" in 1918, Mao was ridiculed by the big-city intellectuals for his heavy rural accent and his status as a librarian's assistant. The sense of personal humiliation he drew from this experience found expression in the 1940s when he criticized intellectuals who came to Yen-an to aid in the war against Japan for their arrogance and aloofness from peasants and workers.

In addition, China's intellectuals traditionally have applied themselves well to their studies, but have lagged in practical work, disdaining to dirty their hands and looking down on those who engage in physical labor. Mao has great contempt for such attitudes.

After coming to power, Mao was faced with the problem of at once needing the intellectuals for their technical skills in the process of modernizing China, yet fearing that their "bourgeois" and "anti-socialist" attitudes would make them unreliable allies -- or worse that they would dilute the revolutionary enthusiasm of Party members with whom they worked. To deal with this problem, in 1956-1957 Mao launched a campaign to "let a hundred flowers bloom, and a hundred schools of thought contend." This was an effort to encourage intellectuals to lend their creativity to China's development, and to criticize bureaucratic behavior on the part of Party and state functionaries, yet to be subject themselves to criticism for their "backward" thinking and behavior. This approach backfired on Mao in May of 1957 when China's intellectuals, many of whom had been educated in the West, criticized the very basis of Communist Party rule in China. Mao was forced to call a halt to the mutual-criticism campaign.

In the early 1960s, however, intellectuals again became critical of Communist Party rule in the context of the agricultural crisis created by the Great Leap Forward. Some even published indirect criticisms of Mao himself, comparing him to Stalin* or characterizing him as a mental case. Stung by their ridicule, Mao initiated the Cultural Revolution in late 1965 by attacking a playwright who had compared him to a dictatorial emperor of old; and in the summer of 1966 the Chairman manifested his complete disgust with intellectual life in the PRC by closing down China's university system and having the professors subject to mass criticism by their Red Guard students.

At present intellectual life in the PRC is just beginning to recover from the Cultural Revolution discipline of mass rote memorization of Mao's "little red book." Universities are beginning to reopen, yet students and teachers are still required to spend months or years on farms or in factories reforming their elitist and "anti-socialist" attitudes through physical labor. We do not know whether Mao has found a way to deal with the paradox of needing the intellectuals to develop China, yet controlling their attitudes of elitism, aloofness from physical labor, and bureaucratic tendencies (see below) which have for so long been a part of China's Mandarin heritage.

VIII. Man in a Bureaucratic Society

In contrast to many other Communists, Mao has doubts about the virtue of a Party and governmental bureaucracy as instruments of national development. His provincial peasant background has given him a deep distrust of the Mandarin class, and its traditional role as a bureaucratic administrative elite. As early as 1955 Mao complained to other Party leaders of the way in which the CCP was building a bureaucratic machine that was strangling local initiative:

Now there are dozens of hands interfering with local administration, making things difficult for the regions. Although neither the [Party] Center nor the State Council knows anything about it, the departments

*It should be noted that Mao continues to pay respect to Stalin as a great national leader and revolutionary. He has said that despite the "30%" of Stalin's deeds which were in error, the 70% of things he did which were good for the revolution in Russia deserve recognition and honor.

[of the Central Government] issue orders to the provincial and municipal governments ... Forms and reports are like floods. This situation must change, and we must find a way to deal with it.

Mao initially tried to decentralize the government system during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) by creating self-sufficient "people's communes" and organizing the population into "guerrilla warfare"-style semi-autonomous units structured along military lines. When this movement ran into deep trouble in the early 1960s, leaders of the Party and state resisted Mao's policies. In the Cultural Revolution Mao finally decided to pull apart these bureaucracies which were thwarting his efforts to decentralize administration.

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This enduring effort of the Chairman is based on a view that bureaucracy thwarts popular initiative, making people passive and dependent on guidance from organizational superiors. His own activist and "struggle" approach to life makes him convinced that if China's people are only given greater opportunity to take initiative, a tremendous creative force of 800,000,000 people will be released to modernize Chinese society.

For all of Mao's almost romantic beliefs in the creative energies of his people, however, he exhibits a basic distrust of genuine popular political initiative. While he has repeatedly encouraged "mass campaigns" such as the Cultural Revolution in which people are directed to criticize Party bureaucrats, these are consciously structured and manipulated affairs organized by Mao at the political "center."

In this regard, Mao has indicated that he feels China has something to learn from the U.S. in developing a decentralized and relatively unbureaucratic system of government. As Edgar Snow paraphrased Mao in late 1970:

Chairman Mao said that China should learn from the way that America developed, by decentralizing and spreading responsibility and wealth among the 50 states. A central government could not do everything. China must depend on regional and local initiatives. It would not do to leave everything up to him [Mao].

IX. Distrust of Peasant Initiative

Part of Mao's unwillingness to tolerate genuine mass initiative seems to be based on the fact that China's "masses" are largely peasants with minimal education, potentially conservative attitudes, local economic interests, and parochial family social ties. As a Marxist he sees the working class as the only group really committed to industrialization; and as a Chinese he understands that the peasants have a "spontaneous tendency toward capitalism" characteristic of small producers.

A further reason for Mao's distrust of peasant initiative is his fear that they are vulnerable to manipulation by intellectuals and bureaucrats. Being of peasant background himself, Mao is aware of the rural population's traditional sense of inferiority before men of literacy, given the age-old prestige of the Confucian scholar-official in Chinese society.

X. Collective Life Versus Individualism

Like most Chinese, Mao equates "individualism" with "selfishness." One of the more distorted American interpretations of Chinese culture with a Western bias has been the view of the Chinese as rugged individualists. As late as 1949, even an American Secretary of State (Dean Acheson, in the White Paper on China), looked forward to a time when the Chinese people, only recently come under Communist control, would reassert their "democratic individualism." In fact, group life -- whether it be that of the family, school class, or clan -- has always predominated over individual liberty.

In Mao's China, group pressures are constantly brought to bear on the individual through "criticism -- self-criticism" meetings and political study groups. This situation is further manifest in a down-playing of competition between individuals (as in sporting events) which is seen as fostering "individualism," and a disdain of material incentives for labor, which is denounced as promoting selfishness and personal greed.

At the same time, however, Mao lays great stress on "self-reliance" and individual effort. His vision of China is of a country organized into self-sufficient rural communes where a strong collective spirit will encourage each individual to give his all for the progress of the group -- and thus himself. But Mao does not see individual achievement as worthy apart from group collective purposes.

Thus, you are unlikely to find Mao responsive to assertions of the virtue of such Western economic concepts as wage incentives and the competition of the marketplace as methods to promoting economic development. Indeed, Mao has attacked the Yugoslavs and Soviets for "restoring capitalism" in their countries by resorting to market competition and wage incentives.

(It remains a fact, however, that a great many Chinese today would fall into the category of "selfishness" decried by Mao. In places such as Hong Kong, for example, where the rigid social organization of Mao's China is not present, there is a constant scramble by individual Chinese for financial advantage. This is often at the expense of other Chinese. To be sure, those engaged in the scramble may be seeking benefits for their families rather than individual advantage, but the net effect is the same. The phenomenon exists even in Mao's China, as demonstrated by references to the "spontaneous tendency toward capitalism" of the peasantry, and the self-seeking struggles for power of the Red Guards.)