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*Please explain the political origins of the Sino-Soviet Alliance in the aftermath of WWII, both from the standpoint of the Mao-led Communist Party and the Stalin-led USSR. To what extent was this alliance a "natural alliance?" Explain the domestic and international factors that worked for or against this alliance. In the end, why did Mao and the Communist party enter into this alliance?*

In 1950, Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin forged the Sino-Soviet Alliance, promising assistance and friendship to each other. The United States saw this as a natural alliance between ideologically similar nations; both nations were totalitarian and communist, so they were automatically put together in the minds of the Americans. American perception was that the alliance was straightforward and permanent. However, the Sino-Soviet Alliance was more complicated and would fall apart less than thirty years later in the Sino-Soviet Split. The complexity of the alliance — and why it ultimately happened — rests on the need for partners despite both the personalities of Mao and Stalin and the tumultuous history between the CCP and the USSR. Mao and Stalin forged the Sino-Soviet Alliance due to shared international isolation, a fear of American intervention, and economic necessity.

In the aftermath of the Chinese Civil War, the nation was economically ruined. China had, to some extent, been continuously at war for three decades, both with itself and with the Japanese in Manchuria in 1931 and throughout China from 1937 to 1945. Thus, its infrastructure was in an incredibly poor state, and it needed assistance to repair it and restart its economy. Moreover, the Qing dynasty had been forced to sign unequal treaties with European colonial powers throughout the nineteenth century, adding over a century of economic exploitation to an already desperate economic situation. Thus, China needed economic aid to fix its infrastructure,

build its heavy industry, and attend to its runaway inflation. It wanted fair trade and a revitalized manufacturing sector, and the only way to do this was through extensive economic aid.

However, this economic aid would not come from the United States; instead, the United States sought to isolate the Chinese due to their ideological differences. One of the largest examples of this isolation is American policy towards Japan after the Second World War. After the war, Japan was to send extensive reparations to China, but the United States either terminated or postponed Japanese reparations payments in 1948, significantly harming rebuilding efforts. The American government's favoring of Japan further worsened relations between the Chinese and Americans. Japan was a historical rival of the Chinese, and the atrocities committed by the Japanese in the previous two decades could not easily be forgotten. Immediate American support of the Japanese — to the extent of sending \$1 billion of aid to Japan — was seen as a betrayal to China. This aid was used to rebuild Japan's manufacturing to make it a heavy industry hub, processing raw materials from Southeast Asia to make military equipment. Seeing Japan's industry not only functioning but producing military equipment less than a decade after its invasion of China ended would have immediately stirred memories of Japanese aggression against the Chinese. The only logical response to these moves is to see them as needlessly aggressive and confrontational and to find ways to oppose the new Japanese government.

Outside of economic confrontation, the United States further antagonizes the Chinese diplomatically during this early period. The United States nearly instantly allied with Japan, aligning itself with a country it had been fighting. It saw the islands as a good foothold in East Asia, perfect for the United States to base its Asian operations. Furthermore, it flanked the Soviet Union in the East, granting the possibility of a two-front war if tensions rose too much. Strategically, allying with Japan was viable to get the United States a front they would not have

had prior. However, the United States was also moving against the Chinese by allying with Japan and would continue to indicate so with its later diplomatic moves. While Truman might have wanted to help the Chinese Communist Party, the Republicans did not agree with that stance and instead associated them with the Soviet Union due to their perceived similar Marxist beliefs. For Truman to achieve his plans in Europe, he needed to concede his hopes for a softer Chinese policy. Thus, the United States was also confrontational with the Chinese, forming a bloc with surrounding countries like Australia and the Philippines. The CCP perceived this as the United States surrounding China with enemies, making it even more vital that it needed international allies. To them, the United States was using the pretext of anticommunism to influence and take control of nonaligned nations. The US had isolated them internationally, and they were in dire need of both economic and diplomatic assistance.

Despite limited options, Mao was cautious of the Soviets. During the Chinese Civil War, the USSR sent advisors to help and examine the CCP, but it was more concerned with European and Japanese affairs. During the Second World War, Stalin signed a neutrality pact with Japan, recognizing the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo in exchange for Japanese neutrality. Russia did not want an eastern front against Japan when it needed to fully focus on fighting the Germans in the west, so the Soviets would do anything they could to ensure Japan would not attack. This included supporting the Kuomintang to hold off Japan, and informing the CCP to focus on fighting the Japanese rather than fighting for their survival against the KMT. All three moves directly antagonized the CCP for Soviet interests and worsened relations between the two. After World War II concluded, the Russians did cede Manchuria to the CCP, but relations remained frosty between the two. However, Russia did have a historical interest in China, specifically in Manchuria. Russia's need for warm-water ports made it incredibly invested in Manchurian

affairs, and it had previously controlled Lüshun (Port Arthur). These economic interests pushed Russia to want to be involved in post-1949 China.

Domestically, Mao had further issues with the Soviets. Mao was much more of a nationalist in the CCP, and the faction opposing him inside the party had heavy links to Moscow. Simply, Mao's leadership of the party was despite the Soviets' efforts against him, and thus, Mao was incredibly wary of Russian influence. While the Russians saw themselves as naturally superior and in charge of the communist world, the Chinese wanted relations to be a pairing of equals — not one ruling over another. Thus, additional Soviet influence would not be helpful for the Chinese.

However, the alliance between the Soviets and the Chinese became one of necessity. With Chinese economic ruin, they needed to turn to a limited amount of options, and the Soviet Union was the best option for them. The United States had also worked to isolate China internationally, and it needed a diplomatic ally. Thus, China was forced to ally with the Soviets, and during the first years of this alliance, the Chinese became increasingly dependent on the Soviet Union for aid. This alliance was not natural; there were many issues between the two, to the point where they had actively opposed each other, but to survive in the Cold War, the two needed to work together.