

News coverage of the People's Republic of China
by The New York Times
a 1975-1982 content analysis

by

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INTRODUCTION

On December 16, 1978, President Jimmy Carter made a television address to announce: "The United States of America and the People's Republic of China have agreed to recognize each other and to establish diplomatic relations as of January 1, 1979..." [36].

The normalization of diplomatic relations between these two countries seemed to be an important event in the international political affairs of the late 1970s. Before that time, the PRC, with its one-billion population had long been a self-isolated country about which people in the outside world were curious. Foreign newspapers' reporting was limited because of the small amount of communication between China and other countries.

After it opened its doors to the world, China was seen to be changing. It is modernizing, shifting ideological gears, becoming realistic about development needs and goals, and moving away from its isolationist past toward a much more open and pragmatic assessment of its present and future position in the world. Of course, many factors are leading China to make these changes. One was the normalization of diplomatic relations between People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States. With that event, these two countries entered into a new era of bilateral cooperative relationships that gave more people the chance to see into the interior of the People's Republic of China.

Communication media seem to play an important role in transmitting that type of information. The New York Times is considered to be a prestigious newspaper because it covers foreign news more thoroughly

than almost any other newspaper. Consequently, The Times would be expected to have a large influence on public knowledge. The purpose of this study is to determine how The Times reported the People's Republic of China before and after normalization.

This study also provides background to understand the reality of the PRC, its party, its government, its recent history, and the history of Sino-American relationships. Historical relationships between China and the United States are reviewed to provide a context for the findings of this study.

Finally, data gathered from a content analysis of The New York Times are analyzed to determine the quantity and type of news coverage about the PRC. Based on these findings, the author analyzes the relationships between changing diplomatic relation and mass media action.

Study Purpose and Scope of Research

In analyzing content, a researcher needs questions as a guide to identify pertinent content:

1. What was the nature of the news content?
2. Did coverage of the PRC differ before and after normalization, either in space devoted to news or in content?
3. What was the direction of attitudes toward the PRC revealed in The New York Times stories?

Finding answers to the above questions may not reveal all about the coverage of China during the periods covered, but the answers will help

determine how the media, in this case a newspaper, reported news events from another country under certain political circumstances.

Examination of the coverage of The New York Times was limited to the period 1975 to 1982. During this period, sampled news items concerning China were analyzed. The study divides the eight-year period into two stages, 1975-1978 and 1979-1982, i.e. before and after January 1, 1979 -- the point at which diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and the United States were established.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior Research and Relevant Theories

The coverage of international news has attracted many researchers over the past few decades. The following review of several international news studies is given as a basis for the selection of content variables used in this study.

Adams [1] in 1964 indicated that the emphasis in foreign news was put on such "hard news," as politics, economics and news about conflict, crimes and wars. His finding was reinforced by Chang's study of Utah dailies in 1966 [3] which found that "hard news" predominated in international coverage. Chang also found that 75 percent of the foreign items in those papers was straight news.

This conclusion was also supported by Hartgen [7] in 1979. He found that the China-related news in four American newspapers was event oriented. He speculated that most of the news about China was event oriented because visible events were easier for reporters to record than underlying causes or issues, given language and cultural barriers. Reporters covered visible incidents because they were relatively easy to comprehend. So, the stories which they reported were generally narratives of events with the emphasis on what happened, with little attention to the context of events.

Similar results were obtained by Merrill et al. [23] in 1972. But they said that there has long been a realization among world journalists that too little "interpretative" or "explanatory" writing found its way

into the international communications stream.

Hart [6] in 1961 argued that a large portion of the international news between the United States and Canada was written by staff member because of the positive relationships between the countries. This finding indicated that the news of a foreign country would be covered mostly by a paper's staff members if the newspaper's home country had close or subtle diplomatic relationship with that country.

The factor of politics has always influenced the news coverage of foreign countries. Dajani and Donohue [4], in a content analysis of foreign news in six Arab dailies in 1971, indicated that the quantity and direction of coverage of a foreign country in the Arab press was found to be a function of that country's position vis-a-vis the Arab-Israel crisis. Chang's 1981 study [2] also found that the Peking Review's editorial policy toward America was directly linked with the "temperature" of Sino-American relations.

In an introduction to "Muffled Drums," Hachten [5] argued:

A mass media system is also a kind of mirror image of a nation's political and economic structure. Each is sensitive to the other. Newspaper, radio, television, and other media do not operate in a vacuum.

He also said that "wire service nationalism" took precedence over a correspondent's professionalism and competence:

A well-trained and experienced correspondent, his claims of objectivity notwithstanding, still must report the news from the point of view of his own reader's interest, as well as the national interests and foreign policy considerations of his own government.

If, as Hachten claimed, the content of the media was determined by the context of the nation in which they were published, we could assume

that a foreign correspondent to some extent would accommodate his country's policy in reporting a news event.

McDonald [21] in 1971 said that there were many factors influencing the reporting of an event. He listed education, culture, national ties, and day-to-day experiences. His study dealt with Vietnam war coverage by the foreign press. He found that individual reports of the war and over-all coverage differed markedly from nation to nation because of political sensibilities.

Sahin [29] in his study noted that news reporting by The New York Times changed in response to shifts in Turkish-American political relations. His study was based on the principle of congruity. According to the congruity formulation, at a given point in time and space, a person's attitudes are in some state of equilibrium with one another. If and when some of the elements of the structure are altered, an inconsistency is introduced into the prevailing structure. As Tannenbaum [32] suggested, "One of the main means of accommodating such an inconsistency is for modifications to occur in attitudes toward the other elements, changes in accord with the maintenance of a new state of equilibrium." Accordingly, it was hypothesized that as Turkish-American political relations deteriorated, the pressure for congruity would lead to a decline in the evaluative scores of Turkish political figures and institutions as encoded by The New York Times.

It has long been suspected that the media's attitudes toward foreign countries change in response to U.S. foreign policy interest, and there exists some evidence in support of this expectation.

Kriesberg [17] reached this conclusion in 1947 when he concluded that the news stories about Soviet Union in The New York Times from 1917 through May 1946 were keyed to a concept of American interest. The nature of the themes developed, the amount of attention and the manner of reporting news of the Soviet Union were determined by the relationship of American and Soviet interests.

Another study confirmed the finding. Lynch and Effendi's content analysis "Editorial treatment of India in The New York Times" [19] found that those themes supporting American national interests received more favorable treatment and editorial treatment became more favorable as American relationships with India improved.

Generalized Hypotheses

Reviewing the literature above, one can identify some variables and form these generalized hypotheses:

1. News items will mostly be event-oriented reports of fact, with little attention to the context of the event.
- ✓ 2. The subject matter of news stories will be dominated by hard news, such as politics, military, economic and social conflicts.
3. The New York Times' staff members will be the key transmitters of foreign news, when the U.S. has a closer relationship with a country.
4. Treatment of news will change in response to the diplomatic relationships between one country and another country.

Specific operational hypotheses will be listed in the chapter on "Methodology" following background information on the PRC and the historical Sino-American relationship.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE PRC

In 1949, in mainland China, a new regime took the place of the Nationalist government and established the People's Republic of China.

Throughout the turmoil of the changing political situation, especially during the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, the country withdrew into itself and closed its doors. The "bamboo screen" didn't open until mid 1970s. This change probably was inevitable because of increasing interdependence in the world.

