When Henry Kissinger departed for his secret trip to Beijing in July 1971, the use of Islamabad as the point of take-off was symbolic, both of the past and of the future. Together with French and Rumanian officials, Pakistani had served as intermediaries in the delicate manoeuvring that preceded the Kissinger-Nixon visits to the People's Republic of China. This service, moreover, had been performed at a time when the United States and China found themselves on the same side in the India-Pakistan confrontation over Bangladesh. Neither Washington nor Beijing was able to support Pakistan effectively, but the decision to tilt in the direction of Islamabad was to have significant repercussions. Less than a month after Kissinger's departure for Beijing, India and the Soviet Union signed a friendship pact signalling the onset of an alignment that still continues.

Today, more than thirteen years later, US-PRC relations have gone through several phases, but since 1975-76 at least, the attitudes and policies of both nations toward South Asia have remained relatively constant (setting aside short-term swings in US-Pakistan relations) and essentially compatible. In contrast to their divergencies of policy in many parts of the Third World, the United States and China are pursuing a relatively similar path in South Asia. Before exploring the nature of that path and the primary factors sustaining it, let me examine the current status of Sino-American relations, so that the South Asian policies of both nations can be put in a larger context.
The Course of US-PRC Relations

The process of initiating US-PRC official contacts at the highest level begun in 1971-1972 culminated in formal recognition and an exchange of diplomatic representatives at the beginning of 1979. The timing was significant. Chinese leaders had determined to "punish" Vietnam because of its drive to control all of Indochina. Russian reaction to a Chinese strike against Vietnam, even one limited in nature, was uncertain. To be armed with US recognition (and by implication, US support for the challenge to Hanoi) might provide China with additional insurance against any overt Soviet response.

Thus, it is not surprising that in this period, Chinese leaders spoke expansively about the need for a global united front to block Russian hegemonism. That front would be composed of the United States, the so-called Second World (advanced industrial states other than the US) and as much of the Third World as possible, including China. An accompanying theme was frequently heard in the United States: a strategic alliance should be fashioned with the PRC against the USSR. Since the Soviet Union represented a threat to the world at large and was the only nation that could exact great physical damage upon the United States, and since the United States was no longer able to counter the Soviet menace effectively alone, allies in Asia as well as in Europe were essential.2

These views did not go unchallenged. In the mid-1970s, the United States had occupied an enviable strategic position between the two major Communist states. From a centrist vantage-point, it had been able to communicate with each at a time when their capacities to communicate with each other had been exceedingly limited. Realising the value of such a position, many Americans, in and out of government, argued for policies of "even-handedness" in dealing with Russia and China. Acknowledging that the USSR was a global power whereas China was at most a regional force, they asserted that American national interests would best be served if relations with both states
could be advanced in a roughly parallel fashion. Alignment with China against Russia, they insisted, might add to rather than subtract from American global strategic burdens since it would lead to greatly increased complications in American-Soviet relations without any guarantee that the Chinese would or could play a significantly larger strategic role. Nor was there any certainty that Chinese domestic and foreign policies would remain unchanged. In addition, most Asian states did not relish the prospect of a militarily strong China that could more effectively translate its fervent nationalisms into policies threatening the status quo throughout the region.³

The exponents of even-handedness were generally dominant during the early and middle phases of the Carter administration. Plans went forward for the simultaneous ratification of SALT II and diplomatic recognition of the PRC. Most-Favoured-Nation status was to be granted to both communist powers to advance economic relations. Then came Afghanistan, an event placing the Carter administration on the defensive. SALT II had to be withdrawn from Congressional consideration. Augmented defense expenditures had to be pledged. And there could be no thought of MFN status for the USSR. To the President as well as to others, the tilt toward the PRC became more attractive. The trip to China of Secretary of Defense Harold Brown was but one sign of the new direction.

In the light of the protracted debate over China policy in the United States, it is ironic that the question of a US-PRC strategic relationship was dealt with most resolutely in Beijing, the earlier pronouncements of Deng Xiaoping and others notwithstanding. Beginning in 1981, China outlined a new foreign policy that specifically eschewed alliance in favour of a stance that was defined as one of independence and nonalignment. As in an earlier era, although with much less militance, Chinese leaders announced that they intended to stand aloof from both superpowers, criticise each when the situation warranted condem-
nation. China's commitment would be with the Third World of which it was a part. Under this banner, it would fight for "global peace and justice."4

As noted, the rhetoric accompanying the new policy was reminiscent of that employed in the 1960s. As for the Sino-Soviet split, Beijing had taken a "plague on both your houses" attitude toward the United States and the Soviet Union. It was during this era that Mao and others proclaimed the concept of Three Worlds for the first time. Since Soviet leaders had destroyed the socialist camp by advancing "fascist, social imperialist policies" and the desire for independence was growing among the allies of the United States—especially those belonging to the advanced, industrial community—the world was now divided into three parts: the First World, namely, the two superpowers; the Second World, encompassing the major capitalist states except the United States; and the Third World—all others, but primarily those newly emerging states for whom economic development was a supreme desiderata. Until the so-called Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution produced unprecedented turmoil in Chinese domestic politics and virtually destroyed China's international credibility in addition to isolating it from the world, Chinese spokesmen regularly castigated Moscow and Washington in unmeasured terms, and called upon the rest of the world to band together in meeting the threat of imperialism and social imperialism.

Despite the rhetorical similarities between China's foreign policies in the 1960s and the 1980s, however, some important differences of substance exist. Today, Chinese leaders emphasize that policies of nonalignment should not be interpreted as policies of equidistance between the two superpowers. When speaking to an American audience in particular, individuals like Zhao Ziyang assert that China knows from whence the primary threat comes, with the clear implication that it is the Soviet Union, not the United States that poses the gravest danger to Chinese security. It is interesting, however, that when speaking to Third World representative, Chinese spokesmen have preferred another explanation for shunning equidistance. China will assign respon-
sibility in accordance with the actions of the major powers in each specific instance, acting on principle, not on the basis of an effort to balance the PRC position in a mechanistic fashion.

Despite the insistence that the PRC does not seek an equidistant stance between Moscow and Washington, and that it does not intend to play either an American or a Russian card in cultivating its relations with the superpowers, it is clear that China has moved away from the advocacy of a global united front voiced in earlier times. Why?

One explanation centres upon the thesis that the initial policies of the Reagan administration worried and angered Chinese leaders. The three T's, it is said, provoked a reconsideration of China's policies toward the United States: Taiwan, Trade and Tennis. Unquestionably, President Reagan's affinity for Taiwan and his suggestion during the 1980 campaign that relations with the Taiwan government might be upgraded greatly upset Beijing. Ironically, however, the concessions subsequently made by the Reagan administration in the August 17, 1982 agreement exceeded those previously offered. To be sure, the pledge to progressively reduce arms sales to Taiwan quantitatively and qualitatively, looking to a "final resolution," was tied in the American view to China's acceptance of a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue. But the vague wording on the latter matter did not bind the PRC specifically to such a commitment, as Chinese leaders were quick to stress.

Issues of trade and technology transfer have emerged as thorny problems despite general advances in Sino-American economic intercourse. Similar problems, however, are on the horizon of Sino-Japanese relations and relations with Europe, as the global industrial revolution exerts ever greater pressures on all of the advanced industrial societies. And despite their annoyance, the current PRC leaders are deeply committed to turning outward for science and technology, with Japan and the West the chief targets. The concerns, moreover, are by no means one-sided. China's unwillingness to live up to signed trade agreements and
its insistence in some instances upon "red zone" technology have caused unhappiness in Washington.

The defection of Hu Na, a rising young Chinese tennis star, caused a loss of face for the PRC that was resented, particularly since she was granted the status of a political refugee. This case, widely publicised, raised the broader issue of how defection cases would be handled, and what costs the Chinese were prepared to bear as the price of sending thousands of young intellectuals abroad—a question not yet definitively answered.

Indeed, none of the specific issues confronting Sino-American relations during the Carter and first Reagan administrations have been resolved, and some could become more troublesome. The Taiwan Relations Act, for example, has broad bipartisan support, and unless political conditions on Taiwan deteriorate seriously or a peaceful solution to the issue of PRC-Taiwan relations is reached by the parties most directly concerned, the United States will continue to furnish defensive arms to the Taipei government. While the principal trade issue relates to textiles at present, many other products could soon be involved, given China’s export-oriented economic policies. And while there is not an issue comparable to that of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, any substantial brain drain would raise concern in China. Nor is there an absence of grievances, real or potential, on the American side. Most Americans do not take kindly to being equated with the Soviet Union as a threat to global peace. Reciprocity, moreover, especially with respect to the desire of American students and scholars for access to research and training facilities in China, is a rising concern.

The Basic Rationale for Contemporary PRC Foreign Policy

The fundamental reasons for a shift in Chinese foreign policy after 1980, however, did not flow from the specific concerns briefly outlined above. Indeed, even if these concerns were to disappear, Chinese foreign policy would not undergo major changes at this point. Two far-reaching considerations support...
current policies. The first relates to matters of military security. Any strategic alliance with the United States against the Soviet Union would represent for China a high cost-high risk policy. The USSR could not be expected to stand by idly while such a development unfolded. Even more than in recent years, it would augment its Far Eastern military forces, positioning a requisite portion of these against China—as it has recently done against Japan. To be compelled to match such a build-up, China would have to alter its priorities, devoting more attention to a rapid military build-up than it wishes.

This is not to assert that the PRC leaders are uninterested in military modernisation. On the contrary, from the United States and elsewhere, they are seeking military and dual-use technology of a very high order, and the current exhortation to the PLA is to move more rapidly in modernisation efforts. But if the critical drives for agricultural and industrial development are not to be crippled, military expenditures must be kept in line. The process must be stretched out. PRC leaders realise, of course, that for the foreseeable future, they will not be able to compete with the USSR in offensive capacities or global thrust. Increasingly, moreover, they have come to the conclusion that their defensive capabilities make any overt Soviet attack most unlikely. They are also aware, however, that under present conditions, lessened Soviet pressure is improbable. Indeed, Beijing appears to have decided that some reduced tension in American-Soviet relations would be in China’s interest since it might make possible greater Soviet flexibility with respect to its military and political posture in Asia. Thus, in recent months, Chinese spokesmen have repeatedly urged a resumption of US-USSR negotiations. The previous analysis of the United States as a declining power, and the call for wariness in countering Soviet overtures have been muted.  

A second basic factor underwriting China’s new foreign policy relates to political security. It is no secret that China’s top leaders, in the course of attempting to change profoundly the
nation's past economic course, must worry about challenges from their flanks. On the one hand, more orthodox Maoists believe that the revolution is being abandoned, with capitalism acquiring a foothold despite pledges that socialism is being enhanced. On the other hand, a rising number of Chinese, especially among the youthful intellectuals, have grown cynical about the party and government. Witnessing repeated upheavals and changes, they have a limited commitment to Marxism-Leninism, and are inclined in many cases to believe that there are alternative paths of modernisation that are better. Under such circumstances, an alliance with the United State—that foremost "capitalist" power—would greatly exacerbate domestic uncertainties, and render the struggle to defend socialism infinitely more complex.

There is a final factor that figures prominently into current PRC foreign policy. Since China is not now and will not be for many decades a global power, it must seek an extension of its power through means other than military. Thus, an effort to identify itself with the needs of the Third World is logical, however diverse in fact those needs are. Moreover, nonalignment is invariably an expression of nationalism, and nationalism is the only political expression that remains potent in a society that has lost faith in Marxism, repeated exhortations to the contrary.

These constitute the primary reasons for contemporary Chinese foreign policy, and because that policy is broadly in line with Chinese national interests, there is good reason to assume that in its basic outlines, it will remain intact for the indefinite future. Yet one should be careful to distinguish between simplistic rhetoric and the more complex realities that govern Chinese thoughts and actions. In practice, China's policy is one of tilted nonalignment, and the tilt is toward Japan and the West, most especially the United States. In 1984, trade with the United States will total approximately 5.5 billion and while that is only one-half China's trade with Japan, it is considerably larger than the 1.2 billion PRC-USSR trade. There are some 12,000 PRC students and specialists studying in the United States. Contrast this with the agreement
to exchange 80 students on each side earlier concluded between Chinese and Russian representatives. Other cultural exchanges between the United States and the PRC are now commonplace; they have recommenced on a very small scale between Beijing and Moscow. More importantly, a low-level military relationship is enroute between the United States and China, with sales of defensive weaponry, military training and calls of American naval vessels in Chinese ports involved. China insists that this relationship be considered essentially commercial rather than strategic, but it currently contemplates no such interaction with the Soviet Union, and certain aspects of the relation go well beyond commercialism.

While conflict between the PRC and the USSR is a most remote possibility, a close relation based upon mutual trust is at least equally remote. Two empires, each plagued with massive problems but sustained by the availability of a full range of coercive instruments and a powerful nationalism, face each other at their most vulnerable points, and with no buffer state system to cushion the contact. The Soviet Union is very unlikely to satisfy the PRC with regard to any of the three “obstacles” blocking normalised Sino-Soviet relations: removal of Soviet forces from outer Mongolia and other points along the border; an end to military assistance to Vietnam; and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Yet each of these demands is vital in Chinese eyes to PRC security. It is to be noted that Russia has achieved a far more pervasive containment of China than did the United States at the zenith of its efforts in the 1950s. In addition to the 400,000-500,000 Soviet troops on the Chinese border armed with the most modern weapons, the USSR encircles the PRC with such satellite regimes as those of Mongolia and Afghanistan. Its alliance with Vietnam, moreover, is of particular concern to China since it permits the Vietnamese to challenge China in a region historically regarded by Beijing as within its sphere of influence. To prevent a similar occurrence in North Korea, China has been willing to pay a considerable price.
Policies in South Asia: General Considerations

With this setting in mind, let us examine the points of similarity and difference marking US and PRC policies toward South Asia. At the outset, several general observations are in order. For the United States, the South Asian subcontinent has never been an area of primary importance, whether the measurement be economic, political or strategic. Within the Pacific-Asian region, Northeast Asia "Assumes the greatest significance in terms of US calculations. Here, American economic interests rival those with western Europe, and here also are to be found those political-strategic alliances that underwrite the balance of power is Asia. It is in Northeast Asia that the United States, the USSR, Japan and China come into closest interaction with each other, with the complex responses ensuing from their relations determining the level of tension within Asia as a whole.

Southeast Asia ranks next in importance for the United States, if we omit West Asia from this analysis. While the relative significance of Southeast Asia to the United States has been the subject of intense debate for many years, and periodically Washington has determined to reduce drastically the American presence in that region, such decisions have never been implemented over time. A reluctance to commit American land armies to the Asian continent certainly remains strong, product of experiences in Korea and Vietnam. The Guam Doctrine of 1969 continues to be the governing principle with respect to US security commitments. The assumption is that in the event of need, the United States would assist its allies by employing air and sea power, counting upon the effectiveness of their ground forces. This fact, however, has not precluded a renewed security guarantee to Thailand in company with a Chinese commitment. Nor has there been any reduction of American forces in the Philippines.

Meanwhile the enhanced Soviet military presence in the region, the growing role of China through its newly improved relation with a majority of the ASEAN community and its confrontation with Vietnam, and the extensive economic activities of Japan have
made Southeast Asia a region of increasing political-strategic importance. The economic factor adds to American’s interest. The six states comprising ASEAN are scheduled to be among the most rapidly growing economies in the world over the next several decades. One projection indicates that US-ASEAN trade alone will reach approximately $485 billion by the year 2000.

Within the South Asian region, American interests have been essentially strategic, focusing upon two concerns: the Indian Ocean—that artery through which passes oil destined for America’s East Asian allies, and Pakistan—the integrity of which deters further southward expansion of Soviet power. It should be remembered, however, that US concern with the Indian Ocean is relatively recent, and that it was the Afghanistan invasion by the USSR that revitalized an American interest in providing substantial military assistance to Pakistan. An earlier US policy of supporting Pakistan so as to create an equilibrium in South Asia was abandoned after 1971. The United States was prepared to accept India as the dominant state in the region. Equally important, Washington did not choose to challenge the Soviet role in India, seeing in the Soviet-Indian alignment no threat to its own vital interests. Nothing could have symbolised more clearly than this the low priorities given to South Asia in American foreign policy.

For China, South Asia has assumed somewhat greater importance, but by no means equal to that of East Asia. China’s principal concerns in the region have also been strategic, not economic or political. At an early point, to be sure, Chinese leaders were prepared to work with Nehru as well as U Nu and Sukarno in developing a set of principles that would govern relations among states having different socio-economic and political systems. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, while often honoured in the breach, were intended to serve as a model for Third World relations in particular. In the early and mid-1950s, China was torn between adherence to the socialist camp “led by the Great Soviet Union” and participation in a united front of emerging nations.
seeking to challenge the existing world order. In the end, it was the latter strategy that prevailed, but Chinese nationalism dictated that India was not to be a part of that united front.

Indeed, the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 and China's close ties with Pakistan together with its strong opposition to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan are all rooted in the Chinese determination to protect and preserve the Chinese empire against external threats. The Chinese memory of earlier British and Russian intrusions into Tibet and Xinjiang mixes with knowledge of the precarious loyalties of the Tibetans and other Central Asian peoples to the Han. The fierce determination of China's recent rulers to establish their rule firmly over territories determined by them to be within historic China, moreover, blends well with principles of centralisation and uniformity characterising the post-1949 Chinese Leninist-nationalist state.

If China's interest in South Asia is almost exclusively strategic, it is also fundamentally defensive. Unlike its attitude toward Southeast Asia—and portions of Northeast Asia—China does not view this region as one traditionally within China's sphere of influence. Given the cultural and ethnic structure of the region, moreover, there are few targets of opportunity for political penetration. Even with respect to the communist parties of South Asia, in contrast to the situation in Southeast Asia, Chinese influence has generally been minimal. There are, or have been pro-Chinese communist parties in Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, but they have never been particularly significant. An occasional opportunity to exploit tribal grievances, such as those of the Naga, has presented itself, but in the main, China has had to depend upon orthodox state-to-state relations rather than those of people-to-people or comrade-to-comrade in seeking to forward its interests.

An additional observation is important. Until very recently, South Asia lacked any indigenous regional organisation. The emergence of SARC (South Asian Regional Cooperation) dates only from 1983, and the potentialities of this organisation have
not yet been tested. The major South Asian States, and notably India, have wanted the focus to be upon bilateral relations. Insofar as external states are concerned, this situation had built-in potentials for tension. Given the internal rivalries, it has been necessary to choose sides; one cannot have balanced bilateral relations, especially in the light of the perennial Indian-Pakistan hostility. Second, despite the insistence upon bilateral relations and the demand that South Asia as a region be treated separately, in its own right, so to speak, the South Asian states themselves have felt it necessary to turn outward, whether for reasons of security, economics or politics. It should not be surprising, therefore, that external powers have responded in kind, fashioning their policies toward the states of the region in accordance with extra-regional considerations.

One final general consideration of major importance relates to China's potential as a military and economic power. China's bid for military technology from the West, especially the United States, is being watched with more than casual interest by most South Asian governments. The possibility of the PRC's being able to advance its timetable of military modernisation with American help naturally disturbs such states as India. Such prospects may be exaggerated, but it is well known that Chinese military leaders have been seeking very high level technology, in some cases technology not even made available to America's NATO allies.

This concern blends with an apprehension that with China undertaking a sustained campaign to tap Japanese and western technology, the PRC may suddenly become a truly formidable competitor in the economic realm. China's admission to the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and other international funding agencies causes worry, specially since the Chinese have clearly signalled that they will soon seek large loans, thereby competing for available funds with others, including the major South Asian states. China has also made it clear that its economic strategy will be an export-oriented one, and already in such cri-
tical fields as textiles, it is rapidly expanding its overseas mar-
kets. The competition with South Asian exporters is likely to be
intense.

It should not be overlooked that in its modernisation drive, the
PRC faces a number of complex problems, and the current experi-
mentation is both bold and risky. Stubborn economic problems
and resulting political crises could render China less formidable
than many observers contend. Nevertheless, if a nation of one bil-
lion people continues on the march—not under the discredited
Maoist banners, but under those of a mixed economy with ample
room preserved for individual initiatives—is there not reason for
concern on the part of other developing societies?

Relations with India

This is an appropriate point to turn to US-India relations because
most of the issues just set forth involve the United States, directly
or indirectly. Ideally, the United States would have preferred a
South Asia posing minimal demands, a region where the national
units were sufficiently compatible so that it did not have to make
choices, and with the region as a whole underwriting stability
in West Asia as well as serving as a barrier against Soviet expansion.
If the unity of British India could have been preserved, it is possible
that the United States could have developed policies of sustai-
ned economic and strategic support. There were no inseperable
ideological or political barriers to such a course, although neither
Nehru nor his daughter found America compatible with their own
moves.

In the absence of a unified South Asia, however, balance-of-
power considerations encompassing broader regions inevitably
assumed importance. The support of Pakistan not only came to
represent for the United States a means of blocking Soviet advan-
ces, but also held out the hope for strengthening West Asia.
When India, in response, shifted from its original “neutralist”
stance to one of a solft alignment with the Soviet Union, the
linkages between South Asia and global politics were given added
complexity.
As noted earlier, after 1971, the United States was prepared to acknowledge the dominance of India in the subcontinent, but India has remained suspicious. Thus, in addition to staunchly opposing any assistance to Pakistan, it has taken umbrage whenever American policies threatened involvement, especially of a security nature, with such states as Sri Lanka or Bangladesh. New Delhi has had its own Monroe Doctrine for South Asia. If there is to be external involvement, it must be for and with India.

Could the end of Mrs. Gandhi's era make a difference? Probably not, at least in the short to middle term. Instinctively, Mrs. Gandhi was anti-American in a way which may not be true of her son. Nor is the future role of the Nehru-Gandhi family in Indian politics clear. Indeed, the general course of Indian politics is impossible to predict at this juncture. Yet the impersonal considerations outlined above are likely to prevail. Neither Indian-Pakistan rivalry, nor India's determination to reduce the relations between outside nations and the smaller states of South Asia to a minimum—especially those of a political-strategic nature—is likely to disappear. Only a political upheaval that shattered India's own integrity as a state—a development to be deplored by all parties—could drastically alter the probabilities.

The climate of Sino-Indian relations is not radically different from that of American-Indian relations, although in terms of immediate issues and that value factor that we call culture or national character, variations exist. Like the United States, China never forgets India's special relation with the USSR. The memory of Soviet unhappiness with what they privately termed excessive Chinese nationalism during China's 1962 conflict with India, still angers the Chinese, being considered an unforgivable Soviet betrayal. Naturally, China's commitments to Pakistan stem from these considerations. And the border issues with India have not disappeared. Theoretically, these should be easily resolved since the prevailing status quo is more or less acceptable to both sides. Political considerations in India, however, make any concessions difficult. China does not fear India although it is
naturally unhappy about the Indo-Soviet relationship. With no threat perceived nor any signal advantages in an improved Indian relationship, it is not disposed to make significant concessions to obtain more friendly relations. This attitude is buttressed by the far-reaching cultural differences separating Indian and Chinese elites, differences considerably greater than those between American and Indian elites.

Relations with Pakistan

Despite the fact that it is the primary beneficiary of the problems in India’s relations with the United States and the PRC, Pakistan cannot be satisfied with the current situation. For Islamabad, the problem with its relations with the United States will always revolve around two factors: consistency and credibility. On no less than three occasions in the past twenty years, the United States has suddenly reversed course, cutting off arms sales to Pakistan. It is thus not surprising that Zia gave short shrift to the Carter administration’s modest arms proposal after the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan, making it clear that in view of the American record, a more expansive offer would be required to warrant the risks. Such an offer was later forthcoming from Washington, but Pakistan’s guard remains up. Islamabad pays for its arms purchases at regular rates, hews to nonalignment as a general course, and continues to fashion a decidedly independent policy toward West Asia.

Pakistan now realises that under any American administration, US policies toward it will be partly contingent upon global and regional conditions not under its control. It also knows that US-Pakistan relations will continue to be highly asymmetrical as well as being subject to periodic Congressional scrutiny with its human rights and nuclear policies sources of potential trouble. And from an American standpoint, the political future of Pakistan remains a variable of significance. Can a military government pledged to a supraparty, Islamic state hold power for the indefinite future, or might there be a turn toward the secular centre or the Islamic right?
Pakistan's concerns with China are different from those with the United States. China is credible, but it is not capable of providing Pakistan with the required military and economic assistance. It was China that became Pakistan's major source of arms in the 1970s, and from Beijing, Pakistan learned the virtues of self-reliance. But in the event of a major regional crisis, China would be most unlikely to expose itself to serious risks on behalf of Pakistan, and indeed, it does not have the means to do so.

Both the United States and China applaud the basic principles upon which Pakistan is currently standing in discussions relating to Afghanistan—namely, the withdrawal of Soviet troops, non-interference in Afghan politics, and international guarantees for the safe and honourable return of Afghan refugees to their homes. Aid in various forms, moreover, is being given to the Afghan freedom fighters by both parties. With Pakistan serving as refuge (and privileged sanctuary) for nearly three million Afghans, the Soviet invasion has greatly increased the burdens and risks for Pakistan in certain respects. On the other hand, it has dampened the separatist movements with which the country has long been plagued. In any case, the United States and China can be expected to oppose any political settlement that does not include the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan while keeping aid to the Mujahedeen active but limited and discrete.

Relations with Other South Asian States

With respect to Pakistan, as in the case of India, American and Chinese policies are compatible, and in considerable degree complementary, not as the result of consultative planning but as a product of separate evaluations of national interests. Broadly speaking, this is also the case in terms of relations with the other states of South Asia. China has been solicitous of the Himalayan states—Nepal and Bhutan—to ensure that the buffers between India and China have no reason for unfriendliness toward Beijing. Similarly, it has sought cordial relations with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, with care taken not to allow political connections or differences in political system to become obstacles to effective
state-to-state relations. Such policies have been generally successful, especially since India has had problems in varying degree in its relations with virtually all of the other states of the subcontinent and the USSR has also become involved in the internal politics of certain South Asian states.

The United States has followed a course similar to that of China while being forced to contend with fewer handicaps. In recent years, the American emphasis has been upon expanded economic and cultural ties as governments like those of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have experimented with more open economic policies. American protectionism remains a cloud on the horizon, but the economic path now being traversed by Southeast Asia illustrates new possibilities for developing societies, and in various parts of South Asia, Japan has begun to play a major role, with South Korea and other Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs) providing increasing competition.

Conclusion

Sino-American relations have undergone a succession of changes in the past three decades. Bitter enmity gradually gave way to a cautious exploration of mutual interests, culminating at the end of the 1970s in full diplomatic relations and the suggestion of a united front against Soviet expansionism. At present, a retreat from that position has occurred, and China has set the current tone with its policies of tilted nonalignment.

In many parts of the Third World, American and Chinese policies are in some degree of conflict. South Asia, however, represents a region where the policies of the two countries are largely compatible, even mutually supportive. To a considerable extent, this is due to considerations that go beyond South Asia, and most especially to a mutual interest in preventing further Soviet penetration or influence southward. At various times, moreover, specific Indian policies—ranging from pressure upon Pakistan to recognition of the Vietnamese-sponsored Heng Samrin government in Cambodia—have evoked strong opposition from both Washington
and Beijing. And while the United States in particular has been prepared in recent years to grant India the dominant role in South Asia, it has not viewed New Delhi’s paternalistic attitudes toward the smaller states of the region with favor.

At the same time, neither the United States nor the PRC views South Asia as an area vital to its national interests. Thus, the policies of both countries in this region are likely to be cautious and tentative, to the despair of some, the hope of others. Nor is there any strong likelihood of close cooperation between the United States and the People’s Republic of China in an effort to fashion a common South Asian policy. Future policy complementarity, like that of the present, will be based upon separate appraisals of national interests, with the broader conditions governing the political-strategic relations throughout the Eurasian continent a consideration of major importance.
NOTES

1. For a detailed account of his trip, and the preparations leading up to it, see Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979).


3. A more extended discussion of the issues advanced by critics of the US-PRC strategic alliance can be found in my paper, "In Quest of National Interest—The Foreign Policy of the People’s Republic of China" 28th Bernard Moses Memorial Lecture, Berkeley: Graduate Division, University of California, 1982.


7. American assistance to the Mujahedeen has most recently been discussed by Leslie H. Gelb in his *New York Times* article of November 28, 1984, "US Aides Put ’85 Arms Supplies to Afghan Rebels at $280 Million."