

**Nixon Visits China - IV**

**Lead: They were vigorous ideological opponents. Therefore, President Richard Nixon and the Communist leaders of China were in an excellent position to break out of old habits.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: The habit of opposition can stand in the way of diplomatic progress. In the early 1970s for hard-nosed political and economic reasons, the old enemies, Communist China**

**and the United States, reached out to one another. The United States was mired in a war in Vietnam it could not win without provoking a wider Asian conflict, Nixon needed a boost to his re-election chances, and the vast Chinese market offered hope for expanded trade to a troubled American economy. Mao Zedong and the other Chinese leaders were just emerging from the isolation of the highly destructive Cultural Revolution, needed a counter-weight in their disputes with the Soviet Union, and wanted U.S. concessions on the Taiwan dispute and the China seat in the United Nations. They also desired access to Western technology.**

**A secret approach through Pakistan bore fruit and in 1971 the Chinese invited an American table tennis team to compete in China. Ping-Pong diplomacy led to a secret negotiating trip by Henry Kissinger, Nixon's top foreign policy aide. During their talks the United States promised to withdraw its forces from Taiwan in exchange for Chinese support for a peaceful settlement of the Vietnamese War. Nixon was invited to China and in October with American support, Beijing replaced Taiwan in the China seat at the United Nations.**

**Nixon arrived in Beijing in February, 1971. The talks were polite and frank, but restrained. In the final**

**communiqué the United States conceded that only one China existed and that Taiwan was part of it. China promised to delay any invasion of Taiwan and the two adversaries agreed to resist Soviet ambitions in the Far East. Within a decade Nixon had succumbed to his Watergate difficulties and Mao Zedong was dead, but the effort of these two old enemies brought an important change in world relations, helped the United States extract itself from the fruitless Vietnam War, and gave China once again a place among the great powers.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

## Resources

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**Sheridan, James E. *China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese History: 1912-1949*. New York, NY: Free Press, 1975.**

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