

Should richard m. nixon visit red china?

[War](#), [Cold War](#)



That is an interesting question to which one could offer many good reasons to both sides of the argument. However, to fully examine the decision made, one would have to look at many of the background information surrounding the voyage.

This includes; Nixon's popularity with America as well as the Vietnam War, which at that time had yet to be resolved, America's relationship with the Soviet Union, America's relationship with Taiwan and the Republic of China, the relationship between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China, America's past relations with China as well as their distrust on Communism, and China's relationship with the world. After studying each of these, one can form a decision of whether Nixon should or should not go to Red China.

Richard Nixon was an extremely unpopular president. This was primarily due to the war in Vietnam that he didn't even get America into. However, while he was not the one who got America into Vietnam he had the important job of getting America out, a task, which would take him four years, four years of discontent in America. Nixon had decided to invade Cambodia, which had been completely off-limits, however the Communist troops had been using it as a rest area and supply base¹.

While the invasion itself was a successful operation it caused havoc back in the United States. As demonstrated when 100, 000 protesters showed up in Washington D. C. to demonstrate their anger with the decision of invasion². Nixon's policy of "Vietnamization" ³, which included training Vietnamese soldiers to replace American soldiers, worked well and by 1971 has sent

many American troops back to the United States. At the same time Nixon also had his right-hand man Henry Kissinger in secret discussion with North Vietnamese forces, discussing peace negotiations.

America and North Vietnam reached a ceasefire agreement on January 27, 1973, which officially withdrew Americans from Vietnam and allowed them to achieve "peace with honor" 4. The war itself however, did not end until April 29, 1975. This war had a large effect on Nixon's decision to visit Red China as China had been supporting the Communist North Vietnam forces throughout the war, while America had been in Vietnam fighting against them, supporting the Southern side. This created another time for Americans to show their dislike and distrust of Communism.

However, China was a powerful country and if America could make good relations with them it would help to keep negotiations strong between the North Vietnam and America. Therefore, the war in Vietnam was an important thing to consider when deciding whether Nixon should visit the Communist, Red China. America had not always had a very strong relationship with the Soviet Union. Two of the world superpowers had been at constant fear of attack by each other during the Cold War.

This Cold War came about for many reasons, two being, Truman's desire to stop the spread of communism⁵, and the atomic weapons that each country had. However, the most important factor that created this Cold War was fear. Each country had large, irrational fears of the other, the Americans feared another dictator trying to take over the world, and the Soviets feared a powerful invader⁶. The Americans had a monopoly on the atomic weapons,

and weren't sharing their secrets; this alarmed the Soviets and prompted them to make atomic weapons of their own.

Each country was unsure of what the other had, thus creating the constant suspicion. Also feeding this fear was propaganda that each country used. In America politicians were constantly telling the American public about the terrors of Communists and how everyone was in danger because of the evil Soviet Communists planning an attack⁷. The Cold War was an important thing for Nixon to consider because it was still going on and America had been expressing hatred toward Communists since the beginning. Visiting China would be good though because it could speed up the end of the Cold war that they were stuck in.

Also recognizing a Communist country that was so close to the Soviet Union would be handy for intelligence purposes, as they would be closer to the enemy and could get a better idea of what was going on, it could also make the war less between Communism and America and focused on the Soviet Union and America. The relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union eventually did ease up slightly. This started in 1952 when Nikita Khrushchev paid a visit to America with talks of "peaceful coexistence" between the two countries⁸.

At the time that he did this he had begun to see his ally China as more of an enemy than America was⁹. Also at the time the Soviets had, had recent victory over the Americans with the success of the Sputnik satellite, two years prior to the visit. This visit did not create any drastic change or movements towards peace between the two countries, however it was one

good step in the direction towards " peaceful coexistence". This meeting would be a good reason for Nixon to go to China as it shows that two countries that believe and practice completely different forms of government can still meet and recognize one another.

He would want to take pointers from this meeting of good things that Krushchev did while visiting America and expand upon those so that his meeting in China would not only be successful but productive as well, something that Krushchev's visit was not. During the Cultural Revolution American aided the Nationalist, Republic of China, by giving them nearly 1 billion dollars worth of weapons and other necessities¹⁰. America pressured the Nationalist party, led by Chiang to accept some of Stalin's demands, such as the use of northern ports to expand the Russian economy.

By them meeting these demands they were given full Soviet support, and were recognized by both America and the Soviet Union as the only China¹¹. Having Americans helping the Nationalists very much upset the Communist party, and they ceased peace talks. Then Chaing's army completely disregarded some advice given by General Marshall, whom was later made the Secretary of State. When Marshall became the secretary of state he would not allow America to further heavily involve itself with the Cultural Revolution. The Korean War was the first time that American and Communist forces had the opportunity to compete.

