

A Little Ball Moved the Big Ball

The Compromise that Ended the Post WWII Sino-American Conflict

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Individual Website

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As an international student, I am in the unique position of knowing both the history of my home country, China, and the U.S. Looking for a historic event that involved Sino-American relations, I decided to choose Ping-Pong diplomacy because of its importance in the relationship of these two nations.

Because I am fluent in both English and Chinese, I was able to conduct bilingual research and understand both countries' perspectives. The interviews I conducted with Chinese professors Qiu and Zhong and American professor Esenwein greatly contributed to my research. Dr. Qiu related Ping-Pong diplomacy with people-to-people diplomacy, while Dr. Esenwein discussed the event in context of the Cold War. Also, I read primary resources from both Chinese and American politicians, including Nixon's and Kissinger's memoirs, Zhou's speeches, and Mao's articles. Those materials helped me to understand both countries' positions and concerns. Additionally, I read an extensive amount of articles from academic journals to explore the social and economic effects of Ping-Pong diplomacy and the various aspect of Sino-American conflicts.

I designed my website to be simple; the main colors are white and pale green, as simplicity is indicative of Chinese classical art and exemplifies the seriousness of the diplomatic theme. I began every section with two quotes, one from a Chinese figure and one from an American leader, to summarize my contents and also to emphasize two distinct perspectives. Also, I tied visual elements with my paragraphs using numbers so readers can easily connect my statements to the historical evidence. I added several political illustrations that humorously depict events; for example, the illustration in the thesis statement page shows that Ping-Pong diplomacy started on the Chinese side from the left side of the Great Wall, which symbolized the isolation between China and the world. When I talked about the impact of the Soviet Union, I used two Chinese political posters with opposite meanings to ironically show the sharp change in Sino-Soviet relations.

Ping-Pong Diplomacy, as the first non-government exchange between two nations after 1949, was a turning point of Sino-American relations. It resolved the acute conflicts and paved a path to compromise and cooperation. When the People's Republic of China was established, the PRC and the U.S. had no diplomatic relations and viewed each other as enemies. In the 1960s, both sides eventually realized the benefits of Sino-American cooperation. When they wanted to start diplomatic talks, the U.S. Table Tennis team traveled to Nagoya in Japan for the 31st World Table Tennis Championships and received an invitation to visit China. This event provided an

opportunity to ease tensions between two nations and promote cultural exchange. Politically, the

Chinese government sent a friendly message to western countries via this invitation.

Immediately, America released its restrictions on China. Furthermore, this event accelerated

higher-level diplomatic events such as Nixon's visit of China in 1972.