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THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN
PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA:
CHINA’S RESPONSE TO
THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION’S POLICY TOWARD CHINA

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The touchdown of President Nixon's airplane, the Spirit of '76, at Peking airport on February 21, 1972, marked the end of an era in the foreign relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. This period had persisted from the communist takeover in 1949 to the present. This era was marked by implacable fear and distrust on both sides.

The rapprochement which led to this momentous meeting between President Nixon and Mao Tse-tung should not have been too surprising. There had been several prior indications that the President desired a more normal relationship with the People's Republic of China.

As early as 1967 President Nixon, while still a private citizen, expressed an interest in developing better relations between the two governments. In his article published in *Foreign Affairs* he said,

Taking the long view, we simply cannot afford to leave China forever outside the family of nations, there to nurture its fantasies, cherish its hates and threaten its neighbors. There is no place on this small planet for a billion of its potentially most able people to live in angry isolation.¹

In July, 1969, the President enunciated the posture which subsequently became known as the "Nixon Doctrine".² This program called for a reduced American


²John H. Gilbert (ed.), *The New Era in American*
presence in Asia and the Pacific. In his State of the World message of February 25, 1971 he spoke of a desire for China "to play a more constructive role in the community of nations". 3

Then on July 15, 1971 came President Nixon's message announcing that he would visit the People's Republic of China in the near future. He said that his upcoming visit had been arranged during the secret visit to Peking by Presidential Aide Henry Kissinger. 4

Thus, the President's arrival in Peking in addition to terminating the era of overt hostility between the two countries, also marked the beginning of a new phase in the international relations between these two great nation-states. Now that this new détente has been initiated, let us evaluate the benefits expected to accrue to both parties.

I

How does President Nixon's new foreign policy


toward the People's Republic of China benefit that country? Also, what benefits did President Nixon believe would accrue to the United States by this new foreign policy toward China? First, I will discuss those items which China will gain. Then, we will look at those benefits that the United States hopes to gain.

There appear to be four areas where President Nixon's new foreign policy would benefit the Chinese government. These are: recognition of the Peking regime as the sole legal government of China, recognition that Taiwan is an integral part of China, military withdrawal of all United States forces from Taiwan, and an implicit granting of a "balance of power" role for China. Each of these items will be discussed in the paragraphs which follow.

The symbolic handshakes between Henry Kissinger and Chou En-lai in July, 1971 and between President Nixon and Chou in February, 1972 managed to convey de facto recognition of the Peking regime as the legal government of China by the United States. These two events were in marked contrast to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' refusal at Geneva in 1954 to shake hands with Chou En-lai. Despite official United States

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5James C. Thompson, Jr., "The United States and China in the Seventies," *The New Era in American Foreign*
opposition, the significance and the timing of these two meetings helped assure the seating of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations, and the subsequent expulsion of the Republic of China.\(^6\) This implicit recognition of the PRC as the legal government of China by the U.S. prompted several nations to grant recognition to China. Among the nations granting official recognition were Canada, France, Italy and Japan.

Next, President Nixon in the Shanghai Communique, issued a statement agreeing that "All China on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States does not challenge that position." The Chinese and Americans, in the same joint communique, state that "...the Taiwan question was the crucial question obstructing the normalization of relations between China and the United States".\(^7\) While the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty calls for the United States to aid Taiwan in case of an armed attack by China, any other

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\(^6\)Michael, op. cit., p. 129.

scenario between these two contending governments would exclude the United States.⁸

In conjunction with the acknowledgement that Taiwan is an integral part of China, the United States stated in the Shanghai Communique that the ultimate goal of the United States was the withdrawal of all military forces from Taiwan. This withdrawal was to be accomplished in successive steps as tension in the area subsides.⁹ This phased withdrawal has enhanced China's prestige with the governments located on her periphery. The acceptance of this expanded role for China in the community of nations has been growing as a result of the "Nixon Doctrine" and Peking's reactions to this new American policy. This new status reflects various Asian leaders' reactions to the "Nixon Doctrine".¹⁰

Lastly, the new Nixon policy toward China gives that country an implied "balance of power" role to play


in the affairs of Asia and the Pacific community.\textsuperscript{11} This "balance of power" role for China has been reemphasized by subsequent policy statements by various government leaders.\textsuperscript{12} The President evidently envisions a world with four major actors, each with an area under its hegemony, if not direct control. These four powers are the United States, the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and Japan. There appears to be a chance of a unified Western Europe becoming the fifth major actor.\textsuperscript{13}

Next, we will examine those items the United States hopes to gain from adoption of the new foreign policy toward the People's Republic of China. There appear to be four areas in which the United States would benefit from the new accommodation with China. These are: a graceful military exit from Viet Nam, a reduced American military commitment in Asia and the Pacific, seeking a balance between China and the Soviet

\textsuperscript{11} Thompson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 141, 150.


