

**Office of the Historian
Bureau of Public Affairs
United States Department of State**

August 31, 2006

The Department of State released today *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969-1972*. The effort of President Richard Nixon, working closely with his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, to open a dialogue with the People's Republic of China (PRC), is the principal focus of the volume released today.

Nixon and Kissinger sought to signal a willingness to improve relations with the PRC by relaxing trade and travel restrictions, ending the Taiwan Strait naval patrol, and assuring the PRC that the United States would not support a Soviet attack against China. A rapprochement through various intermediaries progressed in fits and starts in 1969 and 1970. By the end of 1970, Pakistan became the key conduit for communicating with the PRC and for arranging Kissinger's secret trip to Beijing. Nixon, through Kissinger, attempted to gain the trust of the leaders of the PRC by providing information on secret Soviet-American arms control talks, significant U.S. actions concerning the conflict in South Asia, and peace talks with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. China often received such information before U.S. allies.

Kissinger's talks with PRC leaders in Beijing in July 1971, which marked the beginning of direct contacts, detail the extraordinary range of issues that concerned leaders of both nations. Kissinger's second visit to Beijing, in October 1971, was marked by similar discussions, the preparations for Nixon's February 1972 trip, and the drafting of what would become the Shanghai Communiqué.

The February 1972 trip to Beijing by Nixon, Kissinger, and Secretary of State William P. Rogers, included dozens of meetings with PRC leaders on U.S. support for the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan, PRC support for the North Vietnamese, the situation in South Asia, the regional influence of the Soviet Union and Japan, trade, exchanges, and arrangements for future contacts. In particular, the finalization of the Shanghai Communiqué required a great deal of debate over the U.S. military presence on Taiwan, and long-term commitments to Chiang Kai-shek's government. Nixon, mindful of the domestic political impact of his China initiative, accommodated many PRC requests, while stressing the need for discretion in public statements by either side. From March through December 1972, the United States attempted to broaden the scope of contacts with the PRC through meetings in Paris and messages and meetings with the PRC's U.N. delegation in New York. Kissinger made another trip to the PRC in June 1972, during which he urged Chinese leaders to become more involved in efforts to end the war in Southeast Asia. Nixon and Kissinger hoped that the PRC would pressure North Vietnam to reach a cease-fire agreement. Kissinger or the NSC staff provided

PRC diplomats at the Chinese U.N. mission in New York with U.S. negotiating positions and statements to the North Vietnamese.

Direct contact and improved relations between Washington and Beijing reduced the importance of intelligence gathering and covert activity in China policy. The U.S. Government continued to monitor the development of PRC nuclear capability, along with advances in other weapons systems, as well as PRC intentions toward the international community, especially in Southeast Asia. Covert action was a minor aspect of U.S. policy toward China at this time. Activities included limited support for the Dalai Lama and Tibetan paramilitary forces, and aerial reconnaissance of the PRC. Policy-makers at the White House and the Department of State sought to reduce the scale and scope of any covert activity that might harm the new relationship with the PRC.

This volume shows that at each stage of rapprochement with the PRC in 1971 and 1972, Nixon or Kissinger either met with ROC diplomats in Washington or worked through Department of State officials to assure Chiang Kai-shek of continued U.S. support and adherence to treaty commitments. This was a time of growing uncertainty for America's long time ally, as the ROC faced international isolation and an aging leadership. Chiang did enjoy two minor victories: first, he dissuaded Nixon from moving toward diplomatic recognition of Mongolia in 1969; and second, he obtained a U.S. commitment to supply advanced weapons in late 1972 in exchange for the ROC's agreement to replenish South Vietnam.

Almost all of the documents printed in this volume concern relations with the PRC or the ROC. The materials on the PRC constitute about three-fourths of the volume. In addition, there are small collections on questions relating to the Dalai Lama and Tibet, and relations with Mongolia. An electronic-only supplement (*Foreign Relations*, 1969-1976, vol. E-13, Documents on China, 1969-1972) to be released in late September 2006, will provide the complete text of many of the documents referenced in the footnotes of the printed volume that relate to high-level contact between the PRC and the United States.

The volume, a summary, and this press release are available at the Office of the Historian website at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/nixon/xvii>. Copies of the volume will be available in late September for purchase from the U.S. Government Printing Office at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov> (GPO stock number 044-000-02597-3; ISBN 0-16-077159-5). For further information contact Edward Keefer, General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series, at (202) 663-1131 or by email to history@state.gov.