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Announcement

George W. Bush and China: Policies, Problems and Partnership


The book addresses US policies toward China under President George W. Bush. Dr. Wang examines the relationship between the United States and China from its tense origins to its current stability, and demonstrates US China-policy is ultimately based on pragmatic national interests that eventually overcome short-term ideological difficulties or mistakes by inexperienced American administrations.

Briefly summarizing the China-policy legacy of Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, Dr. Wang then provides a review of significant developments in US China-policy during President George W. Bush’s first term in office. By following this summary with an analysis of the varied agendas of Bush’s foreign policy advisors during his second term, Dr. Wang allows his readers to trace the influence of advisors on the president’s China-policy. Additionally, Dr. Wang chronicles the reordering of US security priorities after September 11, showing how new challenges prompted Washington to embrace China in a measured partnership and has resulted in the short-term stabilization of US-China relations.

The book will be available for purchase at retail locations and can also be ordered online at www.rowmanlittlefield.com and www.amazon.com.
2008 Year in Review

Meghan A. Crossin

When a relationship is forged between two nations possessing such dynamic and proud histories and deep-seated cultural traditions as the United States and China, it is reasonable to expect a certain level of conflict as each country struggles to find a balance between their domestic imperatives and desire for international cooperation. Although the US and China frequently clash on a myriad of issues, there has also been a significant degree of syncretism that has occurred. The US-China relationship has reached an unprecedented level in its width, depth, and strategic significance. As the world marks the 30th anniversary of both Deng Xiaoping’s economic opening of China and the normalization of Sino-American diplomatic relations, it is remarkable to recall the speed and comprehensiveness with which this relationship has developed.

Although the international community continues to criticize China’s ruling Communist Party for its policies regarding human rights, the environment, and dealings with so-called “unsavory” regimes, China’s economic growth and management of rapid social change has earned global admiration and respect. Looking thirty, fifty, or one hundred years into the future, there is little question that the US-China relationship will have a profound effect on international policies. As China continues to solidify its position as one of the next great world powers, managing this relationship could become America’s most important foreign policy challenge in the 21st century.

As the United States and China confront obstacles of unprecedented weight and complexity in 2009, it is important to reflect upon the recent events that impacted the development of this key bilateral relationship. The following article provides a condensed summary and analysis of some of the most significant events that affected US-China relations in 2008.

Tibet Riots (March)

There are few more controversial topics in international relations than issues relating to Tibet and the preservation of Tibetan culture. The ambiguity and disagreement between Chinese
and Tibetans over the region’s sovereignty is centuries-long and extremely difficult for members of the international community to navigate; in recent years, cries to “Free Tibet!” have often been drowned out by pleas on behalf of those suffering in conflicted regions, such as Darfur, Palestine, or Zimbabwe. In March 2008, however, a violent crackdown by Chinese forces against Tibetan protestors vaulted the controversy back onto the international media stage.

On March 13, demonstrations by Tibetan monks to mark the 49th anniversary of the failed uprising against Beijing’s rule erupted in violence. There were confirmed reports of mass rioting on the streets of Lhasa; additional protests and violence were later reported in ethnic Tibetan areas of Gansu, Sichuan, and Qinghai provinces.¹

The protests were fuelled by a combination of factors. Although some demonstrated with the goal of achieving Tibetan independence, indicators suggest that most of the rioters were not politically motivated. In contrast to riots and clamp downs that occurred in 1959 and other times in history, the March protests were mainly an expression of rising ethnic tensions and economic stress in the region. An increasing divide between the ethnic Tibetans, the Han Chinese, and the Hui ethnic groups over such issues as entrepreneurial pursuits, the Golmud-Lhasa railroad into Tibet, inflation, and the rising prices of foodstuffs caused many Tibetans to feel left behind by China’s economic boom.

Although Chinese-Tibetan conflicts have drawn international media attention for decades, the timing of the protests—less than five months before China was to host the 29th Summer Olympics in Beijing—pushed both Tibet and China’s human rights record into the international spotlight with far more immediacy and intensity than in the past. Much to China’s dismay, the demonstrations in Tibet drew media attention away from China’s staggering economic growth and general development, instead focusing on the country’s domestic problems. Human rights groups called on international leaders to boycott the opening ceremony; British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and German Chancellor Angela Merkel were among officials who decided not to attend.² Several members of the United Nations Human Rights Council also decided not to attend.

States Congress, including Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi and former Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton unsuccessfully petitioned President Bush to follow their example. President Bush remained unavering in his decision to attend the Games, reiterating his intention to treat the Olympics as a sporting event rather than an opportunity for political posturing.

The continuing chaos in Lhasa poses a huge problem for the Chinese government. For a regime that values stability above all else, the defiance of the Pro-Tibet movement has become the ultimate challenge to Chinese legitimacy in the region. On one level, the very public demonstrations shattered a cultivated perception that Tibetans are the delighted recipients of Chinese money and progress. On another, the inability of Chinese security forces to predict and preempt the uprising and their subsequent failure to protect the Chinese inhabitants of Lhasa has resulted in a devastating loss of face for the Chinese.

The long and complex relationship that has developed between China and Tibet since the 7th century is often subject to over-simplification by those unfamiliar with the intricacies of the conflict. Western celebrity personalities have sensationalized the Free Tibet movement without taking the time to examine the reasons behind China’s claim to the region or contemplating possible economic and social consequences an independent Tibet would create. Conversely, the opaque and uncompromising stance taken by China has not provided the international community with any measure of clarity, inhibiting potential support and sympathy.

Issues of ethnic independence are notoriously difficult to navigate and have an impact far beyond the locales involved. Although it is an established fact that most Tibetans have economically profited to some extent as a result of Chinese rule, these gains cannot be reconciled with the cultural cost. In situations where emotive factors play a dominant role, "practical" questions—such as whether Tibetans would be able to maintain positive development trends without a Han Chinese presence in the region—tend not to hold equal weight. Political pride, fervent loyalty to tradition, and the sway of international perception have time and again foiled attempts to pragmatically resolve disputes for centuries.
As the 50th anniversary of the 1959 protests approaches, China has already begun to tighten controls over the region, most recently detaining a reported 81 people in a “strike hard” campaign against crime. The March 2008 riots seem to have reinforced the inability of either side to move towards a mutually acceptable compromise, or even to engage in formal discussion. Mao Zedong once said that the Chinese Communist Party should continually strive “to accept what is useful and healthy, and to discard what is not.” These words should serve as a guide for both the Chinese and the Tibetan leadership as they weave through the minefield of middle ground in pursuit of a compromise.

Taiwanese Presidential Election (March 22)

In Taiwan’s fourth direct presidential election, Kuomintang (KMT) candidate Ma Ying-jeou defeated Frank Hsieh of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), ending eight years of DPP rule. Unlike the 2004 presidential election, the political rhetoric of the 2008 campaign tended to focus on economic issues and government corruption rather than national identity and the political status of Taiwan, with both candidates endorsing the status quo with China in the short term. Mr. Ma’s platform pledged to enhance cultural and political links with China that will indirectly boost economic ties by easing cross-Strait tensions. Although Mr. Hsieh, a former mayor of Kaohsiung, was considered to be considerably more moderate than incumbent DPP President Chen Shuibian, Taiwan’s expanding economic ties with mainland China dramatically increased support for Ma, who was elected President on March 22.

Decisive election results showed that the KMT ticket received a larger percentage and more votes than any other candidate in the three previous direct presidential elections, indicating the extent of public support for a leader who would serve as a “peacemaker, not a troublemaker.” Although the topic of American arms sales to Taiwan remains a contentious issue, the Ma administration has made an effort to balance the pursuit of warmer relations with Beijing while also retaining Taiwan’s capacity for self-defense.

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President Ma is expected to have much more constructive relationship with Beijing than Chen, not only because of his emphasis on political stability and maintaining the status quo, but also because of the shift in Taiwanese public opinion towards constructive engagement. Economically, this shift has already begun to manifest itself through policies inviting more open trade based on a cooperative relationship, as opposed to the extremely limited and heavily regulated trade and shipping associations allowed under the Chen administration. Since the start of the Ma administration, China and Taiwan have agreed to establish offices in each other’s territory to facilitate travel amid warming bilateral ties.5

The results of the election have significant implications for the United States and its relationship with both China and Taiwan. Former President Chen Shuibian’s movements towards Taiwanese independence had directly opposed Washington’s aspirations to maintain the status quo, creating a substantial rift in US-Taiwan relations. In contrast, Ma’s platform assured strict adherence to the status quo by embracing a policy of “Three No’s” (no talks on reunification during his term in office, no pursuit of de jure independence, and no use of force by either side). By making these assurances, the KMT administration will be able to forge closer political ties with the United States.6

Sichuan Earthquake (May 12)

On May 12, 2008, a massive earthquake measuring 7.9 on the Richter scale hit China’s Sichuan province, killing thousands of people, leaving millions homeless, and creating billions of dollars in infrastructure costs. Official figures from Chinese state media reported that the quake destroyed 80 percent of structures in some areas near its epicenter. Over 15 million people lived in the affected area, including almost 4 million in the region’s capital city of Chengdu. The Chinese government estimated that about 70,000 people were killed as a direct result of the earthquake. Disease and hunger were expected to claim thousands of lives for months after the earthquake because of lack of food and clean drinking water.7

The Chinese government’s decision to allow a relatively free flow of information on the quake was rewarded with an outpouring of aid and financial support from the international community. Less than a week after the disaster, Xinhua state news agency reported donations totaling over $860 million. Furthermore, for the first time, Beijing accepted not just foreign financial aid but also allowed in specialized rescue teams from Japan, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. The unprecedented degree of participation by Chinese and foreigners in the relief efforts was a dramatic departure from the practices of a communist leadership that prefers to manage alone.

President George W. Bush lauded China’s rapid and open response to the disaster, and took the opportunity to reiterate America’s commitment to the Chinese people: "My message to the Chinese government is: thank you for welcoming our aid. Thank you for taking a firm response to this disaster, and just know the American people care about the people of China."8

Although the devastation caused by the earthquake cannot be understated, a close analysis of the event turns up a few silver linings. First, the scope of the tragedy served to deflect the media spotlight from China’s handling of the Tibetan conflict, human rights, Sudan’s Darfur region, and other contentious issues ahead of the Summer Olympics in Beijing. More importantly, however, the experience provided China and the world a chance to unite in the face of immense tragedy. The openness of the Chinese government served as a mechanism to modify a number of outmoded Western perceptions of China that had lingered for decades; the empathy displayed by foreign audiences, especially in the West, was greater than at any time since the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in 1989.

China and Taiwan Leaders Meet during Historic Summit (May 28)

On May 28, KMT party Chairman Wu Boxiang and Chinese President Hu Jintao met in China for the highest-level encounter

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8 "President Bush participates in meeting on the People’s Republic of China earthquake relief efforts," The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, June 6, 2008.
since 1949, evidence of the degree to which cross-Strait relations had warmed since Taiwan's March election.

The head of Taiwan's ruling party traveled to the mainland for a landmark six-day visit to discuss cross-Strait transport links with President Hu. During their meeting in the Great Hall of the People, Hu expressed his gratitude for aid from Taiwan following the devastating earthquake in China's Sichuan province and expressed hope for continued improvement of cross-Strait relations under Taiwan's new leadership. Correspondingly, Wu took the opportunity to say that Taiwan and China should ensure they never take up arms against each other again, stating "We cannot guarantee there won't be any natural disasters…but through our mutual efforts, we can ensure there is no war."

The trip was seen as yet another sign of warming ties, suggesting that Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou's call to open a new "chapter of peace" could be achieved if the leadership on both sides of the Taiwan Strait continues to work toward mutually beneficial ends.

Beijing Summer Olympics (August 8)

The much anticipated 29th summer Olympic Games opened in Beijing on August 8, 112 years after the Games' modern revival. The triumphant completion of the Games encapsulates the struggle of a country in transition, seeking to reconcile its status as both a developing nation and an emerging global superpower. China continues to face the challenge of overcoming deep-rooted negative or skeptical perceptions held by the international community; the Olympics presented the Chinese with an opportunity to showcase their modernity in the hope that less appealing memories would fade in comparison. Chinese leaders also used the Beijing Games to temper some of the concerns held by the United States and other nations regarding perceived threats posed by an increasingly powerful China.

On August 8th, the world watched as China captivated viewers with a seamless blend of traditional Chinese artistry, precision, and modern technology. The opening ceremony, directed by internationally acclaimed Chinese film director Zhang Yimou (Raise the Red Lantern [1992], Hero [2002], and House of Flying

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Daggers [2004]), included a nearly-one-hour art performance spotlighting China's 5,000-year civilization and modern achievements. Highlights included a meticulously choreographed drum countdown, artistic dance presentation, and an impressive fireworks display.

Following the opening performances, athletes from 204 countries and regions participated in a 2.5-hour entry parade around the stadium to mark the start of the Beijing Olympics. Polls have estimated that approximately one billion people, or 15 percent of the world's population, watched the opening ceremony. Despite various calls to boycott the opening ceremony in protest of China's human rights record, the participation of an unprecedented number of state leaders, including US President George W. Bush, French President Nicholas Sarcozy, and Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, suggests the degree to which the Games had taken on an importance outside the sporting arenas.

Although reports touting China's double-digit economic growth have been quoted and circulated among scholars for years, it was the Beijing Olympics that served as a lightening rod to draw international attention to the real extent of China's development. In striving to host a “high level” Olympic Games, the Chinese government launched a series of ambitious and costly preparations, including construction of new facilities for the Games as well as improvements to China’s transportation and telecommunications infrastructures. Between 2002 and 2006, China invested nearly $40 billion dollars in infrastructure projects alone; in 2008, the City of Beijing invested more than $23 billion dollars in preparation for the Olympic Games. The construction of the new Olympic venues further exemplifies China’s increasing openness. In anticipation of the Games, the Chinese government engaged architects worldwide in a design competition; the resulting venues have won respect from critics around the globe, who hail the arenas as aesthetic triumphs that further underlines China’s increasingly participation on the world stage, both culturally and diplomatically.

Environmental concerns also garnered attention before the Games, suggesting that China’s rapid development and

urbanization was not achieved without cost. When Beijing first presented its bid to host the 2008 Olympics, it was vying with Mexico City as the most polluted capital city in the world. To address these fears, the Chinese government launched a $12 billion effort to create a green Beijing ahead of the Games. Initiatives included requiring clean energy use in the Olympic village, retrofitting or closing nearly 200 industries in the region, converting buses and taxis to cleaner fuels, and encouraging clean transport pilot projects.\textsuperscript{12}

Despite these efforts, Beijing’s air quality and its potential impact on the games remained a major concern during the months prior to the start of the Games. Worries had been especially focused upon outdoor events, including the marathon and long distance cycling, as athletes with asthma and other breathing disorders expressed anxiety about their ability to compete effectively. In May 2008, Hail Gebrsellassie, the Ethiopian world record holder in the marathon announced that he would not participate in the Beijing Olympics due to concerns over the effect the city’s air quality would have on his asthma.

In response to the worries about pollution, the Chinese government demonstrated a commitment to mitigate the effects of pollution through the initiatives it undertook. Although the Games served as the impetus for many of these projects, the benefits of modernizations such as clean transport initiatives will undoubtedly be enjoyed for years.

Even had China not needed such comprehensive environmental and infrastructure improvements, successfully hosting the Olympic Games is a massive undertaking for any nation. Not only were Chinese organizers tasked with the considerable challenge of mastering the organizational complexities involved with an event of this magnitude, but these individuals were also under great pressure to somehow demonstrate to the world the degree to which Chinese ideology has modernized. Their task was made exponentially more difficult by violent uprisings in Tibet and a devastating earthquake in the southwestern Sichuan province in the months preceding the Games, which further intensified international scrutiny on China’s most sensitive and controversial issues. The media attention garnered by these

developments threatened to overshadow the economic successes that the Chinese had hoped to emphasize. Additional strategic challenges arose during the Games themselves, including the stabbing of two family members of a US coach, controversy concerning the ages of several members of the Chinese women’s gymnastics team, and the choice of child singer for the opening ceremony.

Despite all of the obstacles and controversies threatening the Games’ success, the world overwhelmingly recognized the precision and flair with which the Chinese executed their duties as host nation. The across-the-board improvements and concessions to openness allowed during the Games, such as establishing areas for protests or demonstrations and allowing the international press to report freely, have arguably made as much of an impact on international sentiment as the ultra-modern Olympic venues. Furthermore, the diplomatic efforts undertaken during the Games by Chinese government officials conveyed to the world that China is willing to promote dialogue and exchanges with the goal of enhancing international understanding and mutual respect. It was these efforts and exchanges that allowed the “One World, One Dream” motto to truly resonate and establish the perception of a New China. The true legacy of the Games is less tangible than a medal and less ephemeral than fireworks; China’s role in the 2008 Olympics demonstrated its strength and willingness to take a leadership position in the global community.

Milk Contamination Scandal (September)

Only a few short weeks after the completion of the spectacularly successful Olympic Games in Beijing, Chinese leaders were confronted with yet another affront to the image of an open and modern China. In September, it was revealed that a number of Chinese dairy corporations had been adulterating their milk products by adding small amounts of melamine, a chemical commonly used in plastics and fertilizers. When ingested in high doses, melamine causes crystals to form in the kidneys and eventually leads to kidney stones. Subsequent investigation into the contamination by both Chinese officials and international entities suggested the chemical was added to give the appearance of a higher concentration of protein, which disguised an otherwise watered-down product.
The initial inquiry into the dairy industry was prompted after 16 infants in China’s Gansu Province were diagnosed with kidney stones after consuming baby formula that was found to contain high levels of melamine. Although government inspections revealed 21 other companies were guilty of product contamination, the company at the center of the scandal was the Shijiazhuang-based Sanlu Group. Trace amounts of the chemical were discovered in baby formula, liquid milk, and milk candy from almost every dairy producer in the country. While an official total has not been released, the Chinese Ministry of Health revised number of victims to more than 290,000 sickened, with 11 suspected deaths.

As the investigation spread, the economic and political fallout for China mushroomed. China’s wide range of export food products and position as the world’s second largest exporter transformed the scandal from a domestic incident to one of international concern, affecting consumers on all continents. Throughout the world, countries carried out widespread recalls and boycotts of Chinese-made goods; at least 11 countries stopped all imports of mainland Chinese dairy products.

Potentially more injurious to China than the contamination were the stories of a cover-up that emerged on the heels of the breaking scandal. An investigation uncovered health complaints over Sanlu milk powder dating back at least eight months. One would-be whistle blower, a milk agent at a competing Shaanxi firm, reportedly discussed his fears about unauthorized substances being added to milk products with industry regulators, state government officials, and media representatives as early as 2006. No action was taken.

Western media speculation alleging the delayed governmental response was motivated to a certain extent by a desire to avoid controversy before the Beijing Olympics further inculpated the Chinese Communist Party in the eyes of the international community.

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The milk crisis illustrated the difficulties inherent in China’s attempt to balance the pursuit of economic growth with governmental reform and oversight. Although Chinese leaders recognize the necessity of providing effective product regulation and oversight to restore international confidence and maintain economic growth, the party’s characteristic need for control, especially regarding the flow of information, makes effective and independent regulation difficult or impossible. Critics of the ruling Communist Party have been quick to suggest that this scandal is indicative of the kind of situation that will continue as long as the country lacks the appropriate mechanisms, such as transparency and media oversight, to hold the government accountable.

The bottom line, however, is that China’s export-driven economic rise depends on its position as a manufacturing center. Continuing reports of toxic products damage both the integrity of the made-in-China brand and causes loss of face for the Chinese government. If the country is to maintain its role in the global economy, it is essential for the Chinese leadership to somehow address the regulatory and safety concerns to the satisfaction of the international community.

Chinese Spacewalk (September 27)

The centuries-old fascination with space has long compelled nations to dedicate considerable amounts of time and resources in a quest to understand its secrets. The ability to navigate the vastness of space sends an unmistakable signal to the rest of the world that a nation has advanced to new levels of achievement and modernity. While the US and Russia have long enjoyed a monopoly on manned space flight, China’s recent activities in space technology suggest the country is rapidly expanding the depth and capabilities of its program and will soon pose a challenge to these leading actors.

In the most notable milestone for the ambitious Chinese space program, a Chinese astronaut performed the nation’s first-ever spacewalk on September 27. The mission was the third Chinese manned space mission, but the first time Chinese astronauts performed a spacewalk. According to industry experts, an especially significant indicator of China’s growing technical achievement and confidence in the capabilities of its program was
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the fact that Shenzhou 7 mission commander Zhai Zhigang wore a Chinese-designed space suit during his mission.17

Mr. Zhai’s 13 minute spacewalk was broadcast live to the world via Chinese state broadcaster CCTV. Experts claim the successful spacewalk paves the way for assembling a space station from two Shenzhou orbital modules, which is the next major goal of China's manned spaceflight program. "Spacewalking is a critical capability for the assembly of a space lab or space station, and this first spacewalk will put China one step closer [toward its goals]," said Joan Johnson-Freese, an analyst of China's space policy and chair of the National Security Decision-Making Department at the US Naval War College.18 China is also reportedly pursuing lunar exploration and may attempt to land a man on the moon in the next decade.

The growing size of the Chinese military and expanding capabilities in the space technology field has become both a topic of increasing interest to the United States, and has also been the subject of great misunderstanding, wild conjecture, and distortion. For years, many American policymakers have been wary of the potential implications of Chinese success in space; in 2006, the US National Space Policy announced that the US would "deny, if necessary, adversaries the use of space capabilities hostile to US national interests."19 In response to a 2007 Chinese mission that used a ground-based medium-range ballistic missile to destroy an aging weather satellite, the US responded by shooting down one of its own spy satellites and reviving a program dedicated to building a hypersonic bomber capable of operating between the upper atmosphere and low space orbit and striking anywhere in the world in two hours, which had been cancelled by Congress in 2001.20

Despite the lingering concerns of American policymakers, the aging state of the US National Aeronautic and Space

Administration (NASA) equipment and severe budget cuts could force the US to seek assistance from China to ensure the viability of programs like the International Space Station. Space cooperation between China and other nations so far has been limited and the US has refused Chinese involvement in the international space station for fear it could gain technical secrets applicable to its arms industry. However, the heightened tensions between the US and Russia, especially in light of Russian actions regarding the former Soviet satellite state of Georgia, allow for the possibility of greater Sino-American cooperation in space-related projects.

Global Economic Crisis and the US-China Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED)

The extended growth of the global economy came to an abrupt halt in mid-2008 when the financial bubble that had fueled a decade of growth burst with a resounding pop. The tremors from Wall Street’s collapse have threatened the stability of institutions and corporations across the globe, affecting everyone from the hedge fund manager in New York to the factory worker in Guangdong. The extent of the crisis has been so acute that financial institutions once considered invulnerable have collapsed or were forced to merge with competing firms. In other instances, governments of the wealthiest nations have resorted to crafting extensive bail-out and rescue packages for the remaining large banks and financial institutions, while striving to mitigate the suffering of their citizens. Since the Chinese and American economies are among the most influential in the world, strong ties and open dialogue between the leadership of the countries will be crucial as each tries to successfully navigate the many economic stumbling blocks.

Since 2006, the Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) has become the chief mechanism through which China and the US coordinate economic policy goals and resolve disputes. The biannual SED, initiated by former President George W. Bush and President Hu Jintao, is currently the highest-level economic dialogue between the two nations. One of the most notable measures of the success of the SED for the US has been China’s agreement in allowing its currency, the yuan, to appreciate more than 20 percent since mid-2005.21 The undervalued yuan has increasingly been criticized by members of Congress who charge

that its artificially low value has ensured that Chinese exports remain inexpensive. The fourth and fifth rounds of the SED, held in June and December of 2008, strove for the resolution of ongoing disputes as well as working to restrain the global crisis.

Following the June SED, China and the US announced plans to intensify cooperation on energy and the environment and intentions to try to negotiate a new treaty to ban discriminatory practices that block foreign investments in both countries. Additionally, both sides agreed to modest steps aimed at making it easier for the United States to operate financial services companies or invest in China. China also agreed to invest its own government-held reserves without regard to political objectives. Further pledges were made to make Chinese rules more clear and to allow American credit rating agencies to operate more freely in China. Officials also renewed a previously made commitment to come to an agreement regarding the request by Washington to station US personnel in China to inspect the safety of food, animal feed, and other products. Chief envoys from both countries hailed the fourth session as a complete success.

When the fifth SED convened in December, the dialogues, co-chaired by Secretary Paulson and Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan, were dominated by the global economy. Much of the subsequent discussion centered on the construction of potential mechanisms to restore investor confidence, restrain the crisis from spreading, and to avoid a global economic recession, with special regard for the impact of the crisis on developing countries.

The two sides also discussed an array of issues of overall strategic and long-term importance to both economies, including strategies to manage macro-economic risks, strengthen energy and environmental cooperation, cope with trade challenges, and promote an open investment environment. When the dialogues concluded on December 5, leaders from both sides expressed confidence that an "important consensus" had been reached on the financial turmoil and critical issues of the two economies.

Despite the grave global financial turmoil, China-US trade still kept a strong momentum. China is the third-largest export market for US products and services; US exports to China are growing.

much faster than US exports to other major trading partners. Figures from China's General Administration of Customs revealed that the bilateral trade between China and the United States, China's second largest trading partner, grew 13.6 percent in the first ten months year on year to 281.3 billion US dollars. Although China has not been able to sustain its double-digit growth rates, the country is still projecting a growth rate of 7.5 percent in 2009 and has eclipsed Germany to become the world's third largest economy.

The degree of economic power controlled by the United States and China gives the actions of these nations an especially significant impact on the global economic climate. As world leaders attempt to mitigate the effects of the crisis, it is more important now than ever before to promote strong ties and mutual understanding between United States and China. Although there has not been express confirmation that President Obama will continue the SED, he has indicated his intentions to continue high-level discussion with China. In addition, former Assistant Secretary of State Daniel S. Sullivan has made public assurances that new administration was extensively briefed on the importance of the talks.

US Presidential Election

China’s unprecedented growth and increasing influence on issues both domestic and foreign have complicated efforts by recent US presidential administrations to develop a concrete set of policy rules when dealing with China. The increasingly constructive US-China relationship that has emerged over the last few years has proven to be one of the brighter spots of the Bush administration’s foreign policy. In determining whether the US and China can maintain a stable relationship, dialogue and leadership will be the most important factors. As the Obama administration prepares to take on the many foreign policy challenges demanding immediate attention, analysts in both nations have begun to speculate how Sino-American relations may change under the new leadership.

Although the US-China relationship was not among the dominant issues on the campaign trail, President Obama, then the freshman senator from Illinois, did give Americans a broad framework around which he will base his China policy. Obama has said that he sees both opportunities and challenges for the United States and its allies in the emergence of China and has called for the United States “to take a more active role [in China]—to build on our strong bilateral relations and informal arrangements like the Six Party talks.” As president, Obama has vowed to heighten military-to-military dialogue and work to boost cooperation on shared security, energy, and environmental objectives.  

President Obama’s statements during the campaign indicate he will likely take a hard line with the Chinese on issues pertaining to trade and the economy. In an article for the American Chamber of Commerce in China, Obama wrote “America and the world can benefit from trade with China, but only if China agrees to play by the rules and act as a positive force for balanced world growth…. To increase internal demand Beijing will have to improve substantially its social safety net and upgrade its financial services sector to bring its consumption in line with international norms.” Obama also expressed his intention to use all diplomatic avenues available to seek a change in China’s currency practices.  

In response to the recent problems caused by contaminated or substandard Chinese products, President Obama has pledged to collaborate with Chinese leaders to “establish a better system for both countries to monitor products produced for export and act when dangerous products are identified.” Obama also indicates, although he will not demonize China, his administration will press China to live up to international human rights standards and stop its support for repressive regimes in Iran, Myanmar, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. His message to Chinese leaders, that “China cannot stand indefinitely apart from the global trend toward democratic government, rule of law and full exercise of human rights,” suggests that human rights could become a more prominent issue than in previous administrations.

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27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
With regard to the most sensitive issue facing future Sino-American relations, Obama has said that he recognizes the One China Policy, but that US policy is also based on the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). The TRA requires the US to help the island defend itself in the event that China moves to alter the status quo or violates the principle that all issues regarding the island's future must be resolved peacefully, through dialogue, and be agreeable to the people of Taiwan. Mr. Obama said that he would "support steps to build trust across the Taiwan Strait and improvements in relations between Beijing and Taipei."  

In addition to the aforementioned issues characterizing the framework for Sino-American bilateral relations, the new administration will be confronted with many new challenges. Dr. Kenneth Lieberthal, senior China adviser to President Bill Clinton and a member of the United States-China Policy Foundation's board of advisors, said recently that China was also aware that the relationship would now have issues to address that it had never encountered before—the financial crisis and the necessity of collaboration over global warming and clean energy issues. "The US-China relationship is going to be shaped in part in the next few years by two issues that have not conditioned the relationship in the past," he said. "Together, they are likely to significantly affect each leadership's evaluation of the other in the coming few years."  

Although it is necessary to uphold the high moral standards of the United States and make efforts to stop human rights offenses, it is equally important for President Obama to convey a message to China's leaders that maintaining a constructive and collaborative relationship with China is of the highest priority. Obama's statements during his campaign suggest he plans to take a hard line with the Chinese on several important issues, including trade and human rights. While it is important to stand by his stated positions, he must also be willing to consider how his policies will affect other aspects of US foreign policy, such as economic concerns or the North Korean nuclear issue.

30 Ibid.
Concluding Thoughts

Although a specific model for Sino-American cooperation is far from fully formed, China’s economic and diplomatic rise will continue to render the nation an increasingly important figure on the world stage. It will therefore be crucial for the Obama administration to recognize the importance of this vital bilateral relationship, and to continue to work with Chinese leaders to strengthen ties between the countries.

Hopefully, the leadership of both nations will build upon the experiences gained during the past year to create a bulwark against the daunting challenges in store for 2009. If the United States and China both strive to create mutual understanding through policies based on rational and informed decisions, matching action to rhetoric, the relationship between the two countries will continue to grow and flourish to the benefit of citizens of both countries and the rest of the world.
Sino-American Dynamics in Perspective*

Amb. Chas W. Freeman, Jr.

Thirty years ago, the late Deng Xiaoping persuaded the Chinese Communist Party to make two linked decisions. In the first, China resolved to risk eclectic borrowing from other socio-economic systems to invigorate its own. In the second, the Chinese government determined to reach out to the United States. Deng Xiaoping’s courage in overcoming domestic political barriers and bypassing irreconcilable differences to do so found its match in Jimmy Carter.

There can be few examples in history of decisions with such far-reaching effects. The distance that reform and opening enabled China to travel in less than two generations—from the drab poverty and international isolation of 1978 to the celebration of Chinese prowess and prestige at the Beijing Olympics of 2008—has astonished the world. The rapid development of Sino-American relations helped catalyze this miracle of Chinese change, as Mr. Deng hoped it would. Despite all the bickering and the occasional unpleasant incidents this sometimes involved, today the relationships between our two peoples and governments are vastly broader, deeper, and more stable than anyone imagined they could be three decades ago. Our relationship has shaped and is still shaping a new world order in ways that few, if any, anticipated.

The thirtieth anniversary of normalization is an appropriate moment for Americans and Chinese to review both what our mutual engagement has wrought and the lessons we should learn from it. On that basis, this morning, I would like to propose eight theses on Sino-American relations. They are meant to provide a framework for examining the journey we have made together and to help illuminate the path before us. I will state these theses and then return to each for a brief but somewhat more detailed exposition.

First, Sino-American relations have always been strategic in nature, that is: they cannot be separated from the global and regional contexts in which they exist, nor can they be analyzed in

purely bilateral terms.

Second, changes in Sino-American relations have played and continue to play a decisive role in shifting and shaping the global and regional orders.

Third, the state of Sino-American relations is of great concern to third parties, who are affected by the international context that our interactions create and by the relative priority that China and the United States assign to dealing with each other, as opposed to relations with these third parties.

Fourth, Sino-American relations have been and remain troubled by differences originally set aside to pursue larger common interests but not subsequently resolved between us.

Fifth, Sino-American relations have been and are still interest-driven, not value-based or dependent on personal relations between leaders. This gives them resilience to recover from setbacks.

Sixth, Sino-American relations are now grounded in interaction between the two societies as much as or more than between government officials.

Seventh, Sino-American relations are multidimensional and more than the sum of their political, economic, financial, cultural, and military parts. They cannot be understood by an analytical process that ignores all but one dimension of them.

Finally, Sino-American relations embody a dynamism that reflects the constantly shifting balances of capability between the two societies and states, and the narrowing of gaps in these capabilities with the passage of time.

Let me begin with the first three theses: the essentially strategic nature of Sino-American relations, the impact of our relations on the global and regional orders, and their effects on third parties.

The Nixon opening to China of 1971-72 nicely illustrates all three. This was a classic example of a diplomatic maneuver for positional advantage. Chairman Mao’s acceptance of it rearranged the global and regional strategic geometry. He enlisted China in the cause of containing the Soviet Union in return for US deterrence of
Sino-American Dynamics in Perspective

Soviet attack on China. Nixon’s initiative improved the US bargaining position in both Moscow and Hanoi. It also ended China’s international isolation, catalyzed the United Nations’ acceptance of Beijing vice Taipei as the capital of China, and stimulated the normalization of China’s relationship with Japan.

Seven years later, the normalization of Sino-American relations consolidated these advantages. It protected China against a Soviet military response to China’s use of force to persuade Vietnam to halt empire-building in Indochina. It also kicked off the strategic restructuring of China’s socio-economic system. A year later, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan brought China and the United States into a broad strategic coalition with major Arab states and Pakistan. This coalition’s backing for Afghan guerrillas enabled them to defeat the Soviet Union and compel its withdrawal from their country. Meanwhile, China demoralized the Soviets by demonstrating what could be accomplished by abandoning the Soviet model of political economy. Ruinous levels of military spending and other long-evident weaknesses of the Soviet system then combined to bring it down. First the Soviet empire fell, then the USSR itself.

The two decades since the end of the bipolar order of the Cold War era in 1989 also illustrate the centrality of the Sino-American relationship to the state of the world, though perhaps less in the politico-military sphere than in economics and finance. The opening of the American and Chinese economies to each other has been the central driver of the phenomenon we call globalization—the rapid emergence of transnational markets for commodities, manufactures, labor, and capital. The topics addressed in the multi-ministerial Strategic Economic Dialogues (SED) between our two countries are de facto acknowledgment of this. They underscore the strategic nature of our present interaction. Without effective measures to stimulate the economies of our two countries, the world cannot recover from the current panic and recession. Without Sino-American partnership, the world cannot craft the new and more secure monetary and financial system it needs. Without Sino-American cooperation, the world of the future will be much less able to pursue peace and development than otherwise would be the case.

The global economy is now more open and interconnected than at any time since the first decade of the last century. That first era of globalization was, of course, ended by the unexpected
outbreak of war between the great powers who had been its major beneficiaries. By the end of World War I, the value of the British consol (the “T-bill” of the time) had been cut in half, Britain had lost its global dominance, and gains from globalization had been reversed. Unlikely as it may be, a Sino-American war would now have similarly dire consequences for the world order.

This brings me to issues left over from history. In military science, the doctrine of “maneuver warfare” (of which Blitzkrieg is perhaps the most famous example) advocates bypassing enemy strong points in order to isolate them while focusing on vital targets that can be taken more quickly and easily. The “breakthrough diplomacy” with which Sino-American relations began and by which it has achieved its greatest advances, can be analogized to this. Breakthrough diplomacy concentrated on achieving agreement on vital issues where feasible while deferring attempts to solve more intractable issues.

This is a very productive approach to statecraft by which rapid progress can be made between nations. But, as in the case of maneuver warfare, neither the fortresses nor the problems that have been bypassed always wither away after having been skirted. Sometimes they reemerge to threaten continued advance. And, in the end, they have to be addressed if what has been achieved is to be consolidated. Some points of serious disagreement between China and the United States—like how to deal with various proliferation issues—were initially bypassed in this manner but later resolved. Others—like some aspects of the situation on the Korean Peninsula—are currently under discussion. Still others remain unresolved.

Of such bypassed and unresolved issues, the question of Taiwan’s relationship to the rest of China is the most important. The Taiwan issue pits the passions of China’s nationalism against the vehemence of America’s sense of honor. Sino-American contradictions in this regard are an ever-present threat to everything we have achieved. Left unchecked by reason, the emotionalism of the Taiwan issue could easily ignite a war between us. As I have noted, history suggests that such a war could be catastrophic, not only for our bilateral relations, but for world order. Fortunately, both sides have so far shown a clear understanding of how much we would lose by conflict or in an inappropriate attempt to negotiate the irreconcilable differences between us. More importantly, we have recognized how much we can gain by acting
to sustain the prospects for peaceful redefinition of the relationship between the two sides of the Strait. It is encouraging that, as the fourth decade since US-China normalization begins, the outlook for this has never been better.

My fifth and sixth theses are that Sino-American relations are mainly interest-driven rather than value-based, that they are as much or more between our societies as between our governments, and that these realities lend stability to our ties. The United States and China came together three decades ago out of cold-blooded calculation of our respective national interests, notwithstanding deep mutual suspicion and ill-will. Ours was, in short, a marriage arranged by geopolitics, not affection. Since then, however, the emotional bonds between us have grown and thickened, our misperceptions of each other have subsided, and our mutual understanding has greatly improved. There are many friendships and considerable affection between our two peoples. But differences in our ideologies and values remain a source of tension between us. I see no prospect that we will soon reach a common understanding of the roles that representative democracy, human rights, religious faith, or collective bargaining should have in our respective societies. So we will have to continue to manage differences in values like these even as we pursue common interests. So far, despite occasional serious quarrels, we have not done badly at this.

Our relationship began with the perception by the most senior levels of our governments that, despite the “essential differences” between our “social systems and foreign policies,” (to quote the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué), strategic cooperation was in the national interest of both countries. Since then, especially over the thirty years since the normalization of our diplomatic relations, the recognition of common interests has steadily broadened and deepened. It now links every level of government, every kind of business and financial institution, and every element of the intellectual and cultural life of our two societies. Even when we disagree on important aspects of foreign policy, as in the case of the Korean Peninsula, we have found it possible to pursue common interests. Our disagreements over exchange rates and other matters do not impede trade and investment flows. Our arguments over social issues do not prevent engagement between like-minded NGOs.

The realism engendered by the focus on interests rather
than values and the stability imparted by the engagement of our two societies has enabled us to weather serious incidents that might have been fatal to a less dispassionately grounded and broadly based relationship. I think here, with sadness, of the accidental bombing of China’s embassy at Belgrade and the mid-air collision near Hainan that took the life of Squadron Leader Wang Wei. Countries have gone to war over lesser incidents. We chose another, better path.

My final theses are that Sino-American relations are more than the sum of their parts and that they reflect the relatively rapid shift of the balance of capabilities between our two governments and societies. I suspect that few present here today would object to either observation. Yet we continue to read analyses of our relationship that focus narrowly on one aspect or another, to the detriment of the whole. This is especially the case in the military arena, ironically the aspect of our relations that is both the least developed and in which the disparity in capabilities is most pronounced. Just as some in China imagine an American effort to encircle and contain China by military means, some in my country fantasize about China as a military rival with global ambitions.

Overall, there is a tendency for Chinese to underestimate the degree to which China has become a global leader and to shrink from accepting the responsibilities of such status. Meanwhile, Americans habitually overestimate China’s capabilities and argue for it to do more in support of global norms, stability, and prosperity. This is a somewhat perplexing contrast. It reflects the naturally disturbing nature of change, which can evoke dysfunctional denial as well as ill-founded apprehension. We must guard against both as the balance between us continues to shift and our relations evolve apace with this in the decades to come.

Large gaps in capabilities persist, but it is undeniable that, in every respect except military, the balance of capabilities between the two countries is more equal than it was three decades ago. Politically, Chinese prestige has never been higher. Economically, China is now seen as a great power with a decisive role in global prosperity. Culturally, Chinese film directors, actors, artists, and musicians have gained a widening international following. A Chinese author, though one in disfavor at home, has won the Nobel Prize for literature. China’s self-defense capabilities have been vastly upgraded and its military professionalized, especially over the past decade. These successes have attracted American
attention and elevated the priority the United States assigns to good relations with China.

This is all to the good. Initially, the new American administration is likely to concentrate on economic problems and to focus more on trends in West Asia and Europe than in northeast Asia. However, the promise of Sino-American relations remains exceptional, and the answers to many problems can only be found in their further development. In due course, President Obama will be able to turn his attention to the opportunities that rising Chinese wealth and power already present. As I see it, these include:

- Working together with the world’s other great economies to define and implement a new order for global trade and finance to which China can make contributions commensurate with the benefits it derives from sustained globalization, peace, and development.

- Creating institutions for trilateral and multilateral dialogue to coordinate regional policies and manage crises, while making Sino-American relations more transparent to third countries. The security and prosperity of countries like Japan, the Koreas, ASEAN members, Australia, India, Pakistan, the Central Asian states, and Russia and the state of our respective relations with them are of natural concern to both China and the United States. They are similarly interested in Sino-American interaction. Enhanced dialogue would benefit all parties.

- Realizing still more benefits from the process of mutual opening begun by wise leaders on both sides three decades ago by systematically examining and eliminating legal, regulatory, and other barriers to greater interaction and cooperation between all levels of our two societies.

It goes without saying that the prerequisite for our pursuit of these and other opportunities to advance our common interests is ensuring that problems left over from history do not flare up to threaten the present or the future. Based on our performance over the past three decades, I think we can be optimistic. It is important that we rise to the challenges before us. As one considers the eight dimensions of Sino-American relations I have touched upon this
morning, one cannot help but be struck by the many contributions our relations have made to our two societies and to world affairs in the past. This underscores the stakes Chinese and Americans and the world have in Sino-American relations continuing their mostly positive course in the years to come, and it highlights the importance of the topics to be discussed in this conference.
The Future of China-US Relations

Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Ph.D.

The relations between the United States and China have had their ups and downs in the thirty years since the establishment of formal diplomatic relations. A number of issues such as trade, currency values, intellectual property rights, human rights, Taiwan, Tibet, and others create friction, but these issues can be managed in any normal relationship. The overarching question for the future is whether China and the United States will have a normal relationship.

Throughout history, the rise of a new power has been attended by uncertainty and anxieties. Often, though not always, violent conflict has followed. As Thucydides explained, the real roots of the Peloponnesian War were the rise in the power of Athens and the fear it created in Sparta. The rise in the economic and military power of China, the world’s most populous country, will be one of the two or three most important questions in this century.

Many observers have compared the rise of China to that of Germany at the beginning of the last century. For Arthur Waldron, “sooner or later, if present trends continue, war is probable in Asia…. China today is actively seeking to scare the United States away from East Asia rather as Germany sought to frighten Britain before World War I by building its ‘risk fleet.’” According to Robert Kagan, “the Chinese leadership views the world today in much the same way Kaiser Wilhelm II did a century ago…. Chinese leaders chafe at the constraints on them and worry that they must change the rules of the international system before the international system changes them.”

In recent years, China’s economy has grown by nearly 10 percent annually and its defense budget has increased by about 17 percent. The Pentagon’s Quadrennial Defense Review identified China as a problem. Yet Chinese leaders have spoken of China’s “peaceful rise” or more recently, “peaceful development.”

Some realist analysts like John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago have flatly proclaimed that China cannot rise peacefully, and predicted that “the United States and China are likely to engage in an intense security competition with considerable potential for war.” Others, like Ashley Tellis, point out that China has engaged in good neighbor policies since the 1990s, settled border disputes, played a greater role in international institutions and recognized the benefits of using soft power. Skeptics reply that China is just waiting for its economy to continue to lay the basis for future hegemony, and that its goal is to expel the United States from Asia, and replace the US as the global leader.

Who is right? We will not know for some time, but the debaters should recall both halves of Thucydides’ trenchant analysis. War was caused not merely by the rise of one power, but by the fear it engendered in another. The belief in the inevitability of conflict can become one of its main causes. Each side, believing it will end up at war with the other, makes reasonable military preparations, which then are read by the other side as confirmation of its worst fears. In a perverse transnational alliance, hawks in each country cite the others’ statements as clear evidence. A recent poll reports that one-third of Americans believe that China will “soon dominate the world,” while 54 percent see the emergence of China as a “threat to world peace.” Analysts should be wary of such exaggerated fears and self-fulfilling prophecies.

The Rise of China

In fact, the “rise of China” is a misnomer. “Re-emergence” would be more accurate, since by size and history the Middle Kingdom has long been a major power in East Asia. Technically and economically, China was the world’s leader (though without global reach) from 500 to 1500. Only in the last half millennium was it overtaken by Europe and America. The Asian Development Bank has calculated that in 1820, at the beginning of the industrial age, Asia made up an estimated three-fifths of world product. By 1940, this fell to one-fifth, even though the region was home to three-fifths of the world population. Rapid economic growth has brought that back to two-fifths today, and the Bank speculates that Asia could return to its historical levels by 2025. Asia, of course, includes Japan, India, Korea, and others, but China will eventually play the largest role. Its high annual growth rates led to a remarkable tripling of its GNP in the last two decades of the 20th century. This pragmatic economic performance, along with its Confucian culture,
The Future of China-US Relations

and a new emphasis on public diplomacy enhanced China’s soft power in the region. A recent poll of 33 countries conducted for the BBC, found China’s influence rated positively in 20 countries while the US was rated positively in just 13 countries.

Nonetheless, China has a long way to go, and still faces many obstacles to its development. Measured by official exchange rates (a more accurate measure of power than is the purchasing power parity estimates that the World Bank used and recently discounted by 40 percent), China is the fourth largest economy in the world, but its income per capita is only $1,700 or one twenty-fifth that of the United States. China’s research and development is only ten percent of the American level. If both the US and China continue to grow at their current rates, it is possible that China’s total economy could be larger than America’s in twenty or thirty years, but American per capita income (which is a better gauge of the sophistication of an economy) will remain four times greater. In addition, China’s military power is far behind the United States, and it lacks the soft power resources such as Hollywood and world-class universities that America enjoys. In contrast, the Kaiser’s Germany had already passed Great Britain in industrial production by 1900, and launched a serious military challenge to Britain’s naval supremacy. The historical analogy misreads history, as well as exaggerates China’s strength.

Moreover, simple linear projections of economic growth trends can be misleading. Countries tend to pick the low hanging fruit as they benefit from imported technologies in the early stages of economic take-off, and growth rates generally slow as economies reach higher levels of development. In addition, the Chinese economy faces serious obstacles of transition from inefficient state owned enterprises, a shaky financial system, and inadequate infrastructure. Growing inequality, massive internal migration, an inadequate social safety net, corruption, and weak institutions could foster political instability. Creating a rule of law and institutions for political participation has lagged behind the economy. Indeed, some observers fear instability caused by a weak rather than a rising China. A China that cannot control flows of migration, environmental effects on the global climate, and internal conflict poses another set of problems. Politics have a way of confounding economic projections.

As long as China’s economy does grow, it is likely that its military power will increase, thus making China appear more
dangerous to its neighbors and complicating America’s commitments in the region. But the balance of military power will also depend on what the United States and other countries will be doing over the next decades. The key to military power in the information age depends on the ability to collect, process, disseminate, and integrate complex systems of space-based surveillance, high-speed computers, and ‘smart’ weapons. China and others will develop some of these capabilities, but according to many military analysts it is not likely that China will soon close that gap with the US.

The fact that China is not likely to become a peer competitor to the United States on a global basis, does not mean that it could not challenge the United States in East Asia, or that war over Taiwan or some other issue is not possible. Weaker countries sometimes attack when they feel backed into a corner, such as Japan did at Pearl Harbor or China did when it entered the Korean War in 1950. If, for example, Taiwan were to declare independence, it is likely that China would use force against Taiwan, regardless of the perceived economic or military costs. But it would be unlikely to win such a war, and prudent policy on both sides can make such a war unlikely.

Designing a Strategy to Fit the Challenge

The US faced these problems in the 1990s when the Clinton Administration formulated our strategy for East Asia. We knew that hawks who called for containment of China would not be able to rally other countries to that cause. We also knew that if we treated China as an enemy, we were ensuring future enmity. While we could not be sure how China would evolve, it made no sense to foreclose the prospect of a better future. Our response combined realism and liberalism: balance of power and economic integration. We reinforced the US-Japan alliance so that China could not play a ‘Japan card’ against us, while inviting China to join the World Trade Organization and other international institutions. In a rare case of bipartisan comity, the Bush Administration continued that strategy. Nonetheless, there are some voices in the Congress who dislike this strategy. The domestic politics of America’s China policy might be summarized as the left and the right against the center.
China is now America’s third largest trade partner and second largest official creditor. Critics contend this trade with China has made us vulnerable. China could hurt us by dumping its holdings of dollars, but to do so would also damage its own economy. The yuan may be undervalued, but China accounts for only a third of the increase in America’s trade deficit over the past five years, and a revaluation will not remove our deficit. As for jobs, even if America bars low cost goods from China, we will import them from somewhere else. To solve our economic problems, we must get our own house in order by raising savings, cutting deficits, and improving our basic education. That will do more to make America safe than exaggerating China’s economic threat.

China’s internal evolution remains uncertain. It has lifted 400 million people out of poverty since 1990, but another 400 million live on less that $2 per day. It has enormous inequality, a migrant labor force of 140 million, severe pollution, and rampant corruption. Political evolution has failed to match economic progress. More than 200 million Chinese use the internet, but the government censors the internet. The danger is that party leaders, trying to counter the erosion of communism, will use nationalism as their ideological glue, and this could lead to an unstable foreign policy.

Faced with such uncertainty, former Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick engaged China in a strategic dialogue to encourage it to evolve as a “responsible stakeholder,” i.e., to see itself as helping to provide international public goods rather than just pursuing its short run self interest. There are some signs of an evolution of Chinese attitudes in this direction, but there is always a residual danger that China will slip into competitive nationalism in the face of its domestic problems. Nationalistic reactions by young Chinese to the criticisms of China’s Tibet policy show how strong this sentiment can be.

Conclusion

There is no need for the United States and China to go to war now or in the future. Not every rising power leads to war—witness America overtaking Britain at the end of the 19th century. The rise of China’s soft power or attractiveness in the US and elsewhere can help to make China look less threatening.

* Since this article was written, China has become the United States largest official creditor. “Major Foreign Holders of Treasury Securities,” US Department of Treasury, Nov. 18, 2008. Ed.
Similarly, the increase of American soft power can be beneficial for China. Power need not be a zero sum relationship. If China’s rise remains peaceful, it promises great benefits to Chinese, its neighbors, and to Americans. But remembering Thucydides’ advice, it will be important for security analysts not to mistake their simple theories for reality, to avoid misleading historical analogies (like the one to Germany), and to avoid letting exaggerated fears create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Or to paraphrase Franklin Roosevelt, we can make both countries safer by being wary of fear itself.
US-China Relations: Lessons Learned, New Challenges*

Stanton Jue

China’s dramatic growth in economic and political clout in recent years has irreversibly transformed the strategic balance in East Asia and the Pacific and beyond. Despite some egregious problems at home, this giant country is poised to become a superpower paralleling the United States in 15-20 years.

As former Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig aptly stated in November 1996, “China is an inevitable international superpower. China’s relationship with the United States may well be the pivotal determinant of international peace and stability as well as continued Pacific economic success.” This observation is being shared by an increasing number of China specialists in recent months.

China is a highly complex, multi-dimensional country deeply rooted in rich history and culture, a subject few Americans fully comprehend. However, China’s aggressive foreign policy strategy and its drive towards military modernization have caused many world leaders to wonder if China is really peaceful. However, the ascent of China is surely one of the most important events of our times. It is critically important today for us to deepen our understanding and recognition of the challenges posed by this giant country.

I welcome the opportunity to make a few personal observations as I consider them to be lessons I have learned from my lifelong career in the Foreign Service with a focus on Chinese affairs, including Taiwan. I am reflecting on the broad perspective and trends rather than any particular set of events. Following are some of the lessons:

The first lesson: From hostility to reconciliation. I joined the Foreign Service in 1956. During the first two decades of the PRC’s existence, American experience with China was not a happy one. Intense animosity and suspicion and distrust of each other clouded our vision and goals. There was the Korean War (1950-1953) where more than 54,000 Americans were killed and

thousands more were injured or missing in action. The US 7th Fleet regularly patrolled the Taiwan Strait to prevent both sides from attacking each other. There was the 1954 mutual defense treaty between the US and Taiwan aimed at deterring China from attacking the island. During the 1950s and 1960s there was a protracted and acrimonious series of ambassadorial talks in Geneva and Warsaw over the dispute between our two countries. The Vietnam War found the two countries once again on opposite sides, with Beijing supporting Hanoi and Washington supporting Saigon. The policy of hostility and confrontation between China and the US was stuck, proven unworkable, costly, and counterproductive and had to be changed. The policy of confrontation was shifted to reconciliation as soon as Nixon set foot on Tiananmen Square.

The second lesson: **Less arrogance, more dialogue.** We began to learn to talk and listen to each other differently. Before the 1972 normalization and even now sometimes, the US had the tendency of lecturing instead of listening to the Chinese, patronizing, and at times threatening to impose sanctions or to withhold MFN status for Chinese misbehavior. For their part, the Chinese have regularly accused Americans of blatantly interfering in their internal affairs and of being a bully with hegemonic intentions. Over time, this approach proved unworkable and unproductive as well. Fundamentally, China is a country with considerable strength and resilience, too big to be intimidated and too important to be ignored. For both countries, I think it is important that the relationship be reset on a more even keel with greater cultural sensitivity, as each very much needs the other in order to properly manage this vital, complex relationship.

In the past several years, our approach toward China has changed fundamentally, certainly with more cordiality, respect, appreciation, and understanding of each other’s domestic problems, as demonstrated by Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson during his first Strategic Economic Dialogue with Chinese leaders in Beijing last December and his second SED in Washington in May this year. On both occasions they discussed global challenges as well as rising trading tensions between the two countries. In the second dialogue, Vice Premier Wu Yi brought with her the largest Chinese delegation composed of 17 cabinet-level officials to Washington to interact with an equally large American delegation of 18 cabinet-and senior-level officials, including Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke.
During the two-day discussions and subsequent talks with congressional leaders some progress was reported in aviation by more than doubling the daily passenger flights from 10 to 23 by 2012, expanded opportunities for US financial service companies, increasing use of environmental technology and energy products, but no breakthrough in the biggest dispute, China’s undervalued renminbi or yuan. Meanwhile, Congress vowed to push legislation to punish China for unfair trading practices which have driven US deficits to a record $233 billion in 2006. Despite facing agitation and criticism in congressional and other quarters for a tougher line with Beijing on trade issues, Paulson insists throughout the discussions that the high-level strategic dialogue offers the best opportunity to achieve positive results incrementally over the long haul.

The third lesson: No US role in mediation. We have learned from experience not to mediate in a Chinese dispute, although both Beijing and Taipei wanted the US to help pressure the other side. As one may recall, in the early 1980s when the Republic of China (ROC) in Taipei faced national humiliation and despair, President Reagan offered Taiwan six assurances, one of which was that the US would not be directly involved in mediation or negotiation between Taipei and Beijing. This policy remains unchanged. The oft-repeated US position is that “a peaceful resolution of the cross strait issue is a matter for both sides to decide so long as it is made without coercion.” Clearly, we want to avoid the risk of being caught in the middle, as we learned from the failed mediation missions of Generals Patrick Hurley, Albert Wedemeyer, and George Marshall in the 1940s. United States mediation missions had all good intentions but not the necessary wisdom or skills to untangle the complexities of a Chinese puzzle.

The fourth lesson: China no longer treated as enemy. The US government no longer views China as an enemy, although some in the Pentagon continue to use the “China Threat” as a justification for military acceleration. This sends mixed signals to the Chinese and others. In general, however, we are in search of opportunity in areas where it is easier to find common ground, such as in energy, environment, and public health. We realize human rights and democracy, important as they are in US foreign policy, cannot be quickly transplanted. This point was made explicitly clear when Premier Wen Jiabao stated prior to the opening of the National People’s Congress in March 2007 that “China must stick with the basic socialist development guideline for 100 years.” Three months later, on June 15, President Hu Jintao reiterated this line in
a solemn speech at the Central Party School, asserting that “China will eventually evolve into a form of socialist democracy, in tune with its national characteristics.”

In the foreseeable future, I think what is needed most is for the US to maximize incentives for China’s evolution to become more compatible with democratic norms rather than insisting on promoting American democracy. In any case, China’s democracy would not be a simple copy of Western models. Partly because of China’s entrenched cultural and historical traditions, and partly because of China’s deficiencies in domestic development, some of the issues will require more time, patience, and creativity to reach a solution. Some of the solutions may never meet our expectations.

Given China’s commitment to one-party monopoly of political power for at least the next five years and its rejection to calls for movement toward genuine freedom and democracy, critics in the US are cynical in saying that the US-China partnership concept is illusionary and overly optimistic. They clearly have a stereotypical opinion of China looking at it through the moral lens of our own society. But for those who work on improving Sino-American relations, it is important that they have a sense of optimism, a sense of reality, and a positive attitude in order to move forward to foster a brighter future—a future in which we will have cooperation instead of confrontation, stability instead of chaos, and peace instead of war.

And the fifth lesson: **Glimmers of hope, but future unpredictable**. Amid glimmers of hope and optimism, there are still deep uncertainties about the future of the US-China relationship, as no one, least of all the Chinese themselves, can predict what China will be and how it will use its new power 20 years hence. China might not become a liberal democracy that is pro-American as we hope. According to a recent survey, some 50 democracies were created after WWII, but less than ten can be considered as based on the rule of law with their citizens protected by an independent judiciary or a legal system guaranteeing freedoms of expression and assembly, and only a handful of these countries in non-Western traditions have survived more than a decade, such as South Korea and Taiwan. In both cases, their transition to democracy was much simpler because of their long alliance with and assistance from the United States. What about China? If one can believe in what Hu and Wen remarked above, China, because of its various levels of sophistication and traditions, will eventually evolve into a form of
socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics and the process will take at least another 100 years.

Moreover, China’s economic miracle has created startling institutional changes inside the country. Many Americans tend to believe that engagement and economic development inevitably will lead China to political transformation. In a foreign policy speech delivered in November 1999, for example, George W. Bush stated, in reference to China, “economic freedom creates habits of liberty. And habits of liberty create expectations of democracy.” This may be more wishful thinking.

Economic change in China also created incredible disparity between urban and rural regions on the mainland. Against this background, farmers and workers have become increasingly restless demanding more guarantees of social and economic justice rather than a drastic change of the political system. In the face of this reality, Hu Jintao has created the idea of “a harmonious socialist society” a watchword of his government in hopes of dampening protests nationwide. While it is true that students, intellectuals and business people clamor for more freedoms and less restrictions, many of the population in inland provinces, still tradition-bound, generally prefer gradual rather than drastic political changes as long as the government provides social justice and economic opportunities. Thus, some observers believe China’s political system may not fundamentally change from what it is today. One should not be surprised to see an autocratic Chinese regime more interested in maintaining stability and holding on to power than one working energetically to promote western style democracy and freedom for its citizens.

Finally, looking ahead, one should bear in mind that important uncertainties persist in the future of US-China relations. While we have learned a great deal and have made some progress in working with China, the core relationship remains largely unbalanced, sometimes moving in the right direction and sometimes falling back on short-term crises. The critical challenge is: Can we effectively manage this volatile and complex relationship during the transition? I believe we can and must—only if leaders on both sides work not to allow short-term crises to obscure their long-term vision. In the past, we muddled through many crises. Now we are at a critical crossroads, and much is at stake. I am cautiously confident that leaders in both countries will act sensibly because China and the United States badly need each other to survive and prosper.
Witnessing Change:  
Three Decades of US-China Relations  

*Chi Wang, Ph.D.*

The 30th anniversary of the normalization of US-China relations and the beginning of China’s economic reform and opening present an opportunity to reflect upon the developments in the American-Chinese relationship over the past three decades. China, the world, and Chinese international relations have changed dramatically since President Richard Nixon visited China in 1972. As the former head of the Chinese and Korean Section at the Library of Congress, I was fortunate to witness first-hand many of the seminal cultural and political advancements in the relationship between the United States and the People’s Republic of China.

In 1972, shortly after President Nixon returned from his historic trip to China, I was the first American librarian to visit China in an official capacity, with the aim of establishing book and cultural exchanges with the PRC. Prior to 1972, there had been Chinese delegations to the United States; however, they were all scientific. During my time in Beijing, it was agreed 12 Chinese librarians would visit the United States in 1973. This visit would be the first visit by a Chinese delegation for non-scientific purposes. I also negotiated an informal book exchange program between the Library of Congress and the National Library of Beijing, China’s central library. In 1974, I assisted in arranging an exhibition of archaeological artifacts from the PRC at the National Gallery of Art. Prior to my negotiations, cultural exchanges were sensitive topics in China. While Nixon’s visit signaled a changing Chinese perspective on international relations, the establishment of these exchanges demonstrated a growing Chinese tolerance, albeit slow, of previously taboo subjects.

In September 1973, the delegation of 12 prominent Chinese librarians, hosted by the Committee for the Scholarly Communication with the People’s Republic of China, arrived in the United States for a six-week visit. During their stay in the United States, the delegation members visited New York, Washington, DC, San Francisco, and Honolulu, as well as Harvard and Princeton Universities. In Washington, DC, they were welcomed by the librarian of congress and attended a one-day conference at the Library of Congress to discuss library development in China and
the United States. President Nixon greeted all 12 librarians at the White House on October 1.

Official diplomatic relations did not exist between the United States and the PRC at this time; this delegation and the book exchanges established during my 1972 visit created unofficial channels through which officials from the countries could interact. It was thrilling to become one of the first Chinese-Americans to become involved in US-China relations after Nixon’s opening of China.

In the years between these first delegations and the establishment of normalized diplomatic relations, the United States and China as well as my Chinese counterparts and I continued to broaden US-China relations through unofficial cultural channels. The continuing book exchanges between the Library of Congress and the National Library of Beijing provided not only new access to literature but also vital people-to-people contacts that served as a foundation for later official interactions.

In August 1978, Michel Oksenberg, a member of President Jimmy Carter’s National Security Council, called a meeting attended by representatives from the various government agencies to discuss China; I attended as the Library of Congress’s representative and continued to participate in similar meetings throughout the Carter administration. About 20 individuals met in a conference room at the Old Executive Office Building. Oksenberg asked each representative what his agency would want from the White House if ties to China were normalized. The meeting presented an opportunity to learn about other agency’s opinions on the US-China relationship, and it was clear normalization of relations was a major policy goal of the Carter administration.

On December 15, 1978 (December 16 in Beijing), the United States and China jointly announced their intention to establish normal diplomatic relations effective January 1, 1979. Normalization was a significant development in US-China relations and ushered in a new era. Exchanges, however, remained a vital aspect of Sino-American relations. In 1979, I helped arrange the first delegation of American librarians to visit China led by Deputy Librarian of Congress William J. Welsh. In 1982, I was also proud to arrange a yearlong work-study for two Chinese librarians. Through the support of the Council on Library Resources, these two Chinese librarians worked at the Library of Congress, where
they acquired not only practical skills relevant to their work in China but also developed personal and professional contacts.

The decade following normalization included a dramatic increase in the exchange between the Library of Congress and the National Library of Beijing. Normalized relations allowed for the establishment of a publication exchange between the institutions. The Beijing National Library agreed to give a copy of every newly published work it received to the Library of Congress. In return, the Library of Congress sent a complete set of US government publications to China. Through the exchange, from 1981 to 1987, the Library of Congress received on average 15,000 volumes from China annually. Contacts developed during the librarian delegations, the work-study program, and book exchanges contributed to the Sino-American relationship by broadening its context from solely governmental to social and cultural.

My participation in developing US-China relations was not limited to organizing delegations and exchanges. In 1980, I was assigned by the US Information Agency to research the state of American Studies in the PRC. I traveled to China and visited various universities, libraries, and research institutions before writing a report on my findings. In order to facilitate relations with China, it is imperative the United States understand the fundamental premises upon which China and its people base their views of America. In this regard, my report created a blueprint for American understanding of the status of Chinese American Studies programs.

As the US-China relationship continued to evolve in the context of normalized relations, I was honored to assist Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton before their trips to the PRC. Then in 1995, several former diplomats and I founded the United States-China Policy Foundation (USCPF), the only Washington, DC-based non-profit organization dedicated to improving US-China relations. The USCPF actively seeks to educate and inform policymakers, researchers, and government officials about China and Sino-American relations. In this vein, USCPF co-hosted an academic conference with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on December 15 and 16, 2008, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of normalized US-PRC diplomatic relations. Since the December conference, I have remained involved in the US-China relationship and was among a select few policymakers and ex-government officials, including President and
Mrs. Jimmy Carter, Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, General Brent Scowcroft, Dr. Henry Kissinger, and five former US ambassadors to the PRC, invited to participate in a January 2009 anniversary celebration in Beijing.

It has been a privilege to participate in US-China relations over the past several decades. In the years between my 1972 trip to arrange a book exchange and my January 2009 visit accompanying President Carter and Dr. Brzezinski, I have been impressed by the dramatic changes in the US-China relationship. Once clouded by misunderstanding and rhetoric, the Sino-American relationship has become one of the most productive and influential international bonds today; I look forward to the positive developments that lie ahead.
**Charm Offensive:**
*How China’s Soft Power Is Transforming the World*

*Joshua Kurlantzick*

As a correspondent for The Economist in East Asia, based in Thailand, one of my reporting assignments was covering the first visit of a Chinese president, Jiang Zemin, to Cambodia in November 2000. This was the first such visit in thirty years; China and Cambodia have had a generally disastrous modern history (China was the major foreign patron of the Khmer Rouge, and after the genocide in Cambodia there was much lingering anger at all sorts of factors, including China).

Jiang received a strong public response in Cambodia, not only from local officials whose job it is to do nice things for visiting dignitaries, but from a huge number of schoolchildren who came to welcome him, from the local business community, and then, from thousands of local officials from all over the country who came to greet him. The Chinese government had done a great deal of preparatory work for this visit. They had invested a lot of money in language schools and cultural programs in Cambodia, built a kind of Peace Corps program there, gave out scholarships for children who would go on to study in China, and created a huge aid program. China had done similar things in other countries. But there was very little coverage of this in the global media, which tended to focus on high-level diplomacy. Accordingly, for the book project, I went to China to speak with Chinese officials about how they see their power in the world emerging, particularly in developing parts of the world, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and then went to a number of countries in those regions to look at what China was doing on the ground in these areas. I also wanted to find out what, if any, results the Chinese had gotten from what we call soft power.

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* This article is based on Kurlantzick’s comments about his book, *Charm Offensive: How China’s Soft Power is Transforming the World* (Yale University Press) presented on July 25, 2007 at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia. Ed.
How China’s Soft Power Strategy Emerges

There are many definitions of soft power, but basically, when the Chinese government talks about its new soft power in the world, it means all power outside of the military sphere, including, diplomacy, aid, investment, and economic tools.

One reason for this new relationship with the world is that China has experienced great domestic changes within the past fifteen years. By the 1990s, you saw the growth of a more confident, patriotic, even nationalistic public in China, that, seeing how China had grown significantly, began to talk about China's playing a larger role in the world, a subject that was verboten fifteen years ago. The Chinese leadership also has become much more engaged with the world, with their own think tanks and universities to draw on to develop a more sophisticated foreign policy. These leaders have a more sophisticated view of the world, travel more, and are able to play a larger, more confident global role.

Here in the US, we often talk of how difficult it is for the government to change tack when something is perceived as a mistake. This was not the case in China, which in the mid-1990s was somewhat more adventurous militarily, launching missiles into the Taiwan Strait and creating disputes in Asia over islands that China and other countries have made claims to. Beijing recognized that this adventurism was really failing them and that they were alienating countries, some of whom were coming back and restoring their relations with the US.

Finally, there was the Asian financial crisis. The US was widely criticized for responding slowly to that crisis, and you saw the beginning of the decline of America's image in that part of the world. At the same time the Chinese government was fairly proactive. They resisted devaluing their currency and did a lot of good PR for this. Whatever this may have contributed to solving the crisis, they really hyped up that they were standing up for other countries in Asia and got a lot of goodwill from this decision. It was the first time they saw the benefits of promoting their economic activity in the world as a benefit to other nations.

Chinese Goals

China has new goals as it has become more engaged in the world. First, it desperately needs access to resources. It has a high
level of industrial development, but is a vast consumer of resources. If China were to develop at the same pace as the US and consume the same amount of resources, it would be on a scale unprecedented in the world. As a result, the Chinese government worries desperately where it is going to get oil and gas. The government doesn't have the kind of legitimacy that comes from elections; its legitimacy comes from delivering economic growth. Every time that growth declines or if there's an electricity blackout or the like, the government worries. The Chinese also have been overly dependent on too few oil and gas suppliers in the world. They now look to places they can get oil and gas where they won't be in direct competition with the US or Japan, places like Sudan and other countries where Western nations either can't go because of sanctions or fear to go because the environment is dangerous.

Also, as Chinese companies start to become internationally active, they want to have places they can sell their goods. Again, they often want to go to places where there's less immediate competition with the US, places where the environment is difficult for business. As they get more influential, the Chinese want more partners in international organizations such as the UN, the WTO, etc.

Isolating Taiwan has been a Chinese goal since the US and the rest of the world recognized China, and in the past few years, as China has become more proactive and internationally engaged, they have sought more to isolate Taiwan, which has informal links with many other parts of the world.

China's strategy since the late 1990s shows recognition that in the US, its image will likely be mixed. Therefore, if it could change its perception in other parts of the world and reduce fears of its economic and military power in other parts of the world, it could play a much greater role on the global stage. This is actually quite sophisticated thinking.

Finally, the Chinese leadership to some degree desires in the long run that China be the regional leader in Asia. It feels that the US is an unnatural actor in Asia, owing from the legacy of WWII, when the US was the only country that had the power to play the peacemaker role, to guarantee stability in the region. In the long term, they feel, that role would naturally be China's.
Components of China’s Strategy

Since the late 1990s, China has shifted its foreign policy away from just worrying about the US, as it had been doing to a large extent since Kissinger and Zhou Enlai first met, to a much broader focus. The time they spend in Africa, Latin America, and other parts of the world is evidence that Chinese leaders are putting a much higher priority on those regions, recognizing that because China is also a developing nation, it possibly can build relations with some of these other parts of the world more effectively than the US can. China’s leaders can suggest that their country stands on the side of these other countries on issues like trade and technology transfer. Whether or not this is actually true, as a rhetorical device, it’s quite effective.

China sometimes focuses on countries where the US bilateral relationship is faltering. An extreme case is Uzbekistan. The US has had a closer relationship with Uzbekistan since 9/11, since it wanted bases there. About two years ago there was a significant crackdown on opposition in that country in which hundreds of people were brutally killed. We still have some bases there. But at the time of the crackdown, the relationship was downgraded. Immediately after, the Chinese government invited the leader of Uzbekistan for a state visit to Beijing.

You see this at a lower level, too. A good example is the Philippines. The US had long had a good relationship with that country. But in July 2004 the Philippines took its troops out of Iraq, probably in order to save a Filipino hostage. The Bush administration criticized them, and immediately after that, the Chinese government announced an enormous aid package for the Philippines and aggressively stepped up its relationship. China recognizes that it can benefit when the US slips. It seeks to convey that unlike the US, it does not interfere with other countries’ domestic affairs. It won’t tell any country, Sudan, Myanmar, or France, what to do. China has won some praise in some countries for this.

China has also become more pragmatic. It does not want to directly antagonize the US or poke a finger in its eye; it wants to still have a good relationship with the US but pursue these other strategies at the same time. For instance, China has a very good relationship with Venezuela, whose Hugo Chavez has made stridently anti-US statements in many forums, including the UN.
Charm Offensive

When he did the same in Beijing, China's ambassador to Venezuela immediately told the local press that China did not want to associate itself with those statements.

Finally, within political systems, China is far less ideological than in the past. Forty years ago, China chose its relations within political systems based on ideology. There's very little of that any more. After rebels in Nepal who took their philosophy directly from Chairman Mao began a war against the king, China's government had to decide who they were going to support. They decided to support the king against the Maoist rebels.

Chinese Tools of Influence

With very little fanfare until this past year, China has developed into a significant aid donor in the world. China had given out aid in the 1950s and 1960s, in Mao's time, but had retreated from this in recent years. Now, in some countries like the Philippines and Cambodia and parts of Africa, China has actually become a bigger donor than the US or Japan. The money is spent in a pretty sophisticated way, not for building big sports stadiums, which is what China was famous for in the past, but for their own version of the Peace Corps. They spend money on local media and bring politicians and officials from other countries to China to trade. They do what we in America would call building people-to-people contacts, which was hard for the Chinese government to understand in the past.

This comes along with more skilled formal diplomacy. When I was first based in Thailand, you never saw the Chinese ambassador. He was invisible. China now has a new ambassador to Thailand who often appears on that country's equivalent of the Larry King Show. He speaks fluent Thai and he's perfectly willing to talk about China's relationship with Thailand, a dramatic change from ten years ago. You see this across the Chinese diplomatic corps. They're much more open, much better in English and local languages, and more able to interact with other countries.

This comes along with much increased promotion of cultural and language studies. China has spent a lot of money promoting language studies, funding the first and second year of universities in 100-150 countries. Particularly in poorer countries, they spend a lot of money promoting Chinese studies in primary schools. If you do well there, you can get a scholarship to go on to university in
China. Fifteen years ago there were very few foreign students in China, a certain number of Americans who had come on exchange programs, as well as some African students left over from Mao's time. Now you have 110,000-140,000 overseas students in China (Some, of course, are students who probably would have liked to study in the US but visas have become more difficult to obtain since 9/11).

Particularly in Asia, China's TV and print media also have become more accessible, and China has begun to invest in the world. On trips abroad, Chinese officials are savvy at suggesting the enormous potential of China's future investment. Right now, China is a pretty small investor in the world. But they talk about huge targets that China's going to bring in the future, $100 billion in new investment in Latin America, for example. It covers up that China is still just feeling its way in the world as an investor.

Finally, China has become a country that embraces foreign trade agreements (FTA), which would shock US trade officials of 15-20 years ago. China is now negotiating between 15-20 free trade agreements all over the world at the same time. If you talk to people in the US who negotiate FTAs, they'd say that's impossible, it takes a year to negotiate just one FTA. What the Chinese government does is negotiate an FTA that has very little substance in it, sign it, then work out the substance later, which brings a lot of good will. Obviously in the US context, one could not say to businesses or Congress, "We're just going to sign a trade agreement, we'll tell you what's in it later."

Matrices of Chinese Success

In a lot of parts of the world where there had been fear of China's economic growth, particularly in the developing world, you see much less fear today. This is reflected in the media coverage, even, for instance, in the coverage of exports of tainted goods from China. The Southeast Asia media gives this much less coverage than the US media does. This reflects their much higher degree of comfort with China as an economic partner. If you look at both global and local public opinion polls, China is viewed more favorably in a lot of countries as an actor on the global stage than the US Chinese business people and officials also are now getting access to a lot of countries that once they never would have.
Another sign of China's success is that there is a lot of interest in China's model of development. Countries from Syria to Iran, from Vietnam to South Africa feel that China somehow has done something different from Western countries, given its staggering growth rate. China probably doesn't have a substantially different model of development, but the fact that it has developed to become so strong economically without loosening political control is an attractive idea to a leader of an authoritarian country. Vietnamese officials with whom I spoke for my book really want to copy what China has done.

In Asia, local ethnic Chinese historically were viewed as a prism for how to view relations with China. You see this in diaspora communities in many parts of the world. Ten years ago, when I first moved to Southeast Asia, Indonesians were burning down the homes of ethnic Chinese, looting their shops. Now you have an overwhelming celebration of Chinese culture. Indonesia's president talks about it, and local ethnic Chinese there run for parliament.

China, in fact, has increased its allure to the point that it now plays a quite interesting role for other poor nations on its border. In some ways China is now viewed by some of these nations the way the US might be viewed in Central America, or the EU in Moldova. China is a place you want to get to in order to live a better life. China is still a very poor country, but some of the poorer border countries view China as extremely wealthy. People in Myanmar, northern Thailand and Laos want to marry visiting Chinese business people, thinking it would get them into China. That's actually not true, but it shows the dramatic change in China's image.

As China has increased its access to resources, it's been able to diversify its suppliers of oil and gas, so that its oil and gas take from Africa has nearly doubled over the past ten years.

Finally, China now has more peacekeepers serving under the UN flag than any member of the Permanent 5 on the Security Council except France. They serve in Africa, the Caribbean, with very little comment or concern, which reflects some degree of comfort with China's presence in these places.
Why Soft Power Matters

China's growing popularity broadens its public appeal and allows other countries to cooperate more closely with it, including on defense cooperation. One Filipino defense official put it to me this way: "Ten years ago in the Philippines, which is a vibrant democracy, with a very free press, if the Chinese had come to us and offered us closer defense training or an alliance, it would have been unthinkable, because it would have gotten out to the public and criticized. Now we know it's essentially acceptable to the public, because China's image has improved quite well, and so the Philippines has pushed forward with closer defense and economic cooperation with China."

So, public appeal does matter. Conversely, here in the US we often thought it didn't matter that much. But when it came to the run-up to the war in Iraq, when you would like cooperation with Turkey, our long-time friend, we were unable to get their support for an incursion from Turkey into northern Iraq. Turkey is a democracy now, and the government of Turkey knows that US public appeal is not so strong in Turkey. Rumsfeld, himself, said that was one of the major factors that hindered the war effort at first.

You see the same thing with economic cooperation, countries in Africa, Asia, other parts of the world becoming more comfortable in their relationship with China, partly because it's easier for them to tolerate China's public appeal. The US still has a very close relationship with Saudi Arabia, but the Saudi government must necessarily be worried about the public appeal of having a relationship with the US. It's not surprising that the Saudi government has formed close links to China and thought about building China its own strategic petroleum reserve.

As China has become more influential, opinion leaders from all over the world are visiting or studying there. One of the things the US has always drawn upon is the generations of opinion leaders who had come to the US for education, gone home, and have been the best ambassadors for the US—Margaret Thatcher, Hamid Karzai, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in the Philippines. China is increasingly going to play that role, and that will necessarily impact how other country leaders think of it.
Finally, as China becomes more acceptable economically, it's going to be able to drive Asia as a more integrating trading region. There will be less fear of it and China can drive trade.

Questions

In the short term, China has wielded a significant amount of power. But in the long term it faces very substantial questions, as long as it remains the kind of country it is. First, is China really a model for other countries like Vietnam, Syria, Iran, and South Africa? Yes, it is developed and has remained an authoritarian state. But do they really have any different model of development?

Second, as China becomes a greater actor in the world, can it provide the kind of positive goods that the US has provided for years, such as security and response to disasters? After the December 2004 tsunami hit Asia, though the US was very unpopular in a number of the affected countries, those countries had to rely on the US because no one else was able to provide that type of disaster relief (Actually, the US response to the tsunami did improve its public image among those countries).

Third and most important, China has gone far with its idea that it, unlike the US, doesn't interfere in other countries' affairs. However, the domestic affairs in a lot of the countries with which China has relations are crying out for some kind of resolution. China has said it won't interfere in Sudan, but many in Sudan would like some sort of interference, because right now the situation is untenable. The government in Myanmar has a close relationship with China. Many people, activists of a movement that was elected 15-17 years ago, would like China to push the government to recognize them. Noninterference isn't a policy that can exist in the world over the long term. China has begun to think about this. They've sent their own envoy to Sudan, they've thought about changing their relationship with Myanmar. They are realizing that if you're going to be a real global power, you can't necessarily stick with this philosophy. But if they're going to diverge from this philosophy, are they then just going to be like the US? Or can they be somehow something different at the same time?
A New Diplomatic Model:  
A Chinese Perspective on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Pan Guang

Introduction

China established close links with Central Asia via the Silk Road as early as 2000 years ago. At the opening of the 21st century, in the light of China’s rapid economic growth, including in particular the further development of its western region and the country’s accelerating demand for energy, Central Asia is becoming more and more strategically significant for China. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization* (SCO) has enabled China to build up unprecedentedly strong security, political, economic, and cultural ties with local states, thus creating the conditions for it to play an active and constructive role in the region. Cooperation within the multilateral framework makes it possible for China to avoid friction with its neighbors while preserving and pursuing its own national interests. Throughout the process that began with the Shanghai Five in the mid-1990s and developed into the SCO by 2001, China has played the key role as a major driving force. This also symbolizes the entry of Chinese diplomacy into a new stage, with an orientation towards multilateral interactions.

This study starts by looking at the SCO’s significance, both substantial and demonstrative, for China’s present-day strategic goals and at the ways in which China has played a driving role in the various stages of the SCO’s development. It goes on to discuss the SCO’s achievements and challenges in various spheres of cooperation, and then highlights a number of sectoral and structural issues that, as seen from China, will be critical for the next phase of the SCO’s existence.

The Strategic Significance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for China

From China’s perspective, the SCO has a many-sided strategic significance. First, it has advanced the process of

* Member countries are: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tadzhikistan, Uzbekistan; Observer countries are: India, Pakistan, Mongolia, Iran; Partner country: Afghanistan.
confidence building and increased the trust between China and nine of its close neighbors, including two participants in the SCO System, Iran and Uzbekistan, with which China has no common border. The borders that China does share with seven SCO member and observer states make up, together, about three-quarters of China’s total land border. When peace and security are maintained in these extensive border areas, China need no longer feel exposed to direct military threats on its western and northern flanks, thus allowing it to concentrate on the possible flashpoints on the country’s eastern and southeastern coasts.

Second, the SCO provides a good framework for China to cooperate closely in combating terrorism, extremism, separatism, and various other cross-border criminal forces. The primary target of the Chinese anti-terrorism campaign is the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which advocates the independence of Xinjiang, and is said to be supported by Osama bin Laden. From the Chinese perspective, it is of particular importance that China has been able, in the SCO framework, to count on the support of the other nine member and observer states in its campaign against ETIM. Moreover, China has also been able to draw support from SCO partners in its efforts to frustrate other conventional or non-conventional security threats and to eliminate or ease the external factors of disruption to China’s stability and development.

Third, the economic cooperation that the SCO is committed to pursuing is directly conducive to China’s program for developing its western regions, particularly as it offers land-based routes for energy import and transport. It should be noted that, in contrast to the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the region stretching from Central Asia to Siberia is a source of energy supply that has no need for naval protection. As China has no prospect in the near future of being able to build up a navy that would be strong enough to protect its oil shipping lanes, this alternative, the only one, is of crucial strategic significance for China’s energy security and for its overall development.

Fourth, given that its members and observers boast nearly half the world’s total population and include such large countries as China, India, and Russia, the SCO exerts an influence beyond its own region through its expanding circles of friendship and

1Bin Laden is reported to have told this group, “I support your jihad in Xinjiang.” Information Office of the Chinese State Council, “East Turkestan terrorist forces cannot get away with their offences,” Beijing, Jan 1, 2002.
cooperation. Building a zone of stability and development from Central Asia outward to South Asia, the Middle East and even more distant areas will create a favorable neighborhood and international environment for China’s peaceful development.

The Demonstrative Role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Chinese Diplomacy

The SCO has had a strong ‘demonstration effect’ in the formation of new models and new thinking for Chinese diplomacy at the turn of the 21st century. This effect may be defined and traced in the following four ways:

The Shanghai process has pioneered attempts at building a new approach to neighborhood security by means of mutual trust, disarmament, and cooperative security. Having solved, in a matter of a few years, the century-old border problems between China and the former Soviet states, this security approach already embodies great achievements for the parties involved and offers potential to assist in other outstanding border problems such as those between China and India; the South China Sea dispute; and the Chinese-Japanese disputes over the Diaoyu Islands and part of the East China Sea. Moreover, the SCO has adopted a very broad perspective towards the definition and execution of security cooperation that has been highlighted by the way in which it has made the fight against drug trafficking and cross-border crime its top priority; has proposed the establishment of effective mechanisms for the use of the mass media against new challenges and new threats; has signed a joint declaration on maintaining international information security; and has given full attention to energy security, environmental protection, the protective development of water resources, and similar issues. Keeping an open mind towards the various contemporary non-conventional security issues, as well as the conventional ones, the framework of the SCO leaves China better positioned to play a growing role in global security cooperation.

The SCO has helped to shape a new model of state-to-state relationships characterized by partnership but not alliance, as originally spearheaded by China and Russia. By endorsing a set of new rules regulating state-to-state relations in the post-Cold War era, the SCO presents a sharp contrast to the views of those who cling to a Cold War mentality, the pursuit of unilateralism and the strengthening or expansion of military blocs. The relationship
between China, Russia, and the Central Asian states under the SCO umbrella, constitutes a close partnership with constructive interactions while stopping short of military alliance. The 2001 Chinese-Russian Treaty of Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation symbolized the initiation of a new stage in the bilateral relationship.² This treaty is the first between the two countries to be based on genuine equality and not on military alliance. More generally, the relationships between China and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), between China and the European Union (EU), between China and the African Union (AU), and between China and the Arab League are all now developing in the same positive direction. The current Chinese diplomatic principle of befriending and benefiting neighbors has grown directly out of the SCO success story and other related experiences.

The SCO process has given rise to a new model of regional cooperation, characterized by common initiatives taken by both large and small countries, with security cooperation paving the way, a focus on collaboration for mutual benefit and the facilitating of cultural complementarities. This new model not only stresses cooperation and reciprocity in the economic sector, but also emphasizes cultural exchange and mutual learning. Valuable experience for China's regional and cross regional cooperation with many other countries can be supplied by the various activities pursued under this model, such as the establishment of the SCO Business Council and the SCO Inter-bank Association; the buyer's credit that China provides to other SCO members; the launch of the Huoerguosi Border Trade and Cooperation Centre between China and Kazakhstan; the SCO Cultural and Art Festival; the training provided by China for 1500 Central Asian professionals in various fields; and the strengthening of educational ties. They provide important input for the various proposed bilateral and multilateral free-trade programs involving China.

More generally, the SCO process, with its successful practice and evolution, symbolizes the transformation of Chinese diplomacy from its traditional focus on bilateral relations towards the growing embrace of multilateral interactions. Prior to the Shanghai process, China chose mainly bilateral rather than multilateral channels for resolving its disputes with other parties. However, the SCO has now given China greater confidence in

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participating in and, in some cases, even initiating multilateral processes. For example, China is now an actor in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and an active participant in the ‘10 plus 1’ ASEAN-China summits and ‘10 plus 3’ meetings between ASEAN, China, Japan, and South Korea. It hosts the Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear issue and is a responsible player in the ‘P5+1’ efforts at resolving the Iranian nuclear problem. The beginning of the 21st century has seen China playing an increasingly active and constructive role in the multilateral arena.

China’s Driving Role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

China’s driving role in the SCO can be traced mainly in the following contexts.

*Formulating the theoretical guidelines.* Summarizing the successful experience of the Shanghai Five, in 2001 Chinese President Jiang Zemin put forward for the first time a definition of the ‘Shanghai spirit:’ “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect to different civilizations and common prosperity.” These have since become guiding principles for the steady development of the SCO. In reviewing the first five years of the SCO and the 10-year Shanghai process, the 2006 Shanghai summit summed up the successful experiences that this multilateral structure has achieved by promoting and practicing unswervingly the Shanghai spirit. On this foundation, Chinese President Hu Jintao put forward at the summit the further strategic goal of constructing “a harmonious region of lasting peace and common prosperity,” which has become an important part of the plan for the future development of the SCO.

*Driving forward institutionalization.* China has actively pushed forward the institutionalization of the SCO since its foundation, and particularly following the terrorist attacks on the

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3 The 10 members of ASEAN are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.
4 The Six-Party Talks on North Korea bring together China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Russia, and the United States. The ‘P5+1’ are the 5 permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States (the P5)—and Germany.
United States of 11 September 2001. Three days after the attacks, at a meeting of SCO prime ministers in Almaty, Kazakhstan, Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji stressed that work drafting the SCO Charter should accelerate and that the SCO anti-terrorist mechanism should begin to operate as soon as possible. The opening of the SCO Secretariat in Beijing in January 2004 and its effective work under the leadership of Secretary-General Zhang Deguang bear witness to the critical role that China now plays in regularizing the work of the organization through its permanent institutions. The SCO’s 2006 Shanghai summit took further specific initiatives for the institutional improvement of the organization. Although the institutional build-up of the SCO might be seen as being basically complete after five years of development, significant work remains to be done on improving the institutional structure and the efficiency of its operations in particular. A resolution was therefore passed at the Shanghai summit to strengthen the role of the SCO Secretariat within the multilateral system. It was also agreed that Bolat Nurgaliyev of Kazakhstan would take over from Zhang as SCO Secretary-General in 2007 and serve until 2009. These measures will make the SCO better prepared for the increasingly important work lying ahead.

**Giving direct support to major projects.** Partly because of its economic strength relative to the other five SCO member states, China has granted substantial direct assistance to the major SCO projects. Its financial contribution to the organization surpasses that of any other member. As one illustration, President Hu stated at the 2005 Astana summit that “China attaches great importance to the implementation of the 900-million-US-dollar buyer’s export credit promised in the Tashkent Summit.” China has offered preferential treatment in terms of the interest rate, time limit and guarantees of the loan, so that the funds can be used as quickly as possible for SCO cooperative projects in the interest of all member countries concerned. The fulfillment of this Chinese promise of $900 million in buyer’s credits is promoting the economic development of SCO member states and the deepening of SCO economic cooperation. Cultural cooperation is another area in which China has played a

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pivotal support role. Hu remarked in Astana that SCO members “should adopt effective measures to develop and deepen the cooperation in such fields as culture, disaster relief, education, tourism and media” and “should enhance the cooperation in the capacity building of human resources.” For the latter purpose, “China will set aside a special fund to train 1,500 management and professional talents in different fields for other member states within three years.” It was gratifying to see that the 2006 Shanghai summit further promoted this project, which is now making good progress.

Although China has been a major force in driving forward the SCO’s development, it would be inexact to say that China has dominated or led the process. Theoretically speaking, all the participating states are equal, which is in itself a key component of the Shanghai spirit and, legally speaking, the SCO has a rotating chair system. Of course, since China and Russia outweigh other SCO member states, these two countries have undeniably played key roles in facilitating the SCO process. This in turn means that coordination and consultation between China and Russia are invariably crucial for the further development of the organization.

The Substance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s Work: Achievements and Challenges

Over time, the SCO has taken on an increasingly active posture in safeguarding security and promoting economic and cultural development in its region; showing concern for the situation in areas around Central Asia, such as the Middle East and South Asia, and demonstrating that this five-year-old organization has embarked on a new course of pragmatic development.

Maintaining security in the heart of Eurasia

Since 1996, the process begun by the Shanghai Five and continued in the SCO has brought remarkable achievements in security cooperation, with the following main features:

Confidence-building measures. These measures have been put in place, leading finally to the resolution of historical border problems. As mentioned above, within the frameworks of the Shanghai Five and the SCO, and thanks to the joint efforts of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, all disputes
regarding the western section of the former Chinese-Soviet border, which stretches for more than 3,000 kilometres and was an area of instability and conflicts for centuries, were completely solved within six years, which is a rare case in the history of international relations.

Cooperation in the struggle against trans-border menaces. After the break-up of the Soviet Union and the rise to prominence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, extremist and terrorist forces started rampaging across Central Asia and became a grave concern for the countries in the region. The Shanghai Five was the earliest international community to call for cooperative action against terrorism in Central Asia. The 2001 Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism, to which the six SCO members are the parties, was the first international anti-terrorism treaty of the 21st century. It spells out the legal framework for SCO members to cooperate with each other and to coordinate with other countries in fighting terrorism and other such menaces. Within the framework of this convention, the SCO member states cooperated in establishing the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) in 2004, which has helped to combat and contain extremism and terrorism in the region.

Restraining the spread of conflict and maintaining regional security and stability. Central Asia’s ethnic and religious conflicts as well as other issues emerging from history are as intricate and complex as those in the Balkans and the Middle East. Central Asia, however, is fortunate to have the SCO mechanism—the Balkans and the Middle East have no exact equivalent. Within the SCO’s framework, and again in contrast to other regions, the Central Asian authorities have managed to restrain malignant influences, such as the civil war in Afghanistan, from spreading into the region, thus offering a successful model on the troubled international scene after the end of the Cold War. It can be said without exaggeration that in the absence of the Shanghai Five system and the SCO, the Taliban may have continued marching northwards, and the Afghan conflict might well have spread to neighboring countries. In this regard, the SCO is playing an essential role in maintaining the region’s security and stability.

A cautious expansion and development policy. As an organization, the SCO works to develop fruitful multilateral cooperation with all states and international organizations on the basis of the principles of equality and mutual benefit. The Regulation on the Status of Observer to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, adopted at the 2004 Tashkent summit, was the first document to regulate contacts between the SCO and the rest of the world and had major significance for promoting international cooperation as well as for developing and strengthening the organization itself.\textsuperscript{12} In December 2004, the SCO was granted observer status in the United Nations General Assembly.\textsuperscript{13} In April 2005, the SCO signed a memoranda of understanding with ASEAN and with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), establishing relations of cooperation and partnership.\textsuperscript{14} In September 2005 the SCO Secretary-General was invited to the UN’s 60th anniversary World Summit and for the first time was able to make a speech from a UN podium.\textsuperscript{15} This was an important sign of the constantly increasing international prestige of the SCO. Meanwhile, by granting observer status to India, Iran, Mongolia, and Pakistan, the SCO has increased the potential opportunities for cooperation and broadened the prospects for the SCO’s own development. The SCO can be expected to proceed steadily along its path of cautious expansion. As stated in the 2004 Tashkent Declaration, the leaders of the SCO member states “are convinced that further development and strengthening of the SCO, which is not a bloc organization and is based on principles of equal partnership, mutual respect, trust and openness, correspond to the main tendencies of international development and will promote broadening the scope of international dialogue.”\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} “Memorandum of Understanding between the CIS Executive Committee and the SCO Secretariat” was signed on April 12, 2005 at Beijing. “Memorandum of Understanding between the ASEAN Secretariat and the SCO Secretariat” was signed on April 21, 2005 at Jakarta. <http://www.aseansec.org/4984.htm>
If analyzed more deeply, the above-mentioned successes of the Shanghai process do not merely have a strategic significance for the stability and development of the organization’s member states and for security and development in Central Asia overall, they also have demonstrative significance for peace and development in the whole world. Recent realities have proved that the Shanghai spirit differs from the thinking of the Cold War period and that it meets the requirements of a new era characterized by peace and stability, as recognized and accepted by many countries today.

Economic and cultural development (and its link with security)

The SCO leadership has laid increasing emphasis on promoting economic and cultural cooperation, believing that such cooperation not only constitutes the basis for political and security cooperation but directly promotes the long-term development and interests of future generations in the region.

At the SCO’s 2004 Tashkent summit, it was pointed out that “progressive economic development of the Central Asia region and contiguous states, as well as satisfaction of [the] population’s essential vital needs are [a] guarantee of their stability and security.” The 2005 Astana summit made clear that the main priority for the near future was to put into practice the action plan on fulfillment of the 2003 Programme of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation among SCO Member States, thus embarking on a pragmatic course of cooperation in trade, transport, environmental protection, disaster relief, the rational use of natural resources, and so on. The 2006 Shanghai summit decided to designate energy, information technology, and transport as the priority areas for economic cooperation, stressing particularly the importance of proceeding to implement a number of pilot projects. The SCO Inter-bank Association, which is designed as the first step towards an SCO development bank and was formally inaugurated before the Shanghai summit, is expected to provide a financing platform for major projects in the region. The official launch of the SCO Business Council during the Shanghai summit can be

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{“Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation among SCO Member States” was approved by Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) on Sep. 23, 2003 at Beijing.}\]

\[\text{“Joint Communiqué of the Meeting of the Council of Heads of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.” Shanghai.}\]
expected to provide a new tool for facilitating greater economic cooperation within the SCO framework.

As regards cultural cooperation, the SCO member states have actively cooperated in the SCO framework on education, culture, sports, tourism, and the like. President Hu has stressed the need for cooperation in these fields. As he pointed out at the 2004 Tashkent summit, “SCO members all have their distinctive human resources that represent good potential for cooperation. Cooperation should be actively promoted in the fields of culture, education, science and technology, tourism, mass media, etc. in order to enhance the mutual understanding and friendship among the SCO peoples and consolidate the social basis of growth of the SCO.”

Especially noteworthy was the recognition at the SCO’s 2005 Astana summit that the “formulation of coordinated methods and recommendations on conducting prophylactic activities and respective explanatory work among the public in order to confront attempts of exerting a destructive influence on the public opinion is a vital task.” The Shanghai summit emphasized again the need to actively promote people-to-people activities as well as cultural cooperation. In the short term, the focus of such cooperation is to highlight the spirit of the Silk Road by enhancing mutual communication and understanding among different civilizations and nations in the region, thus strengthening personal ties among the Chinese, Central Asians, and Russians, and paving the way for comprehensive cooperation within the SCO. The document on educational cooperation signed at the Shanghai summit represents another SCO initiative to broaden its individual as well as cultural cooperation, while the formal launch of the SCO Forum, an academic mechanism for research and discussion created before the 2006 Shanghai summit, will provide intellectual support for the further development of the organization. The first and second SCO Cultural and Art Festivals held during the Astana and Shanghai summits, respectively, also stand out as specific achievements in this field.

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Responding to new challenges

Since early 2005 there has been a wave of so-called color revolutions in Central Asia; Afghanistan has witnessed the resurgence of the Taliban and al-Qaeda and, even more serious, Hizb ut-Tahrir and other extremist groups are fast winning support in Central Asia, particularly in the poverty-stricken Fergana Valley. This heralds a re-emerging grim security situation in the region that also poses new challenges for the SCO.

Facing such a grave situation, the SCO's 2005 Astana summit took the initiative to shoulder the main responsibility for safeguarding security in Central Asia. The heads of state attending the summit decided to increase their security cooperation significantly on the basis of the achievements made so far, with a particular focus on:

a) Promoting close cooperation among member states’ diplomatic, external economic, law-enforcement, national defense, and special services authorities;
b) Working out effective measures and institutions to respond collectively to developments that threaten regional peace, security, and stability;
c) Coordinating member states' laws and regulations designed to ensure security;
d) Cooperating in researching and developing new technologies and equipment for coping with new challenges and threats;
e) Establishing new effective structures for the mass media to deal with new challenges and threats;
f) Combatting the smuggling of weapons, ammunition, explosives, and drugs;
g) Fighting organized transnational crime, illegal immigration, and mercenary troop activities;
h) Giving special attention to preventing terrorists from using weapons of mass destruction and their launch vehicles;
i) Taking precautionary measures against cyber-terrorism; and
j) Drafting uniform approaches and standards for monitoring financial flows linked with individuals and organizations suspected of terrorism.23

The SCO leaders also took the view that cooperation on drug trafficking should become a priority focus, as defined by the 2004 Agreement on Cooperation in Fighting the Illegal Trafficking of Narcotics, Psychotropic Substances, and their Precursors.24 They agreed that the SCO should step up its participation in international efforts to create an “anti-drug security belt” around Afghanistan, and in the formulation and realization of special programs to help stabilize Afghanistan’s social, economic, and humanitarian situation.25

The SCO’s 2006 Shanghai summit decided to deepen further cooperation in security affairs. As stressed in the summit declaration: “To comprehensively deepen cooperation in combating terrorism, separatism, extremism and drug trafficking is a priority area for the SCO.”26 High priority was attached to continuing the build-up of RATS, launching joint anti-terrorist exercises, and establishing an anti-drugs mechanism. At this summit, it was stated publicly for the first time that SCO members will prohibit any individual or group from conducting in their territories any kind of activity that would undermine the interests of other members. At the 2006 Shanghai summit, following the proposal made at the Astana summit to establish structures for the media to deal with new challenges and threats, a statement on international information security was issued, and it was decided to establish a commission of information security experts to lay the groundwork for drafting and executing related action plans.27 At the Shanghai meeting, the SCO leaders also instructed the Council of National Coordinators to conduct consultations on concluding a multilateral legal document

23 “Declaration by the Heads of Member-States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.” Astana.
24 “The Agreement on Cooperation in Fighting the Illegal Trafficking of Narcotics, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors” was signed on June 17 2004 at Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
25 “Declaration by the Heads of Member-States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.” Astana.
on long-term neighborly and amicable cooperation within the SCO framework.28

The SCO leaders have recently stressed that security cooperation must be put on the basis of comprehensive security. As stated at the Astana summit, this cooperation should be comprehensive and should assist the member states in providing protection for their territories, citizens, livelihoods, and key infrastructure sectors “from the destructive effect of new challenges and threats,” thus creating the necessary preconditions for sustainable development and poverty elimination.29 On the same occasion, the SCO leaders agreed that, with a view to preventing and eliminating the various kinds of technical disasters that have become significant components of the new threats, it was becoming increasingly urgent to protect and further develop the region’s infrastructure, particularly for transport. They saw a need for the SCO members to construct multilateral structures to monitor possible disasters and their consequences, exchange information and analysis, and create the necessary legal and institutional conditions for joint rescue and response operations, including promoting interoperability in terms of personnel training and the deployment of personnel and equipment. The SCO leaders also declared that “the SCO will be making a constructive contribution to the efforts by the world community on issues of providing security on land, at sea, in air space and in outer space.”30

Looking Ahead: Big Tasks and a Long Journey

In June 2006, the heads of the SCO member and observer states gathered in Shanghai to celebrate and review the five years since the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the ten years since the initiative of the Shanghai Five. The leaders discussed the new developments in the international arena and in Central Asia, and their impact on the SCO. As mentioned above, they defined the strategic goal of constructing a “harmonious region,” and, above all, a “harmonious Central Asia,” and proposed an ambitious plan for the next stage of the SCO’s development.

28 “Joint Communiqué.” Shanghai. The Council of National Coordinators directs the day-to-day activities of the SCO.
29 “Declaration by the Heads of Member-States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.” Astana.
30 Ibid.
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Looking into the future, several major issues should be highlighted that face the SCO and deserve urgent attention.

The need for a breakthrough in economic cooperation. An early breakthrough in SCO economic cooperation is essential, and several points are particularly crucial for realizing this aim. The first point is to be pragmatic in designing cooperation goals and implementing cooperation measures. Empty talk and a lack of specific goals and effective measures will not suffice, in the economic field above all. The second point is to persist in following market rules such as those of ‘the level playing field,’ equality and reciprocity, mutual opening, and a combination of both bilateral and multilateral approaches. It is not enough to care only about one’s own interests, and divorcing economic cooperation from the market base is even more of a mistake. Properly managed, bilateral cooperation and multilateral cooperation can be mutually enhancing, a case in point being the oil pipeline between Kazakhstan and China, which is now also giving rise to trilateral energy cooperation including Russia. The third point is to press ahead with coordination and the setting of priorities for each stage. Initial investment is certainly necessary, yet caution is needed to avoid over-hasty expansion and duplication of construction projects.

Deepening security cooperation. There is a clear need to deepen the SCO states’ security cooperation. In the near future, work in this area can be expected to remain one of the SCO’s strong points. However, it must be intensified if further headway is to be made on the basis of past achievements. Several practical points demand attention. RATS should be quickly consolidated to increase working efficiency and, more specifically, cooperation must be stepped up in finalizing the SCO list of the names of wanted terrorists and terrorist groups and in regularizing joint anti-terrorist exercises. The Central Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone (CANWFZ) program should be carried forward, so that the region no longer risks a nuclear arms race and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, additional campaigns should be launched to crack down on drug trafficking. In this regard, active cooperation with the UN is needed in order for an ‘anti-drug security belt’ to be established around Afghanistan to

31 “Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (CANWFZ) Treaty” was signed on Sep. 8, 2006 by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. It has not yet come into force, and it does not include China or Russia.
allow its peaceful reconstruction. Only when these various practical goals are fulfilled can the SCO play an indispensable role in maintaining security in the whole Central Asian region, as well as within its member states.

The following words from the final declaration of the SCO’s 2005 Astana Summit deserve special attention:

Today we are noticing the positive dynamics of stabilizing internal political situation in Afghanistan. A number of the SCO member states provided their ground infrastructure for temporary stationing of military contingents of some states, members of the coalition, as well as their territory and air space for military transit in the interest of the antiterrorist operation. Considering the completion of the active military stage of antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan, the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization consider it necessary, that respective members of the antiterrorist coalition set a final timeline for their temporary use of the above-mentioned objects of infrastructure and stay of their military contingents on the territories of the SCO member states.

Here, for the first time, the SCO made clear its position that it endorses international participation in anti-terrorism cooperation in Central Asia, yet at the same time believes that Central Asian security should be chiefly the responsibility of countries in the region, and notably of the SCO countries themselves.

Four points should be emphasized in this connection. First, the remarks quoted are not specifically targeted at the United States, but more broadly at “respective members of the antiterrorist coalition,” that is, all those countries and international organizations that use the infrastructure facilities of SCO countries or station their troops in SCO countries. Second, while the SCO has voiced its views and suggestions, any final arrangements will have to be worked out through multilateral or bilateral consultations between SCO member states and the relevant parties. Third, issues such as one SCO member state’s military presence or use of infrastructure facilities in another member state, for example, Russia’s use of a military base in Kyrgyzstan, may be resolved through coordination within the framework of the SCO or the CIS, either multilaterally or bilaterally. Fourth, as the situation in Afghanistan is still severe, this

32 “Declaration by the Heads of Member-States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.” Astana.
is not the right time to draw up a timetable for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Central Asia. Instead, it is necessary to step up anti-terrorism activities in Central Asia and to strengthen the relevant ties among the SCO, the USA, the EU, and other parties.

Promoting cultural cooperation. Cultural cooperation should be pushed forward steadily. The existing bilateral cultural cooperation among the SCO member states should be expanded into multilateral cultural cooperation within the SCO framework, which will clearly demand organizational coordination, financial support, and professional programming. In the near future, cooperation will develop in the following specific fields, among others: mutual exchange visits by cultural, artistic, and sports groups; hosting joint art festivals and exhibitions; sending and receiving more exchange students; promoting visits by high-level experts and scholars; mutually assisting in training those with talents in various fields; increasing cultural exchanges among young people; and facilitating culture-oriented tourism along the Silk Road.

A cautious growth policy. External relationships and the expansion of the organization should be handled carefully. Since India, Iran, Mongolia, and Pakistan were accepted as SCO observers in 2004 and 2005, an increasing number of countries have expressed a desire to achieve this status, to join the SCO or to cooperate with it. In light of this growing demand, the 2006 Shanghai summit commissioned the SCO Secretariat to monitor the implementation of the documents on cooperation between the SCO and other organizations, and to facilitate cooperation between the SCO and its observer states. The heads of state have also asked the SCO Council of National Coordinators to make suggestions regarding the procedures for membership enlargement.  

Sorting out its relationships with such important players as the USA, the EU, and Japan, which are probably not interested in becoming members or observers of the SCO but offer great potential for cooperation, remains a major challenge for the SCO. One way in which this potential can be realized is to establish, alongside the formal membership and observer statuses, a system of partner states modeled after the Partnership for Peace (PFP) of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). A given country

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33 “Joint Communiqué of the Meeting of the Council of Heads of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.” Shanghai.
could choose, for example, to become an SCO partner for anti-terrorism or anti-drug purposes. Indeed, Afghanistan has already become a fully active partner of the SCO. Whether immediately feasible or not, such ideas are worthy of careful consideration with a view to broadening external exchanges and moving towards cautious enlargement of the SCO.

In Conclusion: Key Points

In reviewing the success of the SCO to date and in contemplating its future development, the following three points merit special attention:

First, regional cooperation needs to be institutionalized steadily and to be supported by relevant international or regional laws and regulations. At the same time, discrepancies between laws and regulations at the national and the regional levels need to be resolved with due care.

Second, regional security cooperation must be based on a ‘comprehensive security’ approach. In particular, the handling of conventional security threats should be combined closely with the handling of non-conventional threats.

Third, the maintenance of regional security and stability is both a precondition and a guarantee for the facilitation of regional economic and cultural cooperation, while economic and cultural cooperation can in turn provide a solid basis for political and security cooperation.

34 This was effected through the “Protocol on Establishment of SCO–Afghanistan Contact Group between SCO and Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.” Beijing, Nov. 4, 2005. <http://www.sectsco.org/html/00649.html>
A Special US-China Relationship: 
American Adoptions of Chinese Children 

Fang Gann

After China formally opened its door to international adoption in 1992, more than 63,000 Chinese orphans have found a permanent home in the United States. China is now the country with the largest yearly number of children adopted by US families. Over the years, the families with children adopted from China have become a special sub-ethnic group and comprise a unique bond between the two nations, the United States and China.

Close examination of adoptions from China provides a comprehensive view of China’s culture and social customs. It is also a special prism with which to view the evolving US-China relationship. This article discusses a number of key aspects involved in adopting from China and identifies the critical challenges that have been posed to the adoptive communities.

Being Female in China and the One-Child Policy

A common dilemma facing adopting families is to explain to their adopted children why these children are not able to remain with their birth families. For many families with girls adopted from China, the question not only brings up the reasons for physical abandonment, it also requires explaining and exploring the social position of females in China. The discussion must also include the government’s One-Child Policy of 1979—the country’s solution intended for addressing the issue of sustainability and overpopulation.

Since 1949, the government of the People’s Republic of China has made a substantial effort to promote the social position of women. Yet a tradition of more than 22 centuries cannot be altered just because a new government takes over. Discrimination against women still occurs, especially in the rural communities.

The historical domination of Confucian culture has been the major historical reason for the subordination of women in China. Since Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty espoused Confucianism as the orthodox state ideology in 135 BC, the doctrine has dominated feudal dynasties in China and guided social policy for more than
2,100 years. Even today, Confucianism remains influential in many aspects regarding women’s subservient status.\textsuperscript{32}

Confucianism emphasizes male authority. According to the Confucian structure of society, women at every level should occupy a position lower than men. Consequently, families emphasize and seek to continue the patrilineal family line. It is regarded as a betrayal of the family ancestors if no male heir is produced to maintain the family tree.

The economic structure of the established agricultural society is another aspect that has reinforced women’s inferior status in China. Because male laborers have traditionally enjoyed advantages in agricultural production, the rural families have a pragmatic reason for preferring sons to daughters; a son makes a stronger worker on the farm.

Discrimination itself has created a perverse economic concern. Despite a booming economy, the income gap between males and females is increasing. In 1999, the average yearly income of an urban female laborer was $895, accounting for 70.1% of her male counterpart. It showed a 7.4% decrease from 1990. In the rural area, a female’s average income was $286, which meant that a female farmer would make 59.6 cents for every dollar that the male farmer would make. This is a 19.4% drop from 1990.\textsuperscript{33} This is despite the fact that the rural female population is creating 50% to 60% of the total agricultural production value.\textsuperscript{34}

The process of urbanization may help increase women’s social status in China. Its rural population has decreased dramatically in the past 20 years. According to statistics in 1990, the rural population accounted for 73.6% of the Chinese population.\textsuperscript{35} In the 2000 population census, rural residents

\textsuperscript{33} “第二期中国妇女社会地位抽样调查主要数据报告 [The Principal Data Report of the Second Sample Survey of Chinese Women's Social Status].” The original data showed that urban female laborer’s average annual salary was RMB 7409.7 and RMB 2368.7 for the rural female laborer. Converted at the exchange rate of 1USD = 8.28RMB. <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjgb/qtjgb/qgqtjgb/t2002020331_15816.htm>
accounted for 63.9% of the total population,\(^{36}\) and by 2005, it was 57%.\(^{37}\)

**One-Child Policy**

Population pressure has become a major impediment to China’s development into a modern technological society. According to the China Population Information and Research Center, the current population of China is 1.32 billion.\(^{38}\) In 2006, China’s gross domestic product (purchase power parity or PPP) reached $10.17 trillion\(^{39}\) while the United States achieved a GDP (PPP) of $13.13 trillion. Yet the per capita GDP of China was estimated to be $7,700 in comparison to $44,000 in the US.\(^{40}\)

The Chinese government’s solution to overpopulation was the announcement of the One-Child Policy in early 1979. This policy mandates universal participation in a family planning program. Originally designed as an interim measure to control population growth from 1980 to 2000, a period that otherwise could have brought a major baby boom, this policy has almost become a permanent fixture of China’s social policy. China has tried to control population by achieving an assumed total fertility rate equal to 1 until the year 2000.\(^{41}\) To achieve this goal, the government has been “calling on” each couple of the dominant Han ethnicity to have only one child. There is no specific and uniform family planning requirement for minority populations in China. The rules vary according to region and minority.

According to the National Population and Family Planning Commission of China, rural couples “who have practical difficulties and who wish for a second child” are allowed to do so with “proper

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\(^{38}\) China Population Information and Research Center. \(<http://www.cpirc.org.cn/en/eindex.htm>\>

\(^{39}\) CIA World Factbook: China. \(<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/ch.html>\>


Indeed, most rural areas began to adopt a one-son-or-two-child policy in late 1980s. Under this policy, if the first child is a boy, no other births are permitted; if the first child is a girl, a second birth is permitted. The policy not only implies a concession to peasant desires for sons and for more than one child, but also serves to institutionalize patriarchal attitudes toward girls.

The One-Child Policy is constantly being reviewed and revised. In 2001, the enforcement mechanism was explained in the Population and Family Planning Law. Under the law, family planning is the duty of Chinese citizens; but they also enjoy legal rights and interests, “for which they are entitled to legal protection.” The law states that:

The People's Governments and staff at all levels, implementing the family planning program, shall act strictly within the law, enforcing it in a civil manner, and must not infringe on citizens’ legitimate rights and interests.

Scholar Mu Guangzong credited the law as a “milestone,” as it indicated “transformation from the imperative, administration-guided period to a new era that puts public satisfaction as top priority.”

According to a July 11, 2007 China Daily e-newsletter, the One-Child Policy actually restricts only 35.9% of the total population in China. Except for the province of Henan, couples elsewhere can have two children if both parents are single children. But the report also claimed that China’s family planning policy would continue without major changes until 2010.

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46 “China to Implement First National Family Planning Law.” Ibid.
The effect of the official population control measures has been shown by the declining average fertility rate, which is a measure of average births per woman. From 1976 to 1979, the rate was 3 births per woman. The 2007 rate was estimated to be 1.75 births per woman. Another index indicating the effects of the family planning policy is the population growth rate, which was estimated to be 0.606% in 2007. The population growth rate dropped from an average 1.6% (1970-1990) to 0.9% (1990-2002).

The One-Child Policy has always been a hotly debated issue. On the one hand, it is praised as an effective tool to enable China to continue to support and contain its large population, while on the other, it is attacked as a human rights abuse that encourages female infanticide.

Female infanticide mainly occurs in the rural areas. In these areas, three factors are relevant: the improper implementation of family planning regulations, the feudal concept of maintaining a patrilineal family line, and the traditional prejudice against women. Together they have produced a surging number of abandoned females. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Wuhan Orphanage in Southern China experienced significant increases in its female populations. This was also a period when the local government adopted more strict measures to implement birth planning policies.

Illegal abortions of female fetuses have been another severe problem. Couples increasingly use ultrasound tests to detect the sex of the fetus and abort it if it is female. Widespread abortions and infanticide against females have created another social issue: gender imbalance. The state-run Xinhua News Agency recently reported that the eastern city Lianyungang has become the epitome of sex imbalance. Among children under four years of age, there are 163.5 boys for 100 girls. Ninety-nine cities have gender ratios higher than 125 to 100. The nationwide gender ratio is now 119 to 110.

48 "China Total Fertility Rate." Index Mundi. <http://www.indexmundi.com/china/total_fertility_rate.html>
100. The United Nations recommends a gender ratio of no more than 107 to 100.  

The US-China Adoptions

International adoptions evaporated in China after 1949. The practice was regarded as “an embarrassing reminder of the pre-1949 starving Chinese orphans who required foreign care.” In 1980, an American couple, “blessed by naiveté and luck,” successfully adopted their Chinese daughter. The adoption surprised the locals as well as the US embassy officials, as it was the first adoption they knew of in three decades by a non-Chinese couple. With the absence of all the complicated regulations, the couple did not even complete all the paperwork before they actually held the child. The expenses were also astonishingly low in that they gave the biological parents $104.

After the 1980 adoption, China started a practice of informally allowing foreigners to adopt orphaned children. But international adoptions were not regulated until the 1992 Adoption Law became effective. According to its Article 20, “a foreigner may...adopt a child (male or female) in the People's Republic of China.” On November 3, 1993, the State Council established the nuts and bolts of international adoption when it enacted the “Implementation Measures on the Adoption of Children by Foreigners in the People’s Republic of China.” On April 1, 1999, a revised Adoption Law came into force. Its Article 21 updated regulations of international adoption. Article 21 mandates that the Chinese National government be legally cooperative with the adopting family's resident country.

There has been much speculation as to why China began permitting international adoption. Some scholars suggest that increasing contact with the international society caused the authorities to recognize international adoptions could be seen as a humanitarian response to China's family planning policy. Others

54 Mathews, Ibid.
55 "Adoption Law of the People’s Republic of China (April 1, 1992)." <http://www.fwcc.org/China_adoption_law_98.htm#secta>
suggest that international adoption provides a practical solution to alleviate the pressures brought on by the increasing number of abandoned girls.\textsuperscript{56}

Whatever the reason or reasons, the Chinese adoption program has earned a reputation for being safe and reliable. Chinese children are “healthy and well cared for” and the program “has been efficiently run.”\textsuperscript{57} This record has attracted more and more potential adoptive parents. In 1995, adoptions of Chinese children in the United States jumped from 787 in 1994 to 2,130 (See Appendix 1). Today, China is the most popular country for Americans wanting to adopt from abroad. Chinese children accounted for about 22\% of all US international adoptions.\textsuperscript{58} More than 63,000 Chinese children have been adopted by American families. Most of these children are girls, who most likely were given up because of an improper implementation of the One-Child Policy. Meanwhile, the United States has become the major destination of Chinese orphans.

The Procedure

According to the China Center of Adoption Affairs (CCAA), the official adoption institution in China, couples aged 30 years or older, with or without children, are qualified to adopt a healthy child.\textsuperscript{59} Because China does not accept individual adoption applications, the prospective parents must choose a qualified American adoption agency with whom to make the application.

In the following two months, the agency will conduct studies in the homes of the applicants and determine the applicants’ overall qualifications to adopt. Qualified applicants submit their dossiers to CCAA. CCAA says it takes 14 to 15 months from the time dossiers are submitted until the applicant’s receipt of a referral with a child’s name, picture, and medical report\textsuperscript{60} (according to Children’s Hope

\textsuperscript{58} Tessler et al., Ibid.
International, a leading adoption agency, the process is more like two years). After another two months, the adoptive families will join a group organized by their agencies and make a two-week journey to China. There, they will meet their adoptive children and complete the adoption process. According to experienced social workers in the field, the cost for a couple, including the China trip, is about US $20,000.

The adoption trip to China is an important aspect of the process for the adoptive parents because it is usually their first direct experience with Chinese culture. Traveling to the crowded country and observing the society also provide the families with a more thorough understanding of the impetus for China’s family planning policy.

Last winter, adoption agencies learned that CCAA would issue new guidelines for international adoption. Many prestigious media sources rushed to report that starting May 1, 2007, China was to “tighten” adoption regulations and “prohibit” or “bar” adoptions by parents who are single, obese, or over the age of 50. But CCAA later stated “China’s laws, regulations and policies concerning foreign adoptions have not changed.” Rather, the new guidelines give preference to more suitable applicants and are subject to adjustments “as the situation warrants.” It also claims that the new guidelines have won international support.

Among all the rules, the most significant change was the ban against unmarried applicants. According to an adoption agency, such parents used to make up as much as 8 percent of all referrals. The change in regulations is a practical, if indirect, way for Chinese authorities to reinforce its prohibition against homosexuals adopting children from China. CCAA publicly announced it “shall not identify prospective adoptive referrals for homosexuals” as early as in 2005.

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Yardley, Ibid.
63 “Can homosexuals adopt children from China?” China Center of Adoption Affairs. <http://www.china-ccaa.org/site/infocontent/SWSY_2005101202091715
The new rules also put more restrictions on the financial, physical, and psychological health of adopters. People with a body fat measurement exceeding 40 percent (30 percent is considered obese) are disqualified. People with depression or anxiety are banned from adopting a Chinese child. The new changes also require an adopting family to have assets with a net worth of at least $80,000.65

**Cultural Identity and International Adoption**

International adoption provides an alternative and humanitarian way of offering homes and families to children who would otherwise spend their childhood in an orphanage or in foster care placements. The US-China adoption programs have given many orphaned children an opportunity to thrive, while meeting their needs for education and medical care in a family setting. The adopted children are no longer dependent on the resources of China’s adolescent welfare institutions. Instead, they develop, within a family unit, their values, character, and interpersonal relations with their adopting parents.

As most of the American adopting families are Caucasians, it can be expected that the children will obtain a good understanding of Anglo-oriented family values and customs. But their appearance remains Asian. In the eyes of US society, they are frequently viewed as children from Chinese American communities and are expected to be familiar with an “authentic” Chinese culture. But these children, just as their Caucasian parents, may not possess such “insider” knowledge of Chinese culture. Many families do not have convenient sources for accessing Chinese culture, and many find it is somewhat overwhelming to incorporate the Chinese heritage into their daily life. For the Caucasian families with children from China, “socializing a child in America to be competent in Chinese language, culture, and values is a formidable task.”66

Consequently, when the adoptees begin to self-actualize and to develop an independent identity, they may feel that they are caught in a gray zone, not knowing which ethnic group they belong to.

66 Tessler et al., Ibid.
US-Korea Adoptions: Socialization in International Adoption

US-Korea adoptions provide a frame of reference for the current US-China adoptions. Both Chinese adoptees and Korean adoptees have a different appearance from their usually Caucasian parents, which often lead them to face outside curiosity and inside confusion, especially in smaller, racially homogenous communities. Both China and Korea are Asian countries deeply influenced by Confucianism, which is usually quite dissimilar and unfamiliar to the American adoptive parents. Both countries have traditional family values that emphasize biological kinship, beliefs that have impeded domestic adoptions. Like today’s China, Korea from the 1950s to the 1970s experienced economic constraints that limited their ability to place their orphans domestically, and so turned to international adoption. Understanding the experiences of Korean adoptees can help to anticipate some of the future issues facing adopted Chinese children.

The major wave of modern international adoption in the United States happened at the end of Korean War. From 1953 to 1975, more than 35,000 Korean children were adopted by American families. With a total number of 140,000 adoptions, Korean-Americans have made up the largest group from any single country. Coming from a country whose culture, language, and values are “so dissimilar as to be unfamiliar, American parents must decide whether and how to retain their children’s connections to their birth cultures.” At the time, the dominant thinking regarding international adoption was to assimilate these children into the mainstream American culture while ignoring their birth cultures.

Why did not the flow of Korean children prompt their adoptive parents to gain more understanding of the Asian country? The social “disinterest or dislike” may have impeded the parents to embrace their children’s birth culture. Another reason is related to the adoption procedure. Unlike adoptions from China, Korean adoption does not require the adopting parents to go to the country. Instead, children can be escorted by agencies to the United States.

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70 Tessler et al., Ibid.
This practice usually means that the adopting parents meet the child at an airport in the United States and never visit Korea. They remain insulated from their children’s birth culture.

Consequently, most of these adopted Korean children grew up with little or no connection with their Asian heritage, largely perceiving themselves as Caucasian Americans and reflecting little Korean culture in their daily lives. Early research showed that these children’s self-concept was similar to that of other Americans and their scores on self-esteem were “virtually the same as those of the norm group.”

According to Dong Soo Kim, self-concept is generally regarded as a stable reflector of what and how one has been living as a whole. It also exerts considerable and continuing influence on one’s behavior patterns. Thus, the self-concept may serve as a useful predictive index of one’s future adjustments and self-actualization in life. Kim’s research in fact indicated an overall good adjustment of the Korean adoptees. But the negative side was that the adjustment of these children “is being accomplished at the cost of their unique ethnic cultural heritage and identity, partially reinforced by the parents’ innocent, yet inept, expectations.” In the process, some adoptees “might have wished or believed that their Oriental features could somehow be washed away.”

Scholars also worried that during the long-term socialization process, these adopted children would willingly assume an inferior status ascribed to people of color. Research showed that many Korean adoptees, whose parents ignored racial issues and strived to make them assimilate into the dominant white culture, suffered from “isolation, confusion and the sense that their adoptive parents, while well-meaning, didn’t understand them.”

Many Korean adoptees later found it necessary to seek an understanding of their birth culture to aid in their personal development and self-esteem. Their stories have also sounded an alarm for the possible consequences of ignoring the children’s birth culture. Today, many parents with children adopted from China

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71 Kim, Ibid.; Tessler et al., Ibid.
72 Kim, Ibid.
74 Huus, Ibid.
have a strong sense of their children’s birth culture and have made efforts to maintain the children’s Chinese heritage.

**US-China adoption: Bi-Cultural Socialization**

Adopting from China did not become popular until the mid 1990s. Compared to the 1970s, the legal landscape and internal US social attitudes toward people of minorities and their cultures have changed dramatically. American society encourages the value of diversity. As far as Asian Americans are concerned, they are perceived as open to assimilation and often viewed as a “model minority.” This stereotype makes the newcomers more easily accepted in their communities. Because of this social attitude, many adoptive parents with children from China are inclined to help their children stay connected with Chinese culture.

Bi-cultural socialization refers to the process by which children come to acquire the norms, attitudes, and behavior patterns of their own and another ethnic group.\(^75\) Growing up in a second culture other than their birth culture, internationally adopted children are endowed with dual heritages. Accordingly, adopted children should understand American values and internalize the agreed upon social rules so that they can succeed in American society and share in their adoptive parents’ heritage. Their birth heritage is another important aspect. Asian children are easily identified with their birth heritage because of their appearance. For them, knowledge and pride in the birth culture is essential to establish a strong, positive self-identity, to defend against intolerance and racism, to be a source of self-esteem, and especially, to serve as a replacement for the absence of an individual biography.\(^76\) As for their parents, many have felt the obligation to develop the cultural and ethnic characteristics of their children.

Taiwanese writer Long Yingtai once described the embarrassing position of the sub-culture intellectuals with the following fable: a crow dyed his feathers white to make himself a dove. He was expelled by the doves because his feathers still had black in them. He returned back to being a crow but was expelled...
again: his feathers were too white. Will the Asian adoptees face the same embarrassing situation? If so, is there a solution?

**Paradigms of Adaptation**

Scholars have identified three major paradigms of immigrant adaptation to a second culture: assimilation, acculturation, and alternation. An alternative model developed specifically for adopted children is “child choice.”

The **assimilation pattern** explains the psychological state of a person living within two cultures and assumes an ongoing process of absorption into the culture that is perceived as dominant or more desirable. For adoptive families, the assimilation pattern argues that because the dominant American culture is privileged, fully accepting its dominant perspectives will best help a positive self-identity. Although the indifferent attitude toward the adoptee’s birth culture is no longer popular, some parents choose to minimize or totally eliminate the presence of Chinese culture and heritage, focusing on socializing their child to American culture. They argue that the most important duties are to help their children feel accepted as Americans and advocate that all ethnicities are “real” Americans. There is also a practical reason: many adoptive families live in communities where Chinese culture is simply unavailable. The assimilation pattern then becomes the most convenient way to bring up the children.

Following the assimilation pattern, some adopting parents also oversimplify the adoption as “saving” the child from terrible and miserable circumstances and certain doom. Many of these parents would rather block their children from their Chinese heritage with a negative description of their orphanage and include a malfunctioning Chinese society as the primary reason for the child’s adoption. I once met a girl who lived in a small town in Nebraska. She was introduced to me as “adopted from China, where she was terribly abused.” Who would disseminate such information other than her parents? I was told that I became the first positive aspect about China the girl had ever known.

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78 Tessler et al., Ibid.
79 LaFromboise et al., Ibid.
80 Rojewski and Rojewski, Ibid.
81 Tessler et al., Ibid.
The acculturation pattern notes that the new immigrants will find it necessary to learn the American culture as well as retain their own cultures. When an immigrant’s group is a visible minority yet not fully accepted as Americans, the acculturation model plays an important role. Proponents for this model emphasize the benefits of Chinese socialization to “prevent estrangement from the heritage that is reinforced daily by physical appearance.”

The scholar Teresa LaFromboise observes its similarities with the assimilation model: both assume that the members of the minority group should acquire the majority group’s culture and that there is a unidirectional, hierarchical relationship between the two cultures. The major difference of the two approaches is the ending of the minority group. The assimilation pattern is optimistic that the minorities, through acquisition of the majority group’s culture, will eventually become full members of the mainstream and lose their original identities. The acculturation approach implies that the minorities, even though becoming competent participants in the majority culture, will always be identified as members of the minority culture. LaFromboise further examined multiple case studies and argued that “acculturation can be a stressful experience, reinforcing the second-class citizenship and alienation of the individual acclimating to a new culture.”

One may apply Long’s fable of the crow. The assimilation approach would argue that the crow could successfully transform himself into a dove, as long as he dyes his feathers white enough. The acculturation approach would insist that the crow could be accepted by the doves, but everybody knows that his true identity still is as a crow.

But why would a crow want to become a dove? What is the reasoning for the superiority of the dove over the crow? Why should the adopted Chinese children have the obligation to adopt the Anglo-culture?

As diversity becomes a core value of the American society, it has also become a prevailing view that one dominant culture in a society does not justify the marginalization of the other cultures. The acquisition of a second-culture does not mean the surrender of the birth culture. Under such circumstances emerges the alternation pattern. It proposes that the immigrant can learn two

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82 Tessler et al., Ibid.
83 LaFromboise et al., Ibid.
different cultures well enough to be able to alternate between them as the context demands.

LaFromboise points out that the alternation model is fundamentally different from the assimilation and acculturation models. It indicates “a bidirectional and orthogonal relationship” between the immigrant’s birth culture and the established culture in the society. This means that the adoptees do not need to choose between their Chinese heritage and the American culture. They can “find a secure footing in both cultures.”

More importantly, this model does not assume a hierarchical relationship between the two cultures. It gives the adoptees the option to assign an importance to the status of their original culture and the American culture. Even though they may not necessarily value the two cultures equally, they do not need to and the channel to switch the emphasis remains present.

Some other adopting families choose an alternative model: child choice. It holds that parents cannot make absolute arrangements, and children should be the active agents regarding their own bi-cultural socialization. In other words, the children choose. Their Chinese heritage “will never be denied to her nor pushed on her.”

Challenges of Adaptation

Many parents make efforts to embrace Chinese culture. They go to Chinese restaurants, decorate their home with Chinese painting and calligraphy, and learn some of the language. However, “it’s not enough to give superficial trappings of a homeland,” commented Jane Brown, an experienced social worker in international adoption. According to Brown, “what children really need is to be with people of color, people of the same race, or another race.” One way to sustain the Chinese heritage is to teach the children Chinese. For many adoptive parents who do not know the language themselves, this is an impossible mission. Several years ago, I became acquainted with a boy who was adopted at the age of seven. When I met him, he was almost nine years old. He spoke beautiful English with no accent. He was doing very well in

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84 Tessler et al., Ibid.
85 LaFromboise et al., Ibid.
86 Tessler et al., Ibid.
87 Huus, Ibid.
school, ranking first in math and even spelling. He could not, however, remember any of his Chinese, even though his adoptive parents had tried hard to expose him to Chinese culture.

For the adoptive families living in a rural, homogeneous area, access to Chinese culture is limited. Even for those who live in metropolitan areas and have opportunities to experience Chinese culture, the parents have to balance the children's Chinese heritage and American culture. Many adopting parents agree with Crawford that "too much emphasis on Chinese things and being Chinese is likely to create, in the child, feelings of exclusion or being different; too little attention to things/being Chinese is likely to create neither the impression that this aspect of the child's identity is valued nor an appropriate subject for discussion." Some parents are concerned that socialization to the Chinese culture might even alienate children from these parents.

On the other hand, the children themselves are not necessarily enthusiastic about learning Chinese culture or speaking Chinese, as it may not make them comfortable or confident among their peers. As more and more Chinese adoptees approach the sensitive teenager stage, the bi-cultural socialization of this group becomes a challenge.

Cultural Conflicts Reflected in International Adoption

As a social phenomenon, American families adopting Chinese children have demonstrated some of the many cultural differences between the two countries.

Why do the Americans adopt?

It is difficult for Chinese people to understand why American families can embrace their adopted children as if they were their biological offspring. Because of the cultural background, social attitudes, and financial status, adoption is far less popular in China. Confucianism considers bloodlines as the core value of kinship and community. Adoption rarely happens among strangers. There are even prejudices against stepchildren in some families. When

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88 Rojewski and Rojewski, Ibid.
90 Tessier et al., Ibid.
Chinese learn about the US-China adoption programs, many will ask: why do these American people adopt from China?

Dong Soo Kim asked a similar question: why did the American families adopt Korean children? He found the reasons to be primarily religious and humanitarian. “Since we are a Christian family, we felt we should put our faith into action,” said one couple in his study. Another couple explained their adoption was driven by “a deep love for all children everywhere, and the realization that we had so much and they had so little.”

Recent studies about adopting from China provide other explanations. Research showed that the most popular reasons for adoption were: wanting a baby, wanting to have a parenting experience, and an infertility problem. Researchers also found that being childless was a significant motivating factor in an adoption decision. With regards to why potential adopting parents would choose China, “eligibility, health status of prospective children, and cultural and personal interests may all be involved, among other factors, in leading one to adopt in China.”

It is important to send these messages across the Pacific and to give the Chinese people a comprehensive explanation to their question, or rather, to dispel the possible misinterpretation of international adoption. Part of the message should be that by adopting Chinese children, American parents do not want to embarrass Chinese people. Nobody wants to hurt China's national pride or the feelings of its people.

Another positive outcome would be promoting domestic adoption in China. As China’s young, educated people vigorously follow the western culture, the idea of adoption and foster care may eventually sink in and more children will find new homes domestically.

Misunderstanding about adoptions from China

There are important misunderstandings about adopting from China. The “model minority” image of Asians has brought families with Chinese adopted children under racial attack. Other people
say these families go to China because they prefer smart “China dolls.”

On January 5, 2007, CNN’s “Paula Zahn Now” aired a 6 minutes segment on the rule changes and adoption from China. When the discussion reached the point of why people would adopt from China, panel members Roland Martin and Solangel Maldonado made the following comments:

MARTIN: Maybe they think they can adopt a smart kid that is going to grow up to be a doctor? I don't know.

MALDONADO: Absolutely. This is something I've been looking into for a long time. Americans have this love affair with girls from China. There is this belief, this perception, irrational as it might be, that if you adopt a little girl from China, she's going to be intelligent, she's going to be more lovable.

MARTIN: Like the porcelain doll.94

But there is even more criticism and suspicion about the nation, China: Why does China have so many babies available for adoption? Why does China allow international adoption?

The first question is always related to the One-Child Policy. Some Americans, based on their little or cursory knowledge about China, blame the One-Child Policy as the reason for the abandonment of girls. Some others focus on the adoption fee, and claim that the government is “exporting” babies to make a profit. As mentioned earlier, the cost of adopting from China is about $20,000. It includes a mandatory donation of $3,000 to the child’s orphanage and about another $4,000 to cover fees in China.95 According to some critics, the $3,000 donation would be the net profit of the "baby exporting business." In 2005, Americans adopted 7,906 Chinese children. Accordingly, China should have made $23.7 million by exporting their children to the United States. The reality is that China would not have counted this as a significant

95 The number of $4,000 is complied from data at Wasatch International Adoptions. <http://www.wiiaa.org/china.asp>
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money making enterprise when it sold America $243 billion worth of merchandise that year.96

But the amount of money can be significant for those orphanages. Many outside observers have noted improvement in the orphanages that participate in international adoption. “International adoption has been a reasonably effective means of bringing funds into the welfare system at a time when it was sorely strapped and barely able to cope with the increasing numbers of children in its care.”97

*The Chinese government’s responsibility for promoting mutual understanding*

The Chinese government should also make more efforts to improve its image in the adoptive community in the United States. Since it officially approved international adoption in 1992, people have seen great changes in the field. Needless to say, allowing foreigners to adopt Chinese children was a brave and revolutionary step, as this issue was bound to invite discussions of the One-Child Policy, overpopulation, human rights, poverty, and many other sensitive political topics. The government also has concerns about losing face, because foreigners are taking care of its abandoned babies. It worries about the public reaction. Many Chinese who know about international adoption have mixed emotions: appreciation along with regret and shame.

For these reasons, the Chinese government has always been sensitive about international adoption. The state-run media used to keep silent on the topic. Only in recent years has coverage about foreigners adopting from China appeared in the media. The government is even more cautious about criticism from the outside. The earliest encounter probably happened in 1993 when the *New York Times Magazine* published the article “China’s Market in Orphan Girls: China's Newest Export.” China immediately suspended international adoption “while the rules and regulations governing it are reviewed once again.”98

When it comes to problematic issues, the Chinese government tends to shun questions. Foreign reporters usually respond to this by trying all means to get “inside” information, with or without official approval. One result was the 1995 BBC documentary “The Dying Rooms,” which included extremely disturbing footage of some orphanages in China. It also claimed that the One-Child Policy caused infringements of human rights and that people in China were opposed to the policy.

The Chinese government was furious. According to the documentary’s producers, officials at the London Chinese Embassy, though they denied interviews in the film, eventually sent the producers a letter, which concluded that reports about the dying rooms “are vicious fabrications made out of ulterior motives.”

Simply issuing a denial was far from an effective way for China to correct the negative images shown in the film. The documentary was biased. It used isolated, sensational stories to cast a false shadow on the larger orphanage program in China. The Chinese government should have offered a channel to let people see the whole picture. The One-Child Policy is controversial, but essential to China. Officials should have taken the chance to explain their reasons for the policy.

More than 10 years have passed since this film was shown. People have seen that CCAA and the Chinese government have made some progress in regard to transparency. But it still needs the speed, agility, and diplomacy to handle public attention and inquiries. When I worked on the documentary, “In the Middle,” I learned that CCAA had an unofficial guideline of “doing without talking.” This policy prevents it from making any comment on international adoption to the foreign media.

When inquiries arise, the ostrich approach of burying one’s head in the sand is not helpful. One recent example was the revising of its international adoption rules in late 2006. When the news broke in the headlines of several prestigious English media outlets, CCAA declined to make any comment because the new

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s%22+caughman&st=nyt
guidelines had not yet been announced officially and publicly. To make matters worse, subsequent official reporting on the changes included incorrect information. The confusion lasted for weeks because the public could not get anything convincing from the Chinese authorities. Instead, the sensitive topic brought another round of sensational coverage and discussions. The “Paula Zahn Now” segment was one of the most notorious examples.

In retrospect, CCAA could have clarified or even prevented the Zahn misunderstandings by taking a more active approach to supplying information. Setting priorities for qualifying adopting parents and choosing those with better qualifications is certainly a desirable policy choice, one which will insure that the children are adopted into better families. Instead, CCAA kept silent. The silence can be read as the lack of confidence and the ineptness of public relations. If the Chinese government would adopt a more open attitude, it could prevent many of these misunderstandings.

Conclusion

Some scholars have made interesting discoveries regarding the social identities of adopted children. One study found that the facial expressions of adopted Chinese children were more similar to that of Caucasian children than to Chinese children or Chinese American children. Chinese adoptees’ emotional expressiveness is strongly influenced by their family’s cultural environment. In the adolescent stage with an anticipatory socialization, adopted Chinese children are still “in the adolescent stage with an anticipatory socialization.” These young Americans have built a strong and unique bridge between the two countries. Research on their education, career choices, cultural identities, and other socioeconomic indicators should expand as they grow up in this society.

The adoptive communities across the nation have organized themselves well. Organizations such as Families with Children from China have been active in many areas and provided support to local families. But many families need a more realistic attitude regarding how and whether to incorporate Chinese heritage into


101 Kim (1978), Ibid.
their children’s identities. Pushing it too hard may make the children feel isolated from their peers and bring a backlash at home. Some adoptive families can also feel frustrated and abandon all efforts. Perhaps the best course is to keep the children open-minded about their birth culture. The children can later explore and develop their interests in China or at the very least, know where to begin looking for their roots.

Adoptive families also need more access to authentic Chinese culture. Members of the Chinese communities should be more active and became involved with these children. Besides the immigrants who have already settled down, students and visiting scholars can also play an active role in bringing Chinese culture to adoptive families. With thousands of Chinese Students and Scholars Associations across the nation, the network is already in place.

China should also take an open attitude towards international adoption, both domestically and internationally. Its international adoption program has enjoyed a high reputation among the adopting communities. As the topic draws more attention from the media and general public in America, it has provided a great opportunity for China to tell its side of the story and gain more understanding of the many controversial issues.

In August 2007, CCAA hosted its first summer camp in China for 30 adopted children from overseas. The event received extensive coverage. This could be the beginning of a long overdue increase in support, attention, and discussion of this topic by the Chinese government.

### Appendix 1:
**Chinese Children Adopted by American Families**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Adoptions from China</th>
<th>Total foreign adoptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>6,520</td>
<td>20,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>7,939</td>
<td>22,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>7,033</td>
<td>22,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>6,638</td>
<td>21,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>6,062</td>
<td>21,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>4,629</td>
<td>19,087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### A Special US-China Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Visas</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4,943</td>
<td>18,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>4,009</td>
<td>16,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>3,988</td>
<td>14,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>3,295</td>
<td>12,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3,318</td>
<td>11,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2,049</td>
<td>9,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>8,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>7,377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>6,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61,814</td>
<td>256,447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Environmental degradation in China since 1949 has discredited three perspectives that suggested a rosier outcome of the development process. The first perspective is the concept of development itself, that shimmering utopia that promised a cornucopia of benefits with little cost to the developing countries in the post-colonial world. With the estimated drain of environmental abuse on the Chinese GDP now estimated at 8-12 percent, the equivalent of the annual growth in GDP, the Chinese slogan through the 1980s and much of the 1990s, “first development, then environment,” has proven to be an alluring but deceptive premise that no longer convinces. The second is socialism. The experience in Russia and Eastern Europe has already documented what is now obvious in China. The state owned, heavy industry model of social development has catastrophic effects on the environment. The third is the idea subscribed to by some in both the East and West, although none of the informed authors of these books buy it, that the Chinese have a special relationship with nature that is more environmentally conscious and less exploitative than that found in the industrialized West. Mark Elvin’s book investigates this thesis at length.

It is not hard to document the alarming state of the environment today in China. Elizabeth Economy’s book is a first rate study of the present situation and the cost to China. It also
explains how this deplorable state of affairs came about, it documents new developments and new politics and the prospects of changing the situation, the role of the foreign community, and most creatively, the essential role of political and social change in solving the environmental problem. A vast amount of data is offered by Edmonds edited volume, now several years old, but still very relevant. The articles are densely packed with data and tables, and typically aimed at specialists. Historical information on the development (or non-development) of China’s environmental law, bureaucracy, and politics and articles on forestry, agriculture, energy, industrial pollution, water shortages, population, and public health is presented by reputable scholars with varied perspectives. The volume would have benefited from an article on the political and social aspects of environmental protection, in addition to the excellent technical articles. Key points about China’s environmental situation gleaned from the Economy and Edmonds books include the following:

- Maoist policies and the Great Leap Forward left a terrible environmental legacy, but reformist and market policies in their own way also contribute to the crisis;

- In 2001, the World Bank reported that China had 16 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world;

- Acid rain affects one-third of China, including one-third of farmland. Seventy percent of water in 5 of 7 major river systems (Huai, Songhua, Hai, Yellow and Liao) was grade IV or worse (not suitable for human contact);

- Dessert covers 25 percent of China’s territory; deforestation and grassland degradation continue unabated;

- The rate of desertification has doubled since the 1970s. In May 2000, Premier Zhu Rongji worried that the advancing desert would necessitate moving the capital from Beijing;

- Less than one-third of industrial and one-tenth of urban domestic wastewater is treated before being dumped into the area the Three Gorges Dam occupies; and
Not until 1996 did top leaders criticize the tendency to relegate the environment to the sidelines in favor of economic growth. As late as 1997, Premier Li Peng reconfirmed a policy of keeping energy prices low.

Economy devotes a chapter to the crisis along the Huai River, a river valley serving 150,000 people in an area roughly the size of England and including the provinces of Henan, Anhui, and Jiangsu. Two of the 195 dams in the area collapsed in 1975, killing a reported 230,000 people, and the last quarter century has been a constant struggle to clean up the river. Water downstream in Anhui province is sometimes thick with yellow foam, dead fish, and garbage. As an official from the National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA) reported in 1997, “towns and villages continue to blindly build small paper mills, dye works, tanneries, and chemical plants with crude equipment, despite the government already having temporarily closed down some such 5000 factories during the cleanup process.” The pollution is exacerbated by the system of dams and reservoirs as well as droughts, which prevent flushing and dilution of the pollution. The Huai actually ran dry in 1999 and 2000 and stranded boats in the river. When local officials failed to deal with the situation (a common problem), national authorities finally got involved in the mid-1990s with numerous meetings, promises, and victory statements. The press reported numerous incidents of false reports, violating factories closing while others reopened, factories running at night to escape detection, gross exaggeration of the number of water-treatment plants operating along the river, etc. Another pollution crises occurred in 2001 and the problems still remained when Economy’s book went to press.

Mark Elvin’s book is a masterful overview of 4000 years of Chinese history and Chinese attitudes and actions affecting the environment. Covering so much territory and complexity in one study is a daunting task, but one that Elvin handles superbly. The wealth of available material but concomitant paucity of hard sources of reliable information give the book a unique character. The author combines a variety of literary and historical sources with resourceful but often cautious analysis, producing a literary and aesthetic quality that itself make the book worth reading. He makes the most of the sources that are available. The current environmental situation is the culmination of a long-term process. The “retreat of the elephants” started 4000 years ago when they lived in most of today’s China (excluding Tibet and Xinjiang), but gradually retreated from the northeast of China until, today, they are found only in small
protected enclaves in the southwest (Yunnan province), as long-term deforestation, the removal of the original vegetation cover, and the elimination of animal species progressed. Classical Chinese culture was, in his view, “as hostile to forests as it was fond of individual trees.” What were the driving forces and the economic imperatives behind this transformation of China? A cultural social Darwinism prevailed, cultures that actively exploited nature tended to gain a military and political competitive advantage over those that did not.

Contrary to Max Weber, the Chinese were driven by a desire for the rational mastery of the world, more than any pre-modern northwestern Europeans. China thus was transformed from having a “richness” of natural fauna and flora, an environmentally lush natural setting, to one that produced “riches” for those skillful at exploiting the possibility for economic gain and military success. The constantly receding original natural riches meant that humans grew up for several hundreds of thousands of years with animals all around them. But now a strange silence has fallen on emptiness Elvin wonders what the long-term implications of this are for “the balance of our minds.”

One of the many snapshots of the process Elvin details is one from an account in the History of the Song, of the Liu Song dynasty, based on the lower and middle Yangtze valley in 5th century AD. The Prefect of Yangzhou (on the site of present day Nanjing) reported to the Emperor:

though the prohibitions regarding the mountains and lakes have been established since times past, the common people have become accustomed to ignoring them, each one of them following in this example of others. They completely burn off the vegetation on the mountains, build dams across the rivers, and act so as to keep all the advantages for their families.... Rich and powerful people have taken possession of ranges of hills. The poor and the feeble have nowhere to gather firewood or hay. These incursions are serious abuses that damage good government, and to which the administration should put an end. It should be reaffirmed that the old laws that defined what was beneficial and what harmful are still in force (p. 55).

Elvin concedes much validity to Karl Wittfogel’s theory of the supreme importance of the hydraulic system of water control in imperial China and its role in retaining central control, but he also
believes the theory is too simple. The pressures on the environment gradually increased through four millennium as population increased and the job of subduing and exploiting the environment progressed. By late-imperial times (Ming and Qing dynasties), Elvin believes the pressure on the environment was much “higher than in Western Europe overall around the end of the eighteenth century, and fairly probably somewhat higher than in England and the Netherlands, though less arguably so.” The extent of hydraulic maintenance works, e.g., flood control, irrigation, transport, more intensive use of land, and higher yields were the key factors contributing to this pressure. The intensiveness of the manipulation and use of the environment amazed the Jesuits resident in China.

The strength of Elvin’s book is both the richness and diversity of the evidence and the glimpses he gives us of a broad expanse of historical China, but he constantly cautions that the nature of the evidence requires skepticism. Still, his overall conclusion is clear. Already, in the sixty century BC, there is the “beginning of a shortage of natural resources.” The core culture of classical China “had no attachment to forests, no commitment to preserve them except in rather late times—as reserves of useful timber, and certainly no reverence for them.”

Robert Weller also describes and explains the Chinese stance toward the environment, and points to the similarities between the approaches taken on Taiwan and the mainland, despite the difference in historical experience and political systems. His focus on anecdotal experience is both a strength and weakness of the book. His heavy reliance on personal experience and accounts provides complexity of explanation, but the book would have been strengthened by the addition of aggregate data to provide more perspective in comparing Taiwan and the mainland. He notes the drastic change in attitude in Taiwan between the late 1970s when he was first there and found little emphasis on the environment and a decade later when he returned to find: environmental laws, factories prevented from opening, a newly created EPA (1987), many new environmental publications, constant pro-environment demonstrations, and four new national parks. He hoped to find in China and Taiwan “an indigenous Chinese understanding of nature” that would counterbalance global influences.

This turned out to be naive, he remarks, but he did find a close connection between nature tourism and religion in both China
and Taiwan, in contrast to the West. One example of this is an amusing account of a visit to West Mountain in rural Guangxi in 1985 on the birthday of the bodhisattva Guanyin. He found large numbers of people lighting sticks of incense in front of rocks and trees all over the mountain, and a spirit possession session in a cave dedicated to Guanyin. This display of “feudal superstition” was quite embarrassing to the local mainland officials accompanying him. They were unable to satisfactorily answer why people were lighting incense in front of rocks and trees instead of in temples. Weller explains that “Nature tourism and religion had combined in a way that neither I nor my hosts expected, but that seemed quite natural to everyone else involved.” He contrasts the “pure nature tourism” of the West with the Chinese approach which prefers to blend nature and human affairs as part of a “single anthrop cosmic system.”

It is tempting to suggest that Weller exaggerates the similarity between the mainland and the Taiwanese situation. Some of his own examples seem to suggest that more progress has been made toward protecting the environment in Taiwan than on the mainland. