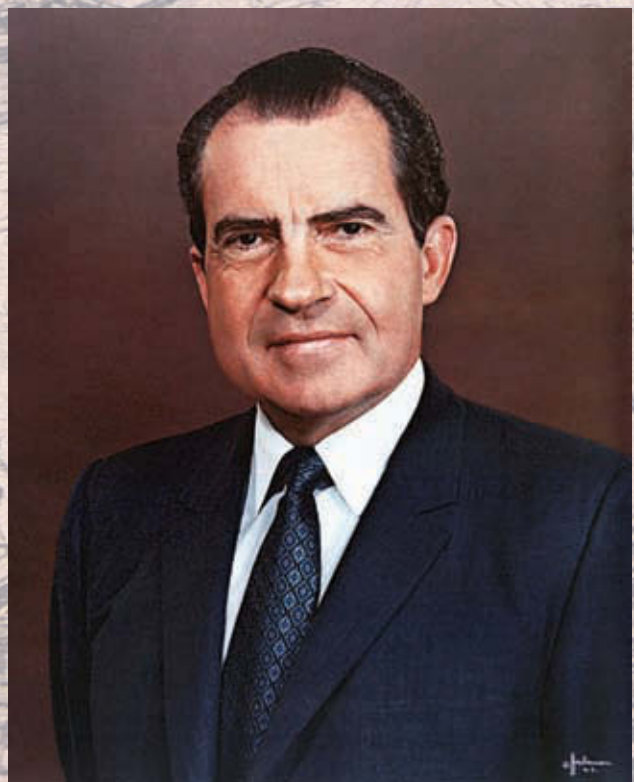


Shanghai Communiqué

Shànghǎi Gōngbào 上海公报

The Shanghai Communiqué of 1972 is the agreement between the United States and China that led to the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two nations. Because they had unresolved issues, each government stated its positions in order to facilitate cooperation. The Communiqué resulted in the establishment of scientific, cultural, and educational exchanges as well as trade ties between the U.S. and China.

The Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and the People's Republic of China (Shanghai Communiqué) announced on 27 February 1972 at Shanghai's Jinjiang Hotel began the process of normalizing relations between the two nations after twenty-two years of nonrecognition. It was the culmination of a weeklong visit to China by U.S. President Richard M. Nixon (1913–1994) and his wife, during which they toured Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou. On February 21 Nixon, the first U.S. president to travel to China, met with Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong (1893–1976) at a much-celebrated occasion marking the renewal of ties between the two nations and the opening of weeklong discussions. The principal negotiators for the United States were Nixon National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger (b. 1923) and Secretary of State William P. Rogers (1913–2001) and for China, Premier Zhou Enlai (1898–1976), Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei (1910–2000), and



Richard Nixon, President of the United States, in 1972. Nixon thought his diplomatic efforts with China to be one of the high points of his presidency. NATIONAL ARCHIVES.

Deputy Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua (1913–1983). The communiqué asserted:

The leaders of the People's Republic of China and the United States of America found it beneficial to

1949

Henry Kissinger with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. Although the document that set diplomatic relations into motion was issued in 1972, normalization between the United States and China would not occur for seven more years. NATIONAL ARCHIVES.



have this opportunity, after so many years without contact, to present candidly to one another their views on a variety of issues. (Shanghai Communiqué, 1972)

The first steps leading to the communiqué took place in October 1971 when Kissinger met with Premier Zhou in Beijing at a time when both governments agreed on the need to settle decades-old conflicts and to use new strategies to solve international problems. The Chinese sought to break out of the diplomatic isolation resulting from their role combating United Nations forces in the Korean War (1950–1953), the Nixon administration hoped that China could assist in ending the Vietnam War, and Beijing and Washington both shared a threat from the USSR. (Despite both being Communist nations, the USSR and China diverged on ideological and boundary matters and officially parted ways in 1960.) Nevertheless, negotiations were difficult since the two nations' foreign policy interests often conflicted. Both sides made concessions while acknowledging the “essential differences between China and the United States in their social systems and foreign policies” (Shanghai Communiqué, 1972).

The communiqué announced that “both [governments] wish to reduce the danger of international military conflict” and “neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or groups of countries to establish such

hegemony” (Shanghai Communiqué, 1972). The latter statement alluded to tensions with the Soviet Union at the time. China and the United States also proposed opening bilateral trade and maintaining contact with the goal of facilitating “new prospects for the relations between the two countries” (Shanghai Communiqué, 1972). On the other hand, viewpoints on several topics proved to be irreconcilable. Zhou Enlai is credited with suggesting an unusual format for the communiqué by which each nation stated its positions on contentious issues rather than trying to reach a compromise. Both governments put aside significant ideological differences in order to reestablish ties.

Major Obstacle

The major obstacle to restoring diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China in 1972 was U.S. recognition of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan since 1949 and the close military and economic ties between Washington and Taiwan's Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMD). Chinese leaders would not accept the United States having close ties with both China and Taiwan. Sections 11 and 12 of the communiqué summarize the two governments' positions. The Chinese side reaffirmed its position:

... The Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government of China; Taiwan is a province of China...; and all U.S. forces and military installations must be withdrawn from Taiwan. (Shanghai Communiqué, 1972)

The U.S. side declared:

The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China... The United States government... reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. (Shanghai Communiqué, 1972)

The Nixon administration made its boldest moves by not allowing Taiwan's status to stand in the way of developing a new relationship with Beijing. Nixon ran the risk of alienating his conservative supporters who backed

the Chinese Nationalists. Nevertheless, in the Shanghai Communiqué the United States announced its "ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan" (Shanghai Communiqué, 1972) and its adherence to a "one-China" policy that is the basis for U.S. relations with China today.

Discussions also focused on the general political situation in Asia. Other difficult issues on which there was little agreement included the ongoing conflict in Southeast Asia, plans for the reunification of North and South Korea, Japan's close ties to the United States, and the self-determination of Kashmir, a disputed area in northern India. Each side introduced its policies with general statements, highlighting the two nations' incompatible outlooks for the future. The Chinese side stated:

Wherever there is oppression, there is resistance. Countries want independence, nations want liberation and the people want revolution—this has

U.S. president Richard Nixon and his wife visit China in 1972. Nixon signed the Shanghai Communiqué at the Jinjiang Hotel. NATIONAL ARCHIVES.



become the irresistible trend of history... (Shanghai Communiqué, 1972)

The Chinese side stated that it firmly supported the struggles of all oppressed people and nations for freedom and liberation.

The U.S. side stated:

Peace in Asia and peace in the world requires efforts both to reduce immediate tensions and to eliminate the basic causes of conflict. The United States will work for a just and secure peace: just, because it fulfills the aspirations of peoples and nations for freedom and progress; secure, because it removes the danger of foreign aggression. The United States supports individual freedom and social progress for all the peoples of the world. (Shanghai Communiqué, 1972)

Normalization Delayed

The signing of the Shanghai Communiqué improved Sino-U.S. relations, allowed cultural and educational

exchanges, and opened trade, but it did not immediately lead to normalized relations. In the United States other problems, such as the conclusion of the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, and finally Nixon's resignation, took precedence. Full diplomatic relations between China and the United States were established in January 1979 when President Jimmy Carter (b. 1924) and Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997) reaffirmed the principles outlined in the Shanghai Communiqué in a second joint communiqué.

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Further Reading

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