China's decision to open its doors was inextricably linked to the confusion of seventies and to the deaths in 1976 of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong, the two key leaders of the country. The rise of Hua Guofeng, and the rise, fall and rise again of Teng Xiaoping brought the nation to a new phase. After normalization of diplomatic relations with the U.S., party leaders began to take advantage of the new relationship to proceed with a series of experiments, various aspects which are continuing today.

In this chapter, the author will present background information about the PRC and its recent history from mid 1970s, which provides a context for examining The New York Times news coverage of China.

PRC -- A Unique Regime

The People's Republic of China is situated in the southeastern part of the Eurasian Continent, on the west edge of the Pacific Ocean. The third largest country in the world, China has a total land area of 9.6 million square kilometres. There are about 1 billion people in China,

the most populous country in the world.

The PRC was founded in 1949. The constitution specified that it was "A new democratic dictatorship--led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants" [8]. The system of government is a centralized, one-party system and a self-styled "dictatorship of the proletariat" [8]. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) played the leading role in the formation of the new China. As Hinton says in his book [8], "The Chinese Communist Party is the unique source of all political power and has the ultimate, exclusive right to legitimize, direct, and control all other political organizations, including the central government." Under this kind of regime, the CCP directs and sets guidelines for people to follow; therefore, interior changes of the PRC are much affected by the political situation.

From Mao Zedong to Teng Xiaoping

The period from the spring of 1973 through Mao's death in the fall of 1976 was one of uncertainty compounded by a sharp internal power struggle. Mao Zedong's strategy of employing the U.S. to counterbalance Soviet pressure and to help re-establish a dominant Chinese position in Southeast Asia appeared to be failing. This crisis in Mao's leadership made it possible for Teng Xiaoping, the staunchest remaining opponent of Mao, to return to power. Teng had been purged in 1967 during the Cultural Revolution. He was put in the right-wing division, which Mao seriously opposed. In 1973, Teng was rehabilitated and made a vice premier. In the policy debate that followed, the familiar pre-cultural

revolution antagonism between Mao and Teng resurfaced.

Teng's protector was Zhou Enlai, who had been elected premier in 1949; he still held the post in 1973. Both of them advocated China's modernization and economic and technological growth. In 1975, the Party held the Fourth National Party Congress. Zhou was seriously ill but still managed to dominate the National Party Congress and to ensure that Teng was made vice chairman of the Army. However, on January 8, 1976, Zhou Enlai died.

Mao, the protector of "reds" (people who are politically pure, like workers, peasants) lived eight months longer than Zhou. During those eight months, a bitter rivalry between Teng and Mao emerged. Although Mao was very ill, he authorized his wife Jiang Ching and three other people to control the party. This so-called "Gang of Four" had come to power through the Cultural Revolution. They included Jiang Ching, Mao's wife; Yao Wenyuan, the Gang of Four's chief theoretician; Zhang Chunchiao, the chairman of Shanghai's Revolutionary Committee, and Wang Hongwen, a vice chairman of the party in 1973. Following the death of Zhou, Teng and his moderates faced the powerful combination of Mao, the Gang of Four, and the militants. On February 8, 1976, the New China News Agency (Hsinhua News Agency) announced that Hua Guofeng had been appointed acting premier. Teng was defeated by an unknown man who had got on well both Mao and Zhou and who had been elected a vice premier in 1975.

Teng's fall caused a series of demonstrations. The most important was the "Tiananmen event" [9]. On April 3, and April 4, 1975, masses of

people gathered in Tienanmen in Beijing to memorialize the late premier Zhou Enlai. Even more unusual was the obvious sympathy the demonstrators expressed for Zhou and, by extension, for Teng and the policies they had. But the activity was swept over by the radicals. Many people were arrested and killed. The Gang of Four publicly criticized Teng and made Hua the first vice chairman of the party.

On September 9, 1976, Mao Zedong died. Although Hua was the successor of Mao, he compromised with the moderates in order to keep his post. On October 6, 1976, Hua sent Mao's former bodyguard to arrest the Gang of Four who were accused of attempting to carry out a coup. In support of his legitimacy, Hua produced Mao's instruction, summarized in a six-character phrase "with you in charge, I'm at ease" [33]. He also agreed to rehabilitate Teng and to make major revisions of economic policy. Hua, therefore, was elected Chairman.

While agreeing to rehabilitate Teng, however, Hua did not commit himself to a specific timetable for Teng's return. In April 1977, the crowds gathered again in Tienanmen to reacclaim their support for Teng. By July, Teng was back in the political committee, working as vice-premier and chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army.

New Stage of the PRC

Teng was rapidly emerging as the real power in Beijing. He played the role of Zhou Enlai's successor, carrying out reforms and instituting programs that were extensions of the late premier's pragmatism and emphasis on economic development.

After normalization of diplomatic relations with the U.S., Teng visited the United States. This visit signified that the new era was to be marked by Chinese development based fully upon the resources of the advanced capitalist-technological world. The visit was also interpreted as indicative of China's turning toward a reasonable approach to economic organization [20].

Modernizations of agriculture, science and technology, industry, and national defense were proposed in 1977. Few achievements had been made before 1979 because of political instability and a severe shortage of capital and talents. After 1979, some aspects of modernization had made enormous strides. The PRC sought a massive inflow of credits and technology from advanced countries, especially the U.S., Japan and West Europe to help realize the four areas of modernization. With the stimulation of capital, technology and new ideas, heavy industry grew rapidly, manufacturing replaced agriculture as the primary contributor to the national product, a mixture of private and collective pursuits were tolerated, the selective science and technology (especially in nuclear power) developed, public health improved, and mass education became nearly universal.

Self-isolated and self-reliant China passed away. Doors to the outside world were opened and international assistance was sought to realize modernization. Whether it will be counted in the front ranks of world powers by the year 2000 is questionable, but in time the Chinese people may succeed in transforming the country into one that is both thoroughly modern and distinctly Chinese.

REVIEW OF SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIPS

In the October 1967 issue of Foreign Affairs, presidential candidate Richard M. Nixon was quoted as urging American policy to "come urgently to grips with the reality of China" [26]. Moving with all deliberate speed, the U.S. and the PRC finally succeeded -- on January 1, 1979, twelve years and three American administrations later -- in establishing mutual recognition and diplomatic relations. This long and difficult process of normalization was filled with tension, frustrations, secret diplomatic maneuvers, and hard bargaining.

Nixon's China Policy

The China policy inherited by the new Republican administration in 1969 was essentially that formulated by the Truman administration in May 1951 in the aftermath of Chinese intervention in the Korean conflict. From 1951 through 1969, the goal of American policy was to isolate and to contain "Communist China." The U.S. refused to recognize the Chinese Communists as the legitimate rulers of China, blocked her admission to the United Nations, cut off all commercial and cultural relations and established close relations with the defeated Chinese Nationalist regime on Taiwan.