American forces were helping South Korea from the invading, communist North Korean troops. China had never intended on entering into the war, however when American forces continued to get too close to their border in

the intent of taking over North Korea, instead of just helping South Korea in keeping their territory. China had sent out warnings to them, not to get close and so when America got too close, Chou En-lai, the Chinese premier sent out masses of troops, which easily surrounded American and South Korean troops¹².

Nixon would have wanted to consider this event before going to China because it was another event in which the Americans were fighting against Communism as well as the Chinese. However, it would be good to go to China because then Nixon would be able to show the world that America was not a sore loser, that despite being brutally attacked by the Chinese they were still able to make relations and work towards peace and prosperity together. The People's Republic of China and the Republic of China had a very poor relationship ever since their split after the Cultural Revolution.

The ROC got Taiwan as their mainland as well as two small islands, Quemoy and Matsu¹³. These two islands were very close to the mainland of PRC's China, which was a fact that had always irked Mao. Mao tried to take the islands by force with his military, however unfortunately he was unsuccessful as the ROC had America to support them and Mao had no one as the Soviet Union had not come in time. This was a small event, yet it would be another thing for Nixon to look at. It would be a good thing for America to recognize Red China, as it would be a form of apology for fighting against them previously with their enemy the ROC.

It would show that America has realized which China is the true China, which is something that would please Mao and would make him more likely to be

open to trade with America. After the Cultural Revolution in China the issue of their seat in the United Nations Security Council arose. After World War two the UN was created and five of the powerful, victorious countries were placed into permanent seats on the Security Council. These were the Soviet Union, France, Great Britain, the United States, and China.

When China split the People's Republic felt that they should replace the Republic of China on the Security Council as they now represented China. This did not go over well with the United States, who did not want more Communist countries on the council, also the United States were allies of the Nationalist China. An early solution was dual representation, however Mao refused to sit next to another China, as this gives the idea that there were two Chinas, when he was so adamant that his China was the only one. 14 Albania then proposed to admit the People's Republic of China into the UN, and they were successful in getting the votes.

This got Taiwan out of the Security Council and the People's Republic in 15. The Americans were unhappy about the results, as they had lost face when everyone voted against Nixon's proposal of dual representation. It would be a good thing for Nixon to go to China and recognize them because it would show that they were still a strong country and that they were ready to move past this one incident. By moving past it they would be able to work together and agree on things, which would be good for both of them to have allies as the more allies a country has the more powerful they become.

Americans, had for a long time completely distrusted all things Communist. The American government used propaganda often to portray to the

American public how scary and evil Communists are. They were mostly stories that they built off of the Soviet totalitarian system¹⁶. They did this propaganda through books, pamphlets, comics, films, and radio throughout the entire Cold War. The American people were forced to believe that China was a part of this world wide Communist conspiracy to overthrow American power and destroy Western Democracy.

Movies were a popular way of propaganda, as it could show with full images how bad the Communists were such as " Red Nightmare: The Commies are Coming". Movies, such as that one show Communists coming to America and just destroying everything that made America run. Not all the movies made to demonstrate the evil of Communists had to be just about them, in the James Bond movies filmed throughout the Cold War feature Russians as the bad guy and Bond coming to save the day¹⁸, this movie was not about Communism, it just found a very subtle way to further demonstrate that Communists are bad.

Since all the propaganda was fed by the government, Nixon visiting China, a Communist country would be a good first step into changing the views of the American people towards Communists. While America would not need to switch and become a pro-Communism country they could start to settle the dispute against Communist countries. If America could make alliances with a powerful Communist country that could make other Communist countries like them. The United States and the Republic of China had, had amicable past relations.

America had traded with the Republic of China, mostly weapons for years and continued to do so after their split from the Mainland China. The United States really helped Taiwan get started shortly after it formed it's own China. They did this through enforcing it's military so that in the event of an attack by the People's Republic of China, they would be well protected. They also traded with them so that their economy could get going and perhaps gain them some relationships with other countries in the world.

This relationship between Taiwan and the United States is something that Nixon would have wanted to consider before going over to the People's Republic of China. This is because Mao was still completely refusing to speak the Republic of China, because he hated the idea of Two Chinas. In Taiwan they refused to talk to he People's Republic until they were no longer a Communist country. By going to Red China Nixon would not necessarily be apologizing to Mao and Chou En-lai about what happened in the past, but would rather be moving on and working towards an alliance, with which they can help each other in becoming even more powerful.

In conclusion, America should recognize the People's Republic of China. The decision would have taken a lot of consideration but all the good things that would come out of the decision would heavily out-weigh anything negative. Visiting Red China would be a big step in the right direction and would help out the United States in many ways. So despite the American hated for all things Communist an official visit to Communist China would be a very good thing to do.