

Segment One



(1949-1950): In 1949, Mao Zedong and the People's Liberation Army lead the Communists to victory in a civil war against Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists. The "lost" of China is a devastating blow to the United States. In need of military and economic aid, Mao seeks Stalin's help. In February 1950, the Chinese and the Soviet Union sign a mutual defense treaty that also guarantees aid for China. China's rulers embark on radical land reforms. Land is taken from private owners and handed to the peasants. The former landowners are denounced and humiliated. [For America's reaction to the "loss" of China, see Episode 6: Reds.]

- How do eyewitnesses explain the appeal of Communism in China?
- How did the United States react to the Communist victory in the Chinese civil war? Why?
- What do you think Mao meant when he said, "A treaty...must not tie our hands?" How do you account for the mutual suspicions between Mao and Stalin?
- Describe Mao's land reforms for China. Who appears to benefit and who appears to lose?

Segment Two



(1950-1955): Armed with Soviet tanks and military equipment, North Korea attacks South Korea in June 1950. The United States comes to South Korea's aid. With Stalin's encouragement, Mao enters the Korean conflict as American troops approach the Chinese border. Under the banner, "Help Korea, Down with U.S. Imperialism," a million Chinese troops cross the border into Korea. The Korean War lasts three years and costs almost half a million Chinese lives. The United States, fearful of the spread of Communism, finances a military buildup for the Chinese Nationalist stronghold on the island of Taiwan. In 1954, the Communists shell the Nationalist Island of Quemoy. [For a more in-depth examination of the Korean War and the relationship among the Chinese, Soviets and Koreans, see Episode 5: Korea]

- What was China's interest in fighting the Korean War?
- Provide examples of how China used propaganda during the Korean War.
- Using eyewitness accounts, describe the relationship between the Soviet Union and China during this period.
- How does Richard Nixon's speech illustrate the attitude of the United States toward China? What was the American rationale for its actions in Taiwan? How did the islands of Quemoy and Matsu raise tensions between the United States and China? What were American and Chinese interests in these two islands?

Segment Three



(1955-1958): In 1956, Khrushchev denounces Stalin as a criminal. Mao takes this speech as a threat to his own style of leadership and proclaims himself the new leader of world revolution. Although he wants independence from Moscow, Mao looks to the Soviet Union for help in building his nuclear arsenal. Mao accuses Khrushchev of being an "American stooge." The struggle for pre-eminence in the Communist world is now out in the open. Soviet advisers are removed from China. Rivalry between the Communist powers is ideological as well as personal.

- How do you account for Mao's reaction to Khrushchev's speech denouncing Stalin at the 20th Party Congress? What were Mao's and Khrushchev's perspectives on Stalin?
- Why do you think Mao continued to have a relationship with the Soviet Union? According to the video, how did China's interest in nuclear technology strain its relationship with the Soviet Union?
- What evidence can you find that illustrates the increasing divide between Mao and Khrushchev? How do you explain the conflict between the Soviets and the Chinese?
- What did Mao mean by Soviet revisionism? Based on what you have seen, do you think that the struggle between Mao and Khrushchev was based on ideology, personalities or something else?

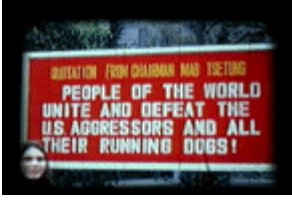
Segment Four



(1958-1965): In 1958, Mao launches the Great Leap Forward. The entire country reverts to pre-industrial backyard furnaces. While the Chinese people work day and night to produce massive amounts of metal, crops are left to rot and scientific knowledge is ignored. Thirty million Chinese starve to death during the Great Leap Forward, making it one of the worst man-made disasters in history. In 1964, China explodes its first nuclear bomb. In 1965, American forces are in Vietnam; the Chinese mobilize to support North Vietnam.

- What was the Great Leap Forward? Based on eyewitness accounts, describe life in China during the Great Leap Forward.
- What was the importance of steel production in China? According to the video, what was sacrificed as a result of steel production?
- What would Third-World nations find appealing about China at this time? How might this affect the balance of power in the Cold War?
- Based on the information in the video, what do you think was meant by peaceful co-existence? How was the nuclear test ban treaty symbolic of peaceful co-existence? What can you infer from Mao's reaction to the signing of the nuclear test ban treaty?

Segment Five



(1966-1969): Mao launches the Cultural Revolution. Millions of young people are recruited as Mao's Red Guards. Their goal is to destroy vestiges of the past and connections to Soviet Communism. In 1969, tension along the vast Soviet-Chinese border increases. There are frequent clashes. In Moscow, the Soviet authorities stage demonstrations outside the Chinese Embassy. War with China seems possible.

- What was the Cultural Revolution?
- What is a personality cult? How is it mentioned in reference to Mao?
- What was the goal of Mao's Red Guard? What slogan is mentioned that symbolized this movement?
- How do you account for the Chinese actions and attitudes towards the Soviet Union?
- According to the eyewitnesses, who is to blame for the border clashes between the Soviet Union and the Chinese?
- How would you describe the fears of the Soviet Union and China? How do you interpret the Chinese creation of underground tunnels?

Segment Six



(1968-1972): In October 1969, Soviet Premier Kosygin visits China to stop a potential war and restore relations. Mao, fearful of Moscow's belligerence, wants better relations with the United States. America's new President, Richard Nixon, and his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, seek to improve relations with both the Soviet Union and China. Improved relations with China begin with table tennis, also known as Ping-Pong diplomacy. Speaking of Nixon's 1972 trip to China, Henry Kissinger says, "On the way back from Beijing, I knew that we had made history."

- What is rapprochement? How do you interpret the rapprochement between the United States and China? Consider Richard Nixon's quotation on China earlier in the episode. Why do you think that Nixon sought rapprochement? Based on this event, what can you infer about foreign policy decision-making during the Cold War?
- What was Ping-Pong diplomacy? Based on the eyewitness accounts, describe the experience of the U.S. table tennis team in China. Why do you think table tennis was used as a tool of diplomacy?
- According to Henry Kissinger, why did Nixon prefer to use back-channels? What do you think he means by back-channels?
- How did this trip to China "change the balance of the Cold War?" What was the significance of U.S.-China rapprochement for both the United States and China?
- Do you agree with Kissinger's statement that "we had made history?" Why or why not?