But in the late 1960s, things began to change. Both Beijing and Washington began basic foreign policy appraisals which led them to establish a less hostile relationship. Two reasons existed: Firstly, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the proclamation of the Brezhnev doctrine had alarmed the Chinese regarding possible Soviet

intentions on the Sino-Soviet border. Secondly, the new Nixon administration had taken the major decision to explore the "possibility of rapprochement with the Chinese" [15, p. 78]. A few weeks after its installation, the Nixon Administration had begun to send out signals to this effect. In February 1970, Nixon declared in his first foreign policy report:

The Chinese are a great and vital people who should not remain isolated from the international community...United States policy is not likely soon to have much impact on China's behavior, let alone its ideological outlook. But it is certainly in our interest, and in the interest of peace and stability in Asia and the world, that we take what steps we can toward improved practical relations with Beijing [27].

Through Rumanian and Pakistani diplomatic channels, the U.S. assured the Chinese that the U.S. had no intentions to join the Soviet Union against China and they did not wish China to remain isolated any longer. The Chinese welcomed these initiatives and began to send out return signals to the U.S.

In December 1969, Beijing informed Washington through Pakistani channels that it was prepared to resume the Warsaw talks without any conditions. An agreement was then reached to meet on January 20, 1970. Through several meetings, the Chinese response became even clearer. In April 1971, China suddenly invited the American table tennis team to visit China. The U.S. team was participating in the world championship competition in Tokyo. Zhou Enlai personally met the team and hailed the visit as a "new page" in Sino-American relations [16].

In February 1972, Nixon was invited to visit China. It was indeed a tremendous development in Sino-American relations. With this visit,

the two countries went beyond the simple level of normalization. The Shanghai Communique was signed on February 28, 1972 by President Nixon and Premier Zhou Enlai. Until agreement on "normalization" was finally reached and announced in the Joint Communique of December 15, 1978, the Shanghai Communique served as the basic charter of the Sino-American relationship. Nixon gave assurances that he intended to completely normalize relations with Beijing during his second term if he was re-elected in November 1972 with the condition of no military danger existing in Taiwan. The communique also underlined the importance of developing bilateral relations in science, technology, culture, sports and journalism.

In the immediate aftermath of Nixon's visit, relations between the two countries expanded rapidly. Kissinger personally averaged about two visits a year to Beijing to discuss broad international issues. Sino-American trade increased from \$5 million in 1971 to \$934 million in 1974. In cultural exchange, over 8,000 American had gone to the PRC and about 500 Chinese had visited the U.S. [15].

The most important development was the accord of the two governments in February 1973 to establish "liaison offices" in each others' capitals [10]. The Chinese government seemed to hold a policy of continuing the momentum of normalization even before the resolution of the Taiwan issue. The CCP leadership adopted a low-key attitude on Taiwan and conveyed its point to Americans that Taiwan's integration was not urgent and that her incorporation into mainland China was a long-term perspective. The PRC, now, just waited for the time of formal

normalization with the U.S.

Slowdown of Normalization

But unexpected developments pertaining to the Watergate scandal weakened Nixon's political position. The process of normalization from the American end came to a complete halt. Nixon was forced to leave the political stage, saying goodbye to the Presidency in August 1974. His successor Gerald Ford, for domestic reasons, decided to maintain the status quo and to slow down the steps toward normalization [15].

Although China tended to make concessions on Taiwan to pursue global Sino-American entente, the Americans appeared to focus their attention on Russia. This policy made normalization lag. Besides, the domestic politics of the PRC was an obstacle to normalization because of the fading away of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong from the political scene due to their illnesses. Vice-Premier Teng Xiaoping was in charge of everyday affairs of the country. However, his position was not secure as Zhou's had been [9]. Therefore, diplomatic policies seemed to be insecure.

Negotiations were almost deadlocked. Beijing decided to drag its feet. American correspondents were refused admission to reside in China, though they were allowed to come in to cover official visits. Criticisms from Beijing were clearly aimed at Washington. In November 1974, Kissinger visited Beijing. He was not received by Mao Zedong, though Mao had seen less important foreign dignitaries [9]. President Ford visited China in December 1975. He was informed of China's concern

with the lack of progress on the Taiwan issue and her opposition to Soviet-American detente [11].

Formal Establishment of Sino-American Relations

On October 6, 1976, following the death of both Premier Zhou Enlai and Chairman Mao Zedong, a coalition led by Hua Guofeng arrested the Gang of Four in Beijing. Less than a month later, Jimmy Carter was elected the 39th president of the United States.

During the first year of the Carter Administration, Sino-American relations remained frozen. PRC declared to the U.S. "If you want to normalize relations, you have to sever relations with Taiwan, withdraw your troops and abrogate the (defense) treaty" [12].

Although the President stated that there was no set schedule or deadline for normalization, the administration made clear its intention to "move toward full normalization of relations" on the basis of the recognition of one China, while reiterating the importance of settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves by peaceful means [13].

In the spring of 1978, pushed by a series of factors, including difficulties with the Russians on strategic talks, the United States took the decision to break the deadlock even if it involved making some concessions. Brezinski visited Beijing in May 1978 and informed the Chinese that the U.S. had made up its mind to achieve full normalization. Following several secret meetings, the Carter administration agreed to set a target date of January 1, 1979, to complete the normalization process.

The communique was released simultaneously in Washington and Beijing on December 16, 1978. It announced the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and it reaffirmed the points included in the Shanghai Communique. In addition, U.S. "will maintain cultural, commercial, and other official relations with the people of Taiwan" [34]. Immediately after the announcement of the normalization of relations, the U.S. administration announced (a) that almost all the existing agreements with Taiwan -- about fifty of them -- would be continued, with exception of the defense treaty, and (b) that it would continue to meet the defense needs of Taipei [15, p.16].

Relations between China and the United States have come a long way since the Chinese Revolution. Within a period of three decades, they evolved from a state of confrontation to a state of mutual cooperation. The partnership of these two ideological adversaries is a dramatic change in world politics.

The State of Post-Normalization

In the two years following the exchange of mutual recognition and diplomatic missions between the U.S. and China, bilateral relations in virtually all spheres progressed with surprising speed.

With the removal of the Chinese Nationalist embassy in Washington on January 1, 1979, Vice-Premier Teng Xiaoping paid a week-long visit (January 28 to February 5) to Washington. In both ceremonial and substantive terms, Teng's visit was a milestone in Sino-American relations, setting, in President Carter's own words, "a new and

irreversible course" in the history of the two countries.

A Joint Press Communique, issued by Carter and Teng on February 1, further promised to facilitate the accreditation of resident journalists in Beijing and Washington and undertook to conclude trade, aviation, shipping and related agreements in the near future [14].

After this historic visit, the interflow of personnel, ideas, goods, and services between the two countries increased by leaps and bounds. At the end of September 1980, the U.S. Department of State summarized the state of Sino-American relations as follows:

Despite the ideological, cultural and social differences between us, our countries share a common concern with global peace and stability. Consultation between our governments on specific issues is now a normal feature of the international landscape. Although our perspectives on global problems are rarely identical, our policies are often parallel and mutually supportive. Our dialogue proceeds from enlightened self-interest and mutual respect, embracing almost every issue on the international agenda -- from questions of war and peace, to world economic problems, environmental protection, and the organization and management of our Foreign Services. Regular consultative mechanisms now exist between us with respect to global and regional strategic problems, politico-military questions, UN and other multilateral organization affairs, arms control, regional political and economic problems, international narcotics matters, and all aspects of our bilateral relations [35].

