

highest offices in Washington had not been exerted, the intimate and complex relationship between Canada and the United States and the prospect of provoking Congressional reprisals by a dramatic change in our China policy would have made any attempt at a Canadian initiative exceedingly risky as long as Washington's policy of containing "Communist China" was frozen in the pattern of the Dullesian Fifties. Other nations, especially our NATO allies, were fully aware of our dilemma. This time, however, Ottawa's initiative provoked ripples of dissent and some rhetoric of caution, but no torrent of protest in the United States. Indeed, there was even speculation that some circles in Washington were interested in seeing us "run interference" in a forum where the United States was itself re-evaluating the ground rules. The successful negotiation of Canada-China diplomatic relations, therefore, undoubtedly had the effect of encouraging other nations sensitive to both the American and Chinese response to follow suit.

No one watched the American response more intently than the Chinese. It is conceivable that Peking also interpreted Washington's reaction to our move as a signal (along with others) that the United States itself was genuinely interested in altering its own China policy. It was certainly as useful a signal to Peking as American cutbacks on its trade embargo with China, its easing of visa restrictions and the virtually open-ended travelling of Americans of many political persuasions and professions to Ottawa to "exchange views" with Chinese officials frankly yet confidentially on a broader scale than at any other time since 1949.

It must, however, be stressed that this interpretation of the Canadian role as a catalyst in improving Sino-Western contacts does not imply that Canada's position was motivated by Ottawa's having anticipated Washington's response. Indeed, it is likely that Canada would have pursued its diplomatic initiative just as aggressively this time even had it been faced by strong American opposition. The point is that the establishment of Ottawa-Peking diplomatic relations also had these important international implications far beyond our relations with China as such.

It is also clear that China's receptiveness to these indicators of changing attitudes in Washington was expressed in the Canadian context before their more dramatic revelation in the sequence of events that began with ping-pong in Tokyo and ended with the announcement of Mr. Nixon's visit.

The announcement that Huang Hua, one of China's leading diplomats, was appointed Ambassador to Canada underlined the fact that Peking was interpreting the role of the Ottawa mission in both North American and an international text. The Chinese simply would not have appointed as senior and influential a diplomat as Huang if only Sino-Canadian relations were at stake. Clearly, his appointment meant that Ottawa would play a pivotal role in China's strategy vis-à-vis both the United States and the United Nations. The delay in the Ambassador's arrival in Canada so that he could participate in the Kissinger talks, and his subsequent appointment to the United Nations served to underline the obvious

Canada's influence

Canada's support of the Albanian Resolution at the United Nations in October may also have had somewhat the same international implications as its establishment of diplomatic relations. Canada changed position on both supporting the Albanian Resolution and opposing the two-thirds procedural issue was articulated with unusual clarity and force. The vote on the procedural issue was, of course, the one, and since it was defeated by only a few votes it might not be exaggerating its influence to suggest we may have influenced significantly the two votes that gave China its triumph.

Thus Canada both directly and indirectly played a major role in breaking the diplomatic log-jam on the bilateral level of contacts between China and other countries, including the United States, in the United Nations. Yet we must not exaggerate either the importance of our role in the past or the influence we can exert in the future. It has been, and will remain, of secondary importance to international considerations and changes within both China and the United States.

In the United States, China has been under constant and intensive review during the past two or three years. I cannot claim the competence required to analyze these trends in any depth, but clearly the most important single factor that helps account for Washington's interest in a policy change is the tragic consequences of Viet-Nam. However, the interpretation of "Vietnamization", American policy seems to have become one of withdrawal from Indochina and a cutback generally on military involvement in Southeast Asia. The cost of that involvement in men, money and international social and political upheaval in the United States has been so enormous that withdrawal

U.S. Response under scrutiny from Peking