

# China: maos rule and legacy

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After the revolution, it took Mao a few years to consolidate power, intimidate or imprison those with whom he disagreed, and get his first initiative known as the " First Five-Year Plan" underway. This major reorganization of China's economy was focused on implementing a Soviet-style, heavy industry model that pushed agriculture and consumer goods manufacturing to the back seat (Corrin, Grasso, and Kort 1991). Mao's relationship with the Soviets not only included a common political and economic theory, but also a heavy reliance on Soviet technology and advisors for a significant concentration of expansion of China's military.

One of Mao's greatest failures, however, was his relationship with the United States. Given his Marxist economic views, as well as the emergent political issues of the Cold War, there was little doubt that China would align closely with the Soviet Union. After the Korean War, where thousands of both Chinese and American lives were lost, Sino-American relationships deteriorated and would remain poor until President Richard Nixon's efforts 20 years later began to build bridges between the two countries. Certainly, outside of its relationship with the Soviet Union, the international relationships of the Chinese would be seen as a failure by most people.

In the post-Mao era, the Chinese government has continued to " adhere to the principle of conformity" in many areas regarding the press and the population; something it inherited from the era of the Cultural Revolution (Guo 59). Obviously, the fiasco at Tiananmen Square did nothing at all to help the Chinese image with the rest of the world. In other ways, however, the Chinese have indicated a willingness to adopt a less totalitarian

methodology. While subsequent reforms have been mixed in terms of their responsiveness to human rights, there is still hope that China can emerge from its Maoist traditions into a modernized, constructive participant in world affairs.