The Department of State noted the growth of human contact: "More than 100 Chinese delegations now visit the U.S. each month (up from about two per month in 1978); perhaps 70,000 Americans will visit China in 1980, compared with 10,000 in 1978" [35]. With respect to trade and economic exchange, the Department of State took note of the fact that:

Sino-American trade... has significantly exceeded the most optimistic earlier projections.... China now buys about half of all U.S. cotton exports and is a major importer of U.S. wheat, corn and soybeans; exports of U.S.-manufactured

goods are the fastest growing item in our trade" [35].

By the end of 1980, the PRC became the eleventh largest U.S. export market. Two-way trade reached \$4.9 billion, of which \$3.8 billion was U.S. exports.

The Department of State also noted, "A large and growing number of cultural exchange activities, undertaken at both the governmental and private levels, are giving the American and Chinese peoples broad exposure to each other's artistic and cultural achievements" [35].

Vice-president Mondale, speaking at Beijing University on August 27, 1979, proclaimed American support for "a strong and secure and modernizing China." He declared that the objectives of the United States with respect to China were: (1) To build concrete political ties in the context of mutual security; (2) To build broad cultural relations in a framework of genuine equality; (3) To forge practical economic bonds with the goal of common benefit [30].

By the time of Vice-president Mondale's trip to China, most elements of the Chinese and American governments had established normal contacts and relationships. After Secretary Brown visited China on January 6, 1980, contacts in the defense field were also established and developed. For the first time, the U.S. exported high technology items for military end-use to China and considered the commercial sale of military support equipment to the Chinese. Related to this was agreement to conduct a series of consultations on developments in Southwest, Northeast and Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean area, Europe and the Middle East.

These achievements represent more than the mere normalization of political relations. Relations have advanced to a stage beyond detente -- to a close consultative relationship based on equality, enlightened self-interest, and mutual respect for the differing ideologies and social systems of the two countries. Normalization promises to mark the end of the almost two centuries of inequality, discrimination, and occasional violence between the two nations since their first contact in 1784 [28].

METHODOLOGY

This study deals with the coverage of the People's Republic of China by The New York Times from 1975 to 1982. The eight-year period was divided into two stages: 1975-1978 and 1979-1982. On January 1, 1979, normal diplomatic relationships were established between the PRC and the United States. The thesis will compare the coverage during the two periods.

The study will examine the amount of space devoted to PRC news, the types of items used, the news sources who originally provided the information, the reporting media, the subject matter and the perceived viewpoint of news items during the two periods.

Selection of The New York Times

The New York Times has long been one of the most prestigious newspapers in the U.S. It had a circulation of nearly 854,000 copies in 1980 [24], and is considered to have a strong influence on other media and readers because of being nationally read.

The newspaper was founded in 1851. At that time, the journalist, Henry J. Raymond, and two financiers, George Jones and Edward B. Wesley, saw a need for an inexpensive paper in the New York City field. With Raymond as editor and Jones as business manager, The New York Daily Times was born as a large-size four-page paper, selling at one cent a copy. Over the years, it has become known as a "newspaper of record" and, while most commentators speak of its quantity, there is little doubt but that the general quality of its journalism ranks with the best

of the world [24].

The New York Times' international reporting has been considered one of its strongest areas. As A. S. Steele [31] noted in his book about China in 1966, The New York Times' coverage was "probably pre-eminent in the field." And, he said that in a check made of a dozen United States papers during March, 1964, he found that The New York Times led all newspapers in the amount of space given to China.

Another American newspaper editor, Robert C. Notson of the Portland Oregonian, said about the thoroughness of the Times: "The New York Times is unique in its field. Both in completeness and authority, it sets a high standard.... As nearly as a newspaper can be, it is a history of one day in the world of events" [24].

The New York Times operates under a libertarian press system, enjoys the press freedom written into the U.S. constitution, and maintains political independence. The New York Times is widely read in U.S. and microfilms of all issues are readily available in university libraries.

Hypotheses and Categories

Six hypotheses were examined:

1. Differences in types of item covered will be found concerning the PRC before and after the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relationships between the PRC and the U.S.
2. Differences in column inches of news coverage about the PRC before and after the normalization with the U.S. will be

found.

3. Differences in subject matter concerning the PRC before and after normalization with the U.S. will be found.
4. News sources will change before and after normalization.
5. The amount of information filed by The New York Times' staff members or by other news agencies before and after normalization with the U.S. will differ.
6. Direction of attitudes toward the PRC exhibited in news stories will change after normalization.

✓ A total of six variables were utilized to evaluate each articles.

The variables concerned: 1) types of item, 2) item length, 3) subject matter, 4) news source who originally provided the information, 5) filing agencies, and 6) direction (negative or positive).

Definitions, written prior to coding, were framed to indicate content characteristics relevant to each category.

Type of item

1. report of fact: deals with the report of an event or situation that has significance or interest or both. Those events or situations have happened or will happen. They include straight news, announcement, and reports from other reports.
2. feature story: a creative, somewhat subjective article designed primarily to entertain and to inform readers of an event, a situation or an aspect of life. They are often accompanied by pictures and mostly written by The New York

Times staff members.

3. analysis: a background story or interpretation of an event or situation.
4. editorial: article on the editorial page showing the newspaper's attitude and viewpoint toward events or situations. Also may include commentary and opinion columns.
5. letters to editors: readers' opinions toward events or situations.
6. illustrations: photographs or graphics.

Item length

Column inch was the unit of space measurement. The standard format of The New York Times is six columns with a daily banner headline. Each column is twenty-one inches.

Subject matter

1. politics: domestic or international politics, diplomatic relations with other countries, political activities, government, election, political suppression.
2. military: armed conflicts, defense, military force, war, armament, boundaries, territorial issues, bombing, coups, terrorist activities, military school, military training, military organization, arms purchases, arms production, military agreement.
3. economics: domestic, international economic conditions, trade, business, finance, production, transportation, sales,

marketing, unemployment, money, price, banking, foreign investment, trade agreement.

4. social issues: strikes, riots, demonstrations, social problems, crime, general social phenomena, people's living conditions, family planning, etc.
5. judicial and legal matters: legal disputes, movement of the judiciary, sentences, legal doctrines, trial, inquiries, appellations.
6. accident and natural disaster: fire, earthquake, car crashes, aircraft crashes, draught, flood, etc.
7. culture: education, music, arts, travel, literary achievement.
8. sports: all kinds of sports, sportsmen, competition, sports negotiations, sports meetings.
9. health and family: all kinds of medical news, diseases, health affairs, food, nutrition.
10. religion: religious activities, religious features, etc.
11. science and technology: technological news, scientific invention.
12. public record: vital statistics, population.
13. miscellaneous

News source

1. the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) or excerpts taken from its official agencies.
2. the United States and its official agencies.

3. international source other than PRC and U.S.
4. private or individual sources, such as experts or scholars.

X Filing agencies

1. UPI (United Press International)
2. AP (Associated Press)
3. Reuters
4. AFP (Agence France Presse)
5. The Globe and Mail
6. The New York Times staff members
7. Persons not associated with The New York Times or any news agency, such as freelance writers or other private persons.

Direction

Direction includes perceived positive, neutral or negative attitudes toward the People's Republic of China in an article.

1. positive means that the subject matter of the article is judged with a favorable viewpoint by the source of information.
2. neutral means that the content of the article does not have any subjective slant. It is an informative article.
3. negative means that the subject matter of the article is judged with an unfavorable viewpoint by the source of information.

A pre-test was conducted to check the reliability of the direction coding. Three graduate students were invited to read several news items

from the New York Times and judge the articles' attitude. Compared to the author's judgment of the same articles, there were no significant differences by t-test.

Each article was recorded on a coding sheet, then punched separately on computer card. Data were processed by SAS.

Sampling Procedure

Because the research covered an eight-year period of news coverage, a sample of issues was analyzed. To insure that the sample issues analyzed would be more representative, reconstructed composite weeks were utilized. The procedures were specified as:

1. The sampling universe was 2688 issues in an eight-year period, calculated in this way:
$$7(\text{issues/per week}) * 12(\text{weeks/per quarter}) * 4(\text{quarters/per year}) * 8(\text{years}) = 2688(\text{issues/eight years})$$
2. An artificial week of seven days, Monday through Sunday was constructed for each quarter using a random number table.
3. Since 12 was a two-digit number, the last two columns from a random number table was used. The value looked for was equal to or less than twelve. For example, if Monday was the first day to be selected and 03 was the first number pointed in the table, then, the first issue used would be the third Monday within the quarter.

The same procedure was repeated until thirty-two reconstructed

weeks were determined for a total of 224 issues of the newspaper.

In order to find articles more easily, "The New York Times' Index" was utilized to extract all news regarding the PRC among the sample issues. There were 173 articles in 120 sample issues which mentioned the People's Republic of China by name. Another 104 issues did not have any articles relating to PRC.

FINDINGS

Findings are based on the quantitative analysis of number of news items and amount of space devoted to the news items. Six analytical approaches are dealt with: type of item, item length, subject matter, news source, filing agencies and direction of The New York Times' articles concerning the People's Republic of China. The analysis is made on a sample of 224 issues selected from all issues published from 1975 to 1982.

Total Number of News Items

TABLE 1. Frequency of news items in period I and period II

	Period I	Period II	Total
Frequency of news items	73	107	180
Expected frequency	90	90	180

$\chi^2 = 7.61$
Prob. < 0.05

Among 224 issues, 73 articles appeared during period I and 107 during period II. Table 1 indicates that the total number of news items increased after normalization and the difference was significant.

Total Amount of Space of News Items

Table 2 and Table 3 indicate that the total column inches in period II clearly numbered more than those in period I. The chi-square is 93.8 of text and 42.16 of illustration. Both increases were significant.

TABLE 2. Amount of space in text in period I and period II

	Period I	Period II	Total
Column inches	876.0	1331.0	2207.0
Expected columnn inches	1103.5	1103.5	2207.0

$\chi^2 = 93.8$
 Prob. < 0.05

TABLE 3. Amount of space in illustration in period I and period II

	Period I	Period II	Total
Column inches	138.0	269.0	407.0
Expected column inches	203.5	203.5	407.0

$\chi^2 = 42.16$
 Prob. < 0.05

This means that in period II, more news space was given to Chinese news by The New York Times than in period I.

Type of Item

Articles were divided into six types of items: report of fact, feature story, analysis, editorial, letters to the editors, and illustration. However, there was no significant difference in terms of number of items before and after normalization. Reports of fact were found to be the most numerous in both periods (Table 4). This type of item comprised nearly 73% of all the articles. Feature stories increased from 1 in period I to 6 articles in period II. The percentage changed from 1.4% to 5.6%.

TABLE 4. Distribution by type of item in period I and period II

Type of item	Period I		Period II		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Report of fact	53	72.6	78	72.9	131	72.8
Feature story	1	1.4	6	5.6	7	3.9
Analysis	13	17.8	14	13.1	27	15.0
Editorials	2	2.7	2	1.9	4	2.2
Letters to the editor	3	4.1	4	3.7	7	3.9
Illustration	1	1.4	3	2.8	4	2.2
Total	73	100.0	107	100.0	180	100.0

$\chi^2 = 4.28$
 Prob. > 0.05

Analyses decreased slightly in percentage of all articles, from 17.8% to 13.1% after normalization. This was the second most frequently-found type of item in both periods.

Editorials, letters to the editors and illustrations were small percentages of total items.

Although distribution of type of item did not show a significant change between period I and period II, the total number of column inches showed a big increase after normalization (Table 5). The space expansion was mainly due to the increased amount of space for feature stories and reports of fact.

Analyses comprised 30% of the news space in period I but only 20% of the space in period II.

The amount of space given to editorials and letters to the editors did not significantly change. But column inches of illustration increased from 1.5 column inches to 27.5 column inches. Its percentage

TABLE 5. Column inches by type of item in period I and period II

Type of item	Period I		Period II		Total	
	Col."	%	Col."	%	Col."	%
Report of fact	539.0	61.5	847.5	63.7	1386.5	62.8
Feature story	17.0	1.9	130.0	9.8	147.0	6.6
Analysis	263.0	30.0	266.5	20.0	529.5	24.0
Editorials	32.0	3.7	26.5	2.0	58.5	2.7
Letters to the editor	23.5	2.7	33.0	2.4	56.5	2.6
Illustration	1.5	0.2	27.5	2.1	29.0	1.3
Total	876.0	100.0	1331.0	100.0	2207.0	100.0

$\chi^2 = 90.78$
 Prob. < 0.05

increased to 2% of the total space after normalization.

Item Length

Table 6 indicates that the distribution of item length differed significantly before and after normalization. Most of the articles fell in the range between 0.5 inches and 24 inches. In period I, more than 90% of the articles consisted of less than 24 inches, of which over half were less than 12 inches (less than half a column). There were no articles over 36.5 inches.

In period II, the length of articles was primarily either less than 6 inches or between 12.5 and 24 inches. There were 4.6% of the articles over 30.5 inches, including one 50-inch analysis.

Table 6 also indicates that the number of articles of a length between 12.5 and 24 inches increased about 12% after normalization and

the number of articles ranging from 6.5 to 12 inches decreased about 11% after 1979.

TABLE 6. Distribution by item length in period I and period II

Column inches	Period I		Period II		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0.5 - 6	22	30.1	35	32.7	57	31.7
6.5 - 12	21	28.8	19	17.8	40	22.3
12.5 - 18	13	17.8	26	24.3	39	21.7
18.5 - 24	11	15.1	22	20.6	33	18.3
24.5 - 30	3	4.1	2	1.9	5	2.8
30.5 -	3	4.1	3	2.7	6	3.2
Total	73	100.0	107	100.0	180	100.0

$\chi^2 = 15.39$
 Prob. < 0.05

TABLE 7. Column inches by text in period I and period II

Column inches	Period I		Period II		Total	
	Col."	%	Col."	%	Col."	%
0.5 - 6	67.5	7.6	111.5	8.4	179.0	8.1
6.5 - 12	189.0	21.6	166.0	12.5	355.0	16.1
12.5 - 18	199.5	22.8	411.5	30.9	611.0	27.7
18.5 - 24	236.5	27.0	463.5	34.8	700.0	31.7
24.5 - 30	78.5	9.0	58.0	4.4	136.0	6.2
30.5 -	105.0	12.0	120.5	9.0	225.5	10.2
Total	876.0	100.0	1131.0	100.0	2207.0	100.0

$\chi^2 = 74.8$
 Prob. < 0.05

Table 7 shows that the amount of space of text changed significantly from period I to period II; 21.6% of total space was

allocated in the range between 6.5 and 12 inches in period I, but dropped to 12.5% of the total space in period II. About half of the total news space was of a length between 12.5 and 24 inches in period I. It increased to about 15% of the total space in period II. The amount of space used for very short or very long articles did not change significantly before and after normalization.

