Nixon visits China (1972)
Entire trip was risk – no guarantee Mao would agree to see Nixon, Mao genuinely excited about visit
Visit ended ‘bi-polar’ world of Cold War – declared to world that PRC was significant world power
- PRC agreed to play down support for ‘revolutionary struggle’ in Third World
- Issued joint statement condemning ‘Soviet Imperialism’
No formal Sino-US alliance agreed – good working relationship established

Shanghai Communique (1972)
Closer cultural, educational and trade links – PRC trade with US increased from $5 million (1972) to $500 million over next 10 years
Acknowledged substantial disagreements over Korea/Vietnam/Taiwan
Committed to relationship of peaceful coexistence based on mutual respect
Seek to normalise relationship by 1976 – establish formal diplomatic links
Would work together to resist any country that tried to dominate S.E Asia – implicit reference to USSR
Committed to increased co-operation and trade
Allowed both sides to present visit as diplomatic success – without abandoning principles

Nixon’s aims for creating Triangular Diplomacy
Aim – make Cold War relations more stable by creating three-way relationship rather than two-way confrontation
China
- Offered Mao support in battle to stay independent of USSR
- Reasoned that independent China was better for US that China that was USSR satellite
USSS
- Anticipated USSR would be worried by potential Sino-US alliance
- So would maintain friendly relations with US

Impact of Sino-US rapprochement on USSR
Nixon’s visit to PRC, meeting with Mao and Shanghai Communique horrified USSR (as Nixon hoped)
USSR forced to maintain friendly/co-operative relations with US as feared anti-Soviet Sino-US alliance
Early as 1969 – USSR monitoring US interest in China
USSR divided military resources – ‘war on two fronts’
Sino-US alliance meant US defensive policy focused on USSR
Soviet leaders worried China may persuade US to abandon détente
3 months after China visit – Moscow Summit (May 1972)

Moscow Summit (1972)
Most successful summit of Cold War to date
USSR agreed to sign SALT I treaties and Basic Principles Agreement – normalised relationship between superpowers

Nixon resigned in 1974
Ford in weaker position than Nixon was – no ‘mandate’ from the US people – no room to compromise on important issues
Ford – unpopular with US people, no support from Congress
Ford tried to follow approach to China – aimed for normalisation by 1976
Kissinger visited China (1975)
- Aim to reach agreement over Taiwan
- Offer co-operation on military/intelligence matters
- Failed to reach agreement on issues
Ford visited China (Dec 1975) – did little to hasten normalisation, did consolidate working relationship