http://www.johndclare.net/China12.htm

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| **China and the USA** |
| **Summary**  **Before 1970, China's relations with the USA were rock-bottom – for the Chinese Communists, America embodied capitalism and imperialism.**  **After 1970, however, as China's relations with the USSR continued strained, relations with the United States (to the surprise of the world) improved.** |  |
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| **Why China’s relations with the USA were poor** |
| **a.  Taiwan** |
| After the communist victory in 1949, the US continued to say that Taiwan was the legitimate government of China, and the US fleet protected Taiwan against PRC invasion |
| **b.  Korea and Vietnam** |
| Chinese forces attacked UN/US troops in Korea, and China financed and provided weapons for the North Vietnamese |
| **c.  Foreign Claims Commission, 1967** |
| The US set up a claims commission, which (unsuccessfully) demanded restitution for assets seized in 1949 of companies such as Esso and American Express |
| **d.  The Third Front** |
| Convinced that the US intended to invade China, the Chinese built a huge network of fortifications, capable of surviving a nuclear attack, in central China |
| **e.  Anti-American propaganda** |
| Mao mocked the Americans as ‘paper tigers’, and Chinese schoolchildren every day chanted ‘Death to the American imperialists and their running dogs’ |
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| **Why did relations with the USA improve after 1970?** |
| **a.  Sino-Soviet Confrontation, 1969** |
| In 1969 there were a series of Sino-Soviet border clashes; China and the USSR reoriented their nuclear missiles at each other – the USSR, not the USA, became China’s greatest threat |
| **b.  Lin Biao Plot, 1971** |
| In 1971, Lin Biao’s assassination plot had a profound effect on Mao, who ended the Cultural Revolution – this made detente possible |
| **c.  Stagflation in the USA** |
| Economic problems in the USA (a combination of high inflation and economic stagnation) meant that the USA no longer had unlimited resources to fight communism all over the world – it was necessary to try detente |
| **d.  US defeat in Vietnam** |
| The US problems in Vietnam convinced Nixon that he had to abandon the war there – reconciliation with China, North Vietnam’s greatest ally, would help |
| **e.  United Nations, 1971** |
| Seeking detente with China, the US changed its policy and the PRC became the official representative of ‘China’ at the UN; this paved the way to detente between the USA and China |
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| **Closer relations with the USA from 1970** |
| **a.  Ping-pong diplomacy, 1971** |
| After a chance meeting of two competitors at the table tennis championships in Japan, an American table tennis team went to China; other symbolic gestures followed (e.g. the Chinese sent pandas to London zoo) |
| **b.  Nixon visit, Feb 1972** |
| In February 1972, Present Nixon spent a week visiting China |
| **c.  Shanghai Communique, 28 Feb 1972** |
| The Chinese and US governments promised not to seek hegemony in the Pacific, and to work towards the ‘normalisation’ of relations |
| **d.  Joint Communique, 1979** |
| This marked the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries |
| **e.  Strategic Economic Dialogue, 2006** |
| By 2006, China was a trade and military superpower, and the Strategic Economic Dialogue talks meet regularly to discuss relations |
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| **Task**  Study this poster (it will help you answer question 1 if you google: Imperialism and all reactionaries are all paper tigers), and write answers to the questions which follow:  **Government poster, 1965** http://www.johndclare.net/images/China-PaperTiger.jpg The text reads: 'Imperialism and all reactionaries are all paper tigers'.  **Explain the meaning of the poster.**  **Why were Chinese-US relations so poor in 1965?.**  **Describe how and why relations between China and the United States improved after 1970.** |  |