Subject Matter

Thirteen categories of subject matter were analyzed: 1) politics; 2) military; 3) economics; 4) social issues; 5) judicial and legal matters; 6) accident and natural disaster; 7) culture; 8) sports; 9) health and family; 10) religion; 11) science and technology; 12) public record; and 13) miscellaneous. Because items in some categories were limited, the author merged the category of judicial and legal matters into a category of politics and likewise the categories of sports and religion into a category of culture.

From Table 8, we see that the dominant subject matters were politics, the military and economics in both periods. In period I, the top three categories comprised over 80% of the articles, and in period II, they comprised nearly 79% of the articles. However, significant differences were found in the distribution of subject matter categories. Political articles decreased from 63% to 37% of total articles after normalization. On the other hand, news dealing with military increased from 8% to 24% of the articles after normalization. Articles about economics, social issues and culture increased slightly in period II.

TABLE 8. Distribution by subject matter in period I and period II

Subject matter	Period I		Period II		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Politics	46	63.0	40	37.3	86	47.8
Military	6	8.2	26	24.3	32	17.7
Economics	10	13.7	18	16.8	28	15.6
Social issues	3	4.2	8	7.5	11	6.1
Accident and natural disaster	2	2.7	2	1.9	4	2.2
Culture	2	2.7	8	7.4	10	5.6
Miscellaneous	4	5.5	5	4.8	9	5.0
Total	73	100.0	107	100.0	180	100.0

$\chi^2 = 14.52$
Prob. < 0.05

TABLE 9. Column inches by subject matter in period I and period II

Subject matter	Period I		Period II		Total	
	Col."	%	Col."	%	Col."	%
Politics	584.0	66.7	493.5	37.1	1077.5	49.0
Military	61.5	7.0	262.5	19.7	324.0	14.7
Economics	98.0	11.2	247.5	18.6	345.0	15.6
Social issues	57.0	6.2	163.5	12.3	220.5	10.0
Accident and natural disaster	17.0	1.9	12.0	0.9	29.0	1.3
Culture	30.0	3.4	100.5	7.6	130.5	5.8
Miscellaneous	28.5	3.3	51.5	3.8	80.0	3.6
Total	876.0	100.0	1331.0	100.0	2207.0	100.0

$\chi^2 = 214.55$
Prob. < 0.05

In regard to amount of space, news about politics occupied the largest amount of space in period I (Table 9). 66% of the total news space was in politics. However, in period II, news space in political articles declined to 37% of the total space. The column inches for military and economics articles increased in period II, to 38% of the total space instead of 18%.

Social issues comprised 12.3% of the news space in period II. The increase was about 6% of the total column inches devoted to the PRC. Column inches devoted to culture (including sports and religion) increased from 3% to about 8% of total space. The difference of amount of space by subject matter was significant between the two periods.

News Source

Four news sources were analyzed in the study. The news sources providing the original information were categorized as 1) the PRC, 2) the U.S., 3) other countries, and 4) private sources.

TABLE 10. Distribution by news source in period I and period II

News source	Period I		Period II		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PRC	37	50.7	56	52.3	93	51.7
U.S	8	11.0	18	16.8	26	14.4
Other countries	10	13.7	16	15.0	26	14.4
Private source	18	24.6	17	15.9	35	19.5
Total	73	100.0	107	100.0	180	100.0

$\chi^2 = 2.7$
 Prob. > 0.05

Looking at Table 10, we can see that China itself was the main information provider in both periods. It accounted for over half of all items in either period. Private sources provided 24.6% of all articles in period I. Its frequency ranked second to the PRC. In period II, information from private source dropped to 15.9% of total items. The news from the U.S. comprised the smallest percentage of the articles in period I, but became the second most frequently appearing in period II. The percentage increased from 11% to about 17% of the total articles. The number of articles representing news from other countries did not change much after normalization. However, there was no significant difference in the distribution of news sources as a whole between the two periods.

TABLE 11. Column inches by news source in period I and period II

News source	Period I		Period II		Total	
	Col."	%	Col."	%	Col."	%
PRC	339.0	38.7	694.0	52.2	1033.5	46.8
U.S.	90.0	10.3	240.5	18.1	331.0	15.0
Other countries	100.0	11.4	149.5	11.2	249.5	11.3
Private source	346.5	39.6	246.5	18.5	593.0	26.9
Total	876.0	100.0	1331.0	100.0	2207.0	100.0

$\chi^2 = 128.56$
 Prob. < 0.05

The PRC provided the second highest number of column inches in period I (Table 11), 339 column inches, 7 inches less than private sources. In period II, the amount of space in which the PRC was the

news source changed from 38.7% to 52.2% of total news space. Private sources dropped from 39.6% of the total space to about 21% in period II.

News from U.S. source occupied only 10% of the total space, but it increased to 18% after normalization. The amount of space by news source differed significantly between period I and period II.

Filing Agencies

TABLE 12. Distribution by filing agencies in period I and period II

Filing agencies	Period I		Period II		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
UPI	4	5.5	8	7.5	12	6.7
AP	4	5.5	17	15.9	21	11.7
Foreign news agencies	19	26.0	9	8.4	28	15.5
New York Times	39	53.4	63	58.9	102	56.7
Others	7	9.6	10	9.3	17	9.4
Total	73	100.0	107	100.0	180	100.0

$\chi^2 = 22.01$
 Prob. < 0.05

Table 12 indicates that The New York Times' staff members filed most of the articles, more than 50% in both periods. There was a statistically significant shift in filing agencies in the two periods. Before normalization, news agencies other than American news agencies played important roles in filing the news, especially Reuters, who ranked second to The New York Times' staff members. Reuters, AFP, and Globe and Mail disseminated 26% of the articles in period I, but only transmitted 8% of the articles in period II.

After formal diplomatic relations were established between China and the U.S., the American news agencies filed more articles than they did previously (Table 12). UPI and AP together filed about 23% of the articles in period II, while in period I, they filed only 11% of the total.

TABLE 13. Column inches by filing agencies in period I and period II

Filing agencies	Period I		Period II		Total	
	Col."	%	Col."	%	Col."	%
UPI	14.0	1.6	37.5	2.8	51.5	2.3
AP	11.0	1.3	76.0	5.7	87.0	3.9
Foreign news agencies	146.0	16.6	42.0	3.2	188.0	8.5
New York Times	594.0	67.8	993.0	74.6	1587.0	71.9
Others	111.0	12.7	182.5	13.7	293.5	13.4
Total	876.0	100.0	1331.0	100.0	2207.0	100.0

$\chi^2 = 146.97$
 Prob. < 0.05

Based on column inches, New York Times' staff members wrote the majority of the material in both periods. They occupied 67.8% of total space in period I and 74.6% of total space in period II. Foreign news agencies accounted for 16.6% of the total column inches in period I, but the percentage dropped sharply in period II to 3.2% (Table 13). American news agencies filed about 3% of the total space in period I, but comprised 8.5% of total space in period II. Other filing agencies accounted for about the same percentage of total space in both periods. The differences of amount of space by filing agencies were statistically

significant.

Direction

TABLE 14. Distribution by direction in period I and period II

Direction	Period I		Period II		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Positive	9	12.3	11	10.3	20	11.0
Neutral	51	69.9	84	78.5	135	75.0
Negative	13	17.8	12	11.2	25	13.9
Total	73	100.0	107	100.0	180	100.0

$\chi^2 = 1.97$
 Prob. > 0.05

Table 14 indicates that there was no significant difference in the distribution by direction in period I and period II. Most of the articles were neutral in orientation -- 69.9% of total material in period I and 78.5% in period II. Positive articles decreased slightly, from 12.3% to 10.3% of total articles. Negative reports comprised 5% more than the positive reports of the articles in period I, while in period II, those two kinds of reports were split almost evenly.

Based on column inches of space, neutral stories accounted for 57.5% of total space in period I and 71.4% of total space in period II (Table 15). Positive articles comprised 15.6% of total column inches in period II which was 1% more than those in period I. Negative articles decreased from 28% to 13% of total space between the two periods. The column inches by direction differed significantly before and after

TABLE 15. Column inches by direction in period I and period II

Direction	Period I		Period II		Total	
	Col."	%	Col."	%	Col."	%
Positive	127.0	14.5	208.0	15.6	335.0	15.2
Neutral	504.0	57.5	950.0	71.4	1454.0	65.9
Negative	245.0	28.0	173.0	13.0	418.0	18.9
Total	876.0	100.0	1331.0	100.0	2207.0	100.0

$\chi^2 = 102.85$
 Prob. < 0.05

normalization.

DISCUSSION

In this study, one of the general hypotheses was that differences in news coverage about the PRC by The New York Times before and after normalization would be found. To support or reject this hypothesis, a random sample of 224 issues between January 1, 1975, and December 31, 1982, was drawn from a universe of 2688 issues. Among the sample issues, 180 articles dealt with the PRC by name. The articles were allocated into two periods -- period I, from January 1, 1975, to December 31, 1978, and period II, from January 1, 1979, to December 31, 1982. There were 73 articles in period I and 107 in period II.

The findings indicate that there were differences in the types of items written concerning the PRC in the periods before and after the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations between the PRC and the U.S.

Reports of fact were the most frequently found of six types of items. This finding supports prior research which speculated that straight news dominated foreign news coverage. In China, most foreign correspondents live in high-rise hotels, sanitized ghettos for aliens [18]. This naturally sets up a formidable barrier between the foreign reporters and the ordinary Chinese. The isolation also makes it extremely difficult for correspondents to keep up with the flow of events. Writing the event-oriented straight news seems to be easier than doing in-depth reporting.

Reports of fact and feature stories increased both in the number of articles and amount of space after normalization. After 1979, reporters

had a chance to take a look at China in areas other than politics, the military and the economy. The increase of diverse feature stories seemed to be predictable as the U.S. improved relations with the PRC and reporters were permitted more access to the Chinese culture.

Differences in the number of column inches given to coverage of the PRC before and after normalization with the U.S. supports hypothesis 2.

In period I, most articles were less than 12 inches in length, but in period II articles were mostly between 12.5 and 24 inches. As articles tended to be longer after normalization, total column inches increased significantly after 1979. Without a doubt, The New York Times devoted much more space to news of China as the U.S. improved relations with the PRC.

A test of hypothesis 3 yielded a significant difference between the two periods in terms of subject matter. The differences between the two periods resulted from two key factors -- a decline in political news and an increase in economic and military news in period II.

Before normalization, the PRC faced many problems concerning domestic politics and the development of Sino-American relations. In the first period, the political news published in The New York Times dealt mostly with Mao Zedong's leadership, post-Mao's political situation, the power struggle between Teng Xiaoping and Hua Guofeng, and development of Sino-American diplomatic relations.

For example, on January 27, 1975, The New York Times published an article to report Mao's influence on the National People's Congress. On March 4, 1975, The New York Times used nearly two columns to print Yao

Wen-yuan's criticism of the bourgeois. Yao was Mao's private secretary and was instructed by Mao to write this article for publication in a Shanghai newspaper. On March 11, 1976, there was a report describing the conflict between Mao and Teng, the conflict between Teng and Hua, and the relationship between Mao and Hua.

Similar reports about the power struggle appeared frequently in period I, such as "China Expands Praise of Hua in Apparent Effort to Enhance His Image" published on November 10, 1976, and "Teng's Elevation Reported" printed on November 13, 1977.

From 1976 to 1978, the articles often addressed Sino-American relations. For example, on April 17, 1977, The New York Times printed an article entitled "China has come up faster than Mr. Carter expected," and on June 9, 1977, "Some small steps toward Peking" appeared.

After normalization, the PRC's domestic power struggle calmed. Teng seized control and led the country. At the same time, the development of Sino-American relations tended to stabilize. The reports related to these two topics decreased comparatively. The coverage about PRC's politics switched focus to Teng's domestic policy and the PRC's external diplomacy. The news about Teng ranged from his capture of power to his political thought and performance. Coverage dealing with the PRC's external relations was limited not only to the U.S., but expanded to include Soviet Union, Vietnam, North Korea, Japan and other European countries. In terms of content, this reflected The New York Times' attention to the PRC's interior situation and her external development in Asian and European areas which might have influence on

America's interest in the world.

Military news about the PRC tended to receive greater coverage in period II. This result could be attributed to the outbreak of the Sino-Vietnam war. Being a new friend of the PRC, the Americans seemed to be concerned about this event. The war was reported with frequency in 1979. In the issues of February, March, April, and October in 1979 and February in 1980, The New York Times devoted a large portion of news space to covering this event. Reporting included straight news, analysis and commentary.

Another two topics of military news should be mentioned. One was the suspenseful territorial issue between the PRC and the Soviet Union. From the issue of April 8, 1979, an image of the long lasting Sino-Soviet boundary unease appeared. The report noted that:

The Soviet Union and China are slowly moving toward negotiations on improving their relations, the first such talks since their 1969 border clash. There is no possibility the Moscow talks will end the Chinese-Soviet split. But both sides, and the U.S. as well, would like to defuse the tension along the 4,150-mile border, now bristling with troops and missiles on both sides.

The situation did not improve and tension existed into the '80s. For instance, on July 4, 1982, The New York Times reported "China exploded a simulated tactical nuclear weapon last month during war games aimed at Soviet.... Atomic bomb exploded deep in the ranks of the 'enemy'." The increase in military news could be attributed to a tendency of the Times to report news in terms of American interest. As Richard M. Nixon indicated in an interview in The New York Times, "The key factor that brought us (the U.S. and China) together was our common

concern with the Soviet threat, and our recognition that we had a better chance of containing that threat if we replaced hostility with cooperation between Peking and Washington" [25]. Thus, Sino-Soviet border issues and the situation of Asia assumed greater priority in American interests. Another topic was the reporting of China's strengthening of its military power, including purchasing arms from the U.S., Canada and Britain, developing its self-producing military equipment, and preventing the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.

Before 1977, economic news did not appear in the sampled issues. From 1977 to 1978, news coverage touched upon the topic of the PRC's trade with other countries. In period II, the trend was more obvious.

According to these findings, The New York Times put more emphasis on the reporting of economics after normalization. The coverage mostly dealt with China's economic activities in conjunction with the U.S. and advanced countries and the operation of China's modernization campaign. The content dealt with a new phase of the PRC's economics and indicated that China interacted frequently with the outside world in bilateral economic cooperation and merchandise transactions. For example, in the issue of February 18, 1982, an article noted that:

..bidding invitation opens a new phase in China's economic cooperation in which foreign technology will be put to work developing Chinese oil resources. Having abandoned the tenet of economic self-reliance espoused by the late Mao Zedong, China has opened its offshore areas to foreign companies.

Those kinds of reporting dominated the coverage of Chinese economics after normalization. The New York Times showed much interest in related topics probably because the U.S. paid much more attention to

the Chinese economy after normalization. Nixon said in an interview, "We must work actively and imaginatively to expand the economic dimension of our relationship. An economically strong China can be an enormously important trading partner, an effective counter weight to the Soviet Union's ambitions and an obstacle to Soviet's expansion" [25]. Thus, China's commercial activities and market information became more important for the U.S. as the two countries' relations strengthened. The Times' increased emphasis on economic news seemed to be understandable in view of its role as conveyor of world-wide information.

Other than politics, the military, and economics, the remaining categories played nonsignificant roles in The New York Times reporting. The issues sampled did not cover news concerning health and family, science and technology, and public record in either period. In period II, there were two additional subjects which did not appear in period I -- sports and religion. More items and column inches about these subject matters showed that after normalization The New York Times tended to devote news space to diverse subject matters that reflected the more open Chinese culture.

Hypothesis 4 was supported, that news sources changed before and after normalization with the U.S. News originating from China and the U.S. in period II accounted for 70% of the articles. This implied that the two countries provided more information about the PRC after they established formal diplomatic relations.

The information from China came primarily from the party news

agency, New China News Agency (Hsinhua News Agency) and the organ newspaper, People's Daily (Jenmin Ji Pao). In other words, the Chinese government always gave the official news to the government-related news organizations, but not directly to the international correspondents.

News from private sources decreased both in number of items and in column inches in period II. This result could be attributed to the fact that China and the U.S.'s official news sources played more important roles than private sources after they had established official relations. The New York Times published a greater share of articles of which the PRC and the U.S. were news sources probably because those news sources were the most reliable and accurate.

A test of hypothesis 5 indicated that there were significant differences in the amount of information by The New York Times' staff members and by other news agencies before and after normalization.

Before the U.S. established the relations with China, The New York Times had correspondents in Hongkong but not in China. Although they could get information in different ways, they did not have much access to the Chinese officials and people. Under these circumstances, international news agencies provided wire services to The New York Times to supplement the shortage of correspondent-generated news. Those news agencies whose home countries had formal relations with China could cover Chinese news more easily. Reuters, for example, was the British news agency which disseminated more news than any other news agency because Britain had long been a friend of the PRC and had an official relationship with China.

After normalization, American news agencies took the place of Reuters as primary agency. For instance, UPI and AP together transmitted 23% of the articles, while foreign news agencies disseminated only 8% of the total articles. Since The New York Times had a permanent foreign bureau in China in 1979, most of the articles were written by its correspondents in China. From 1979 to 1982, 60% of the articles were reported by The New York Times' staff members. Compared with other filing agencies, The New York Times' newsmen bore most responsibility for news dissemination during both periods. The tendency was more obvious after normalization.

For hypothesis 6, the direction of attitude toward the PRC based on column inches did change before and after normalization.

Much of the information about China appearing in The New York Times took the form of factual articles of a neutral direction. Neutrality was the prime motivation in American foreign policy during late 1970s. For example, the U.S. played a neutral role in the Sino-Vietnam war. It did not want to intervene the war and therefore did not criticize China's invasion which was condemned by other countries. An article in February, 1979, specified this situation:

Administration officials stressed today that the United States would not become involved in the fighting between Communist nations in Asia but would concentrate its diplomatic efforts on ending the conflicts....Senator Howard H. Baker Jr., the minority leader, who has been in contact with President Carter,...seemed pleased with the Administration's policy.

In comments on the ABC television program "Issues and Answers," Senator Baker said the United States was playing "the right role in watching, in cautioning both countries and trying to avoid being the partisan of either China or Russia in this situation."

Improved relations with China might explain American neutrality on military affairs in 1979, the year of normalization. Reflecting diplomatic policy, The New York Times itself did not make any negative comment on this event.

As results indicated, negative articles decreased by about 15% of total space and positive articles went up slightly in news space after normalization. Although the attitude toward China did not change significantly to more positive, it became less negative or more neutral. This finding supports prior research that The York Times' attitude would be responsive to American foreign policy to some extent.

CONCLUSION

In general, differences between the two periods, before and after normalization, were found in The New York Times' coverage of the PRC in regard to the amount of news space, the nature, the kind and attitude as well as the attention paid to the PRC.

The study showed that The New York Times was found to devote significantly greater space and more items to Chinese news after normalization. This finding indicated that readers of the newspaper were exposed to more Chinese news during period II.

In regard to the type of news presented by The New York Times, it was found that the event-oriented straight news dominated the paper. That supports prior research by Hartgen [7] which indicated that visible events were easier for reporters to record than underlying causes or issues. More emphasis on feature stories after normalization might be attributed to the effect of closer relations between China and the U.S. which offered reporters more opportunity to view various aspects of China more deeply other than just reporting political, military and economic news. However, straight news still dominated content during period II.

In regard to item length, longer articles were found after normalization. That could be attributed to the fact that The New York Times paid more attention to Chinese news as the U.S. improved relations with China.

Categorization of Chinese news by subject matter indicated that the paper covered a variety of subjects after normalization. News of

politics, military and economics are proportionately greater than other subjects. That supports Adam's study [1] that hard news dominated that foreign coverage. It was also found that these types of news appeared more frequently in The New York Times after the U.S. established official relations with China. This was seemingly due to the growing relations between the two countries and a greater U.S. need for much more information pertaining to American interests.

In regard to news sources, it was found that the news for which China and the U.S. were news sources increased significantly after normalization. That could be explained by the possibility that official news sources provided more information which might have been more accurate and reliable as relations improved between the two countries.

The study showed that in regard to filing agencies, The New York Times' staff members were found to write most of the articles in The New York Times, particularly after normalization. Wire services played complementary roles in news transmission. The result could be attributed to the permanent foreign bureau in Peking after 1979. American news agencies were found to disseminate more news than other foreign news agencies after normalization. One could speculate that American news organizations had more access to news makers as the PRC and the U.S. established formal relations.

The findings of the study in regard to the direction of attitudes projected by The New York Times supported the contention that American foreign policy affects news coverage. As Hachten [5], McDonald [21], Sahin [29], Chang [2] and Kriesberg [17] predicted, newspaper attitude

does correlate with the American political relationship with other countries. From this study, one could conclude that attitudes of the U.S. toward China were reflected in The New York Times to some extent and reporting did change in response to shifts in Sino-American political relations.

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