Union, and gaining additional leverage in subsequent dealings with the Soviet Union. Let us examine each of these goals to see if they were attained.

First, the removal of all U.S. military members from Viet Nam has been completed. Although it cannot be said that the new Nixon policy toward China was solely responsible, it was surely conducted with at least the tacit accommodation of China. Apparently, during 1972, both Russian and Chinese leaders were urging Hanoi to negotiate with the Americans rather than continuing their war effort.\(^{14}\)

In conjunction with the removal of all American troops from Viet Nam President Nixon was also seeking to reduce the size of American military commitments in Asia and the Pacific. This reduction was first proposed at the background briefing conducted by President Nixon on Guam in July, 1969. However, in the same briefing he asserted that America would honor her defense commitments and would remain a Pacific power. Both of these views were subsequently reaffirmed during his State of the World message to the U.S. Congress the following February.\(^{15}\) There are statements from

\(^{14}\) Butwell, op. cit., p. 122.

\(^{15}\) U.S. President, 1969- (Nixon), U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A New Strategy for Peace. A
both China and the U. S. stating that each nation's power in Asia is complementary to the power of the other. China desires that some American military forces remain to counter the power of the Soviet Union and the potential power of Japan. Implicit in the position of the United States is a desire to see China establish the "balance of power" position in Asia envisioned for her by the U. S. As noted above, China is moving rapidly to take advantage of the changing politico-military situation evolving in East and South Asia.

The statement cited above has been used by Ian Clark to support the contention that there is collusion between the United States and China to restrict Russian influence in Asia. One example of Sino-American cooperation at the expense of the Soviet Union was in the Indo-Pakistan War. This belief, whether founded or unfounded, gives the United States the desired additional leverage during negotiations with the Soviet Union on such matters as SALT, MBFR, and the military withdrawal of United States troops from Viet Nam.


16 Clark, op. cit., p. 483.
17 Ibid., pp. 484-485.
Lastly, the new rapprochement between the U. S. and the People's Republic of China has provided the U. S. with the desired balance between China and the Soviet Union. Although the U. S. does not desire to see nuclear warfare erupt between these two countries, it is to the advantage of the U. S. if their relations remain strained.

There appear to be several benefits for both the U. S. and the PRC in this new era of mutual accommodation. However, there seems to be one question which needs to be examined. Will this detente be of an enduring nature or will it soon perish?

Several factors may influence the answer to the above question. Some of these factors are: the behavior of the Soviet Union, the attitude and development of Japan, and whether both parties are able to live up to their commitments.

Although the behavior of the Soviet Union and Japan are factors in the ability of the detente to survive, it is outside the scope of my examination. The focus of this paper will be on whether China is able to honor its commitments.

In order for China to honor its commitments, certain questions need to be answered affirmatively. Are the decision makers a stable group of elite who
can make authoritative and binding decisions? Does China possess an institutionalized decision making elite? We will elaborate on each of these questions below.

First, what do we mean by a stable elite capable of making authoritative and binding decisions? We should be able to expect that as long as the same decision makers remain in office, the U.S. can normally expect any agreements previously established to continue in force. All agreements initiated by one set of decision makers would most likely be honored by the incoming group of decision makers. Contrast this situation to Russia after the revolution of 1917 where the incoming group of decision makers reserved the right to decide which previous commitments it would honor. Also, any decision made by the center would be interpreted and implemented fairly uniformly throughout China.

Next, what do we mean by an institutionalized decision making elite? We mean a decision making body with carefully differentiated roles for the various decision making members. The power and responsibility which a person possesses are an integral part of the role he is assigned at that given time, and is never independent of that role. There are established
avenues provided for mobility of individuals within this governmental structure. However, once established in a given role, a person is expected to serve those above him, and receive the obedience of those lower in the hierarchy.

Now we have examined some of the requirements necessary for China to live up to its commitments. Next, we will critically examine this new detente between the United States and the PRC.

There are two avenues of approach available when examining the new era of mutual accommodation between the U. S. and the PRC. The first approach is to seek to determine whether this new detente actually benefits the long range interests of the U. S. However, this approach is adequately covered elsewhere, and is outside my scope of study for the purpose of this article. The second avenue is to seek to determine whether this new era of detente can lead to any lasting benefits for the U. S.

There is a possibility that the decision making processes in China may not enable us to answer the above questions in the affirmative form. In the next section we will examine the existing interpreta-

\[18\] Dorran, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
tions of the decision making processes in China. Each of these will be evaluated to determine how well it explains events in China.

II

There are presently four theoretical models widely used to explain what is occurring inside China. These models are: the "harmonious elite," the "Bureaucrats under Mao," "Mao in command," and "Institutional interest groups." Each of these models will be described below, and evaluated to determine its validity.


23 The four models discussed above were elaborated upon during lectures by Ming T. Lee during the spring and summer of 1973.
The most widely held view, at least until after the Cultural Revolution, was of a "harmonious elite" in the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party making all decisions after periods of discussion, and influenced only by opinion groups with no organized political force. The wild attacks and vitriolic denunciations which characterized the Cultural Revolution soon brought this model into disfavor.

The second view of the Chinese decision making process is the "bureaucrats under Mao". This model has largely replaced the discredited "harmonious elite" theory. This second model envisions a basically bureaucratic establishment with Mao making all of the major decisions. Any conflict among the decision makers was mainly maneuvering for position under Mao.

Next, there is the "Mao in command" theory portraying Mao in the role of general overseer. In this model Mao allows his underlings to make most of the normal decisions. This style of ruling allows Mao to observe and test the political skills of his subordinates. He is also in a better position to defeat any challenges to his authority which may arise from below.

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The fourth model visualizes all decisions being made either by institutional interest groups, or by the interactions of interested members of these groups. Various authors have seen these interest groups as being composed of: military elite, technocrats, commissars, etc. Each group is constantly vying for power relative to the other interest groups.

These models will be evaluated to determine how well they explain the events which occurred during the Cultural Revolution and the Lin Piao affair.

None of the decision making processes previously described can be reconciled with the information presently becoming available from China. Although this information is sparse and fragmentary and sometimes false and/or otherwise unreliable, a pattern appears to be forming. These four models share the assumption that Mao Tse-tung is in charge, that all the other members of the decision making elite operate under Mao's benevolent supervision.

The bitter fights which occurred among the elite during China's Cultural Revolution cannot easily be reconciled with any of the previously discussed decision making processes. The reason Mao resorted to using the People's Liberation Army was because of
Party opposition at the center. Later, the leadership of the Cultural Revolution was attacked in the Politburo by several members.

Likewise, during the Lin Piao affair, Lin Piao and Chen Po-ta, both leading members of the elite, were attacked indirectly and accused of treason.

These selected examples illustrate both Mao's difficulties in controlling the Chinese Communist Party, and the lack of a "harmonious elite" among China's elite. Therefore, these models seem insufficient in explaining what is occurring in China. However, if we were to use any of these decision making processes, our answer to the questions relative to China's ability to live up to her commitments would be in the affirmative.

An alternative decision making process will be examined in the following section. This process is called "factionalism among the elite". First, the process will be explained, then evaluated to determine its effectiveness in explaining events during the

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Cultural Revolution and the Lin Piao affair.

III

Let us now examine the factional model, and evaluate how factionalism within the decision making elite in China would affect the administration's new policy toward China. In order to properly evaluate the effects of the factional model, it will first be necessary to define a patron-client relationship, and a "faction" as used in this paper. Next, we will need to define some of the characteristics of the factional model. Lastly, we will examine Chinese politics during and after the Cultural Revolution to see whether this model can explain the events which occurred.

The definition of a patron-client relationship, according to James C. Scott is,

...an exchange relationship between roles -- may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of a higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal service to the patron.28

Therefore, patron-client relationships tend to expand

or contract dependent upon the resources of the patron.

In addition, a patron-client relationship has three other distinguishing features. First, there must be an imbalance in services in favor of the patron. Secondly, a patron-client relationship is always face to face and will always involve only the two principals. Lastly, this relationship is total, in that there are no clearly defined limits established as to the duties of each member. 29

A faction, as used in this paper, is the use of either a simple patron-client relationship, or a tiered arrangement of patron-client relationships organized for the purpose of engaging in political activity. Some illustrative examples of various factional groupings can be seen in figure 1, page 18. In addition, because of the dyadic nature of the factional alliance, the faction can never survive the death of the leader. Lastly, factions are almost always a vertical alignment; they therefore are very heterogeneous in nature. This means that there is little or no horizontal contact between the various members of a faction. They may or may not be aware of the identities of the other members of the faction. 30

29 Ibid., p. 93.
Figure 1

Simple faction

Complex faction

Simple faction and support structures

Adapted from Andrew Nathan, "A Factionalism Model for CCP Politics," The China Quarterly, 53 (January/March 1973), p. 41. For similar diagrams see
Factions may control, through the positions held by the members in the institutional hierarchy, one or more support structures as outlined in figure 1. These support structures may be any base of power such as ministries, armies, newspapers, or control of an intermediate level of Party government.

Next, we will deal with the questions of why and under what conditions do factions tend to form and prosper. Factions tend to form if conditions meet one or more of the following conditions. First, factions flourish in societies in which the power is localized in conjunction with a weak central government. The more localized the power, the stronger the patron-client relationships tend to become. This situation tends to establish the second condition which is a fragile institutional order. Localized power tends to reinforce the patron's power at home, while simultaneously giving him a power base at the center. This, in turn, tends to promote personal spheres of influence within all agencies of the institutional framework. It has been noted that


where factionalism exists in a post-industrial society the patrons tend to be at the center of government, because of a concentration of resources at that level. Lastly, factions are more numerous when kinship bonds are inadequate for the protection and advancement of the individual. Kinship bonds seldom provide all of the protection of the individual, but often act to minimize his need for non-kin structures.

There have been cases of factionalism encountered in such diverse locations as India, Mexico, Bolivia, Philippines, France, Turkey, Thailand, Taiwan, as well as Venezuela and Italy. The factions which exist in these last two countries closely parallel the model described below for factionalism in China. These factions, unlike the primitive patron-client systems, have been organized from above, exist within an institutional framework and provide linkages which extend from the peasant up to the highest government leaders. As one can see from these brief examples, factionalism is fairly widespread throughout the underdeveloped countries of the world, and also includes some of the

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33Ibid.
developed nations.

What are some of the characteristics of factionalism? The factional model possesses at least six characteristics which distinguish it from other forms of social organization. Each of these characteristics will be elaborated upon briefly in order to ascertain if this model applies to China.

Factions, because of their physical composition, are weaker than formal corporate structures. Some of these limitations to their power are the size of the factions, communications within the factional structure, and maintaining control over the various members. The size of each faction is always dependent upon the amount of resources available. In addition, the size of a faction is restricted by the problem of communications between members. Because each faction is composed of tiered patron-client relationships, every message must proceed via each step in the tier, thus allowing for distortion of the message during transmission. Lastly, the faction, because of its lack of formal controls, becomes unwieldy if it becomes too large and powerful.

Because its power is limited, a faction has

35Nathan, "A Factionalism Model for CCP Politics", p. 43.
36Ibid., pp. 46-52.
little incentive to attempt to destroy a rival faction. Instead of attempting to destroy an opposing faction, the procedure usually is to try to weaken it either by wooing its members away or by removing part of its resources. Also, because it is virtually impossible to destroy a rival faction, a code of conduct has evolved whereby the factional leaders treat each other with great civility. This civility even occurs while the rival factions are engaging in overt conflict.

Secondly, there is an incentive for each factional leader to assure that no single faction gains a preponderance of power at the center. If one faction were able to seize power, it would be in a position to eliminate all contending factions. Therefore, if any faction appears to be on the verge of becoming the dominant faction, all other factions will unite to weaken the aggressive faction so that it will no longer constitute a threat to their way of life. However, as soon as the dominant member is weakened sufficiently, the other factions begin to compete for the resources which the dominant faction had possessed. Thus, the system tends to create the defensiveness between the factions described in the first characteristic.

There is a constant need for alliances to be formed between factions. Any faction, either alone or
in an alliance, may feel secure enough to launch an attack against one or more factions. Also, possibly only by combining with other factions can a factional leader protect himself. These two conditions illustrate the need for a constant shifting between members of the various alliances.

Because of the balanced power of the factions, no policy, foreign or domestic, can be implemented without the consensus of factional leaders. This situation leads to all decisions being made slowly and with great difficulty. As the crisis approaches each faction watches the others to determine what they will do. Only when the crisis is acute can a consensus be achieved. However, any decision taken is bound to aid some factions at the expense of others. Therefore, the consensus so painfully achieved, quickly disintegrates.

Because of the constantly shifting alliances, ideology cannot become the primary point of contention. The opponent of yesterday may be the ally of today. Besides, all of China's present factional leaders share a common background, and basically agree on the broad ideological issues. Although the factional leaders do not cross major ideological boundaries, they tend to disregard ideology within these parameters. Because they are so nearly identical as to ideological back-
ground, they tend to exaggerate small differences during policy disputes. An opponent is usually not identified by name, rather he is attacked through innuendo or by attacking some lesser member of his faction.

There are only limited numbers of factional leaders because of the limited amount of resources available. If the numbers of factions grow too large some factions will have insufficient resources with which to reward their faction, thereby causing their subsequent decline. The weaker factions will be forced to merge to form larger, more powerful factions. Also, the weaker factions are unable to protect themselves from attacks by the stronger factions. The numbers of factions will stop declining at a point which allows the remaining factions sufficient resources to adequately reward all personnel within this faction.

There is only a limited amount of resources available, therefore all factions are interested in making sure that all resources remain within the small circle of factional leaders. All factional leaders are able to agree upon this goal.

The last characteristic of factions which we will examine is the rule of never publicly attacking the recognized leader. Regardless of the number of attacks to which the leader is subjected privately or
how many of his directives are changed or disregarded, as far as the public is concerned the leader is never questioned.

The reason for this rule is abundantly clear. The masses are to be kept ignorant of the weaknesses and failings of their appointed leader. To do otherwise would be to allow the people to doubt the leader's abilities and call the entire system into question.

Now that we have briefly described some of the more prevalent characteristics of factionalism, let us examine how well the decision making apparatus in China fits our model. Various actions by China's elite will be examined with this objective in mind.

First, although there is some evidence that China is ruled by the interactions of factions, there is no way of correctly ascertaining the exact number of factional leaders. The number of factional leaders at the center has been estimated to be approximately twelve to fifteen. Also, there does not appear to be a very high correlation between membership in the Politburo and the factional leaders. These positions in the

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37 If the numbers of factional leaders grow too large, there will be insufficient resources to reward factional members. Ming T. Lee stated that the number of factional members cannot be too large or too small or the factional system will not function.
Politburo sometimes appear to be rewards for long and faithful service, rather than as positions of power. Merle Goldman mentions that directives emanating from Peking refer to the center (chung-yang) as their authority. This deliberate ambiguousness implies that there is no single executive issuing orders at the center.38

There were many instances of defensive tactics being employed during the Cultural Revolution, and also during the post-Lin Piao purges. Most of the people attacked during the Cultural Revolution were subjected to verbal abuse, demotion, or were stripped of their positions of authority, but few if any were killed. Shortly after Mao initiated the Red Guard movement for reasons discussed below, rival groups of Red Guard sprang up with conflicting goals. Another example of the defensive actions taken was Peng Chen, the influential mayor of Peking, attempting to divert the brunt of the Red Guard attacks onto the academics.39 Also, shortly after the Cultural Revolution had ended, the political restoration of many previous targets of attack began to be restored to their former positions.40

40 Chang, op. cit., p. 54.
During the removal of Lin Piao, few people were executed. Among the military members involved, only the men belonging to factions controlled by Lin Piao, Ch'en Po-ta, and Yang Ch'en-wu were eliminated. Also, there has never been any substantive proof that Lin Piao was killed in the mysterious jet crash in Mongolia. The possibility of Lin Piao being alive, if proved, would illustrate the factional rule of never destroying a factional leader.

Another action which will highlight the defensive arrangements of the factions during the Cultural Revolution was the conflicting orders emanating from Peking. These changed directives presumably reflected the shifting of factional alliances to create new majorities.

The last example to demonstrate the defensive-ness of the factional leaders was the practical results of the Cultural Revolution. We are told that Mao initiated the Cultural Revolution to create renewed revolutionary fervor among the Chinese leaders. However, the results have been just the opposite. China has emerged as more conservative and ready to enter the world community of nations than at any time prior to

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the Cultural Revolution. 42

Twice during the short history of the People's Republic of China Mao has designated a successor, first in the person of Liu Shao-ch'i, then Lin Piao. Both designations led to the selected person being later denounced as a traitor, a renegade, etc. In both cases the designated successor was made a scapegoat. 43 Lin Shao-ch'i was blamed for the failures prior to the Cultural Revolution. Lin Piao was blamed for the excesses which took place during the Cultural Revolution. He was also accused of attempting to assassinate Mao, but this later modified. 44 This removal of these two designated leaders may reflect the other factions cooperating together to punish the aggressive factional leader.

Each factional leader gives his unqualified public support to the leadership of Mao Tse-tung. This is true despite the fact that Mao was removed from all posts of responsibility in 1959 following the debacle of the Great Leap Forward. 45 It appears that Mao, from

42 Goldman, op. cit., p. 131.


44 Ibid., p. 440.

this time onward did not possess a factional power base.

Lastly, the factions in China are constantly going through a series of factional cycles. Each cycle consists of a political crisis, a consensus, and the decline of the factional consensus.

One such crisis was precipitated by Mao's initiation of the Cultural Revolution, in clear violation of the rules of factional conduct. He accomplished this by attempting to utilize the Red Guard movement as a mass power base, thereby bypassing the traditional factional arrangements. This led to the coalition of the majority of factions against the group headed by Mao, in a movement known as the "February Adverse Current". This factional coalition could account for the rival Red Guard units being formed, as the rival factions surreptitiously set about blocking Mao's attempts to recapture control of the center. Yet, throughout this entire struggle for power, all of the factional leaders continued to publicly acknowledge Mao as the great and resourceful leader of China.

Two major factors led to the temporary cessation of the power struggles initiated by the Cultural

46 Chang, op. cit., p. 333.
Revolution. The first was the Soviet military threat. This threat, composed ultimately of forty-nine divisions poised on China's borders, precipitated a more immediate crisis. As the crisis deepened a factional consensus was more desirable.

The second crisis which led to a factional consensus was the internal turmoil created by the Cultural Revolution. Several of the factional leaders had been eliminated and the central authority was increasingly being questioned. The combination of these two crises led to a factional consensus by the various factional leaders.

This consensus gave power to the moderate factions led by Chou En-lai to attempt to develop a detente with the U.S. as a counter to the Russian threat. Also, this detente would lead to an enhancement of the central authority.

An example of factions which benefitted from the newly created detente can be found in the Chou faction. This faction emerged after the beginning of the detente with greatly enhanced prestige and power. Therefore, we can expect the Chou faction to come under increasing attacks by the other factions.

As the two threats which created the consensus subsided, so did the crisis atmosphere. As stated above, any changes in policy, either foreign or domestic, is bound to benefit some factions more than others, because of the power or resources involved. Therefore, the factions which were left out would immediately attack the factions which had previously benefitted.

The decline of the factional consensus created a new political crisis which completed the factional cycle. Thus, a new cycle begins, and the internal power struggle continues. Next, we will seek to determine whether China's leaders can honor any long lasting commitments.

IV

The analysis which follows of China's ability to honor long lasting commitments is based on China being ruled by a coalition of factional leaders. Any other interpretation of the composition of China's ruling elite would produce very different results. Conceding that we are assuming factional politics to exist in China, let us proceed to evaluate China's ability to honor her foreign policy commitments, using the factional political model.
The government of China cannot make long lasting commitments because of the factional elite which com­poses the central authority. At present, China is not ruled by a stable elite capable of making and keeping long lasting commitments. The constantly shifting alliances would seem to indicate that China will be unable to work consistently toward its future goals.

Although China possesses the external trappings of an institutional decision making elite, the actual decision making body is a shadowy group of factional leaders who may or may not have an official position within the governing structure.

Therefore, no coherent, rational policies can be expected with the exception of attempts to preserve the political survival of the factions. Any other policy formulated will be of a transitory nature, fashioned to counter a particular crisis situation. In conclusion, the prospects that the United States and the People's Republic of China can jointly strive to achieve consistent, long-range foreign policy goals appear dim.
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