

Nixon's "China Initiative"

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Along with cold-war strategic philosophy, Richard M. Nixon had a strong desire to visit mainland China one day which lay behind the White House's secret moves to open up this isolated Asian giant.

As soon as he took the oath of office, President Nixon instructed his National Security team to explore ways to make rapprochement with Communist China.

Nixon and his advisor, Henry Kissinger, tried to utilize all the possible connections to establish contacts with China—a "Romania channel," a "Pakistan channel," a "Holland channel," and a "French connection," among which the "Pakistan channel" proved the most useful.

Indirect communications through these channels eventually brought about an invitation to Peking, which led to Kissinger's clandestine mission in July 1971 and the subsequent announcement by Nixon of his intention to visit China, which shook the world.

This oft-told episode has been recounted, primarily either by the memoirs by those directly involved or by journalists who had accesses to those involved. The aim of this article is to trace the processes leading up to the "*Nikuson Shokku*" with the help of the "Nixon Presidential Materials" posited at the National Archive II, at College Park, Maryland. This article also attempts to shed some light on Japan—US relations within this broader context. In the negotiations in Peking the US side successfully assuaged China's fear of a "revival of Japanese militarism" and the Japan—US military alliance by arguing that the very presence of the US troops in the Japanese territory would prevent Japan from becoming militarily self-reliant, possibly with nuclear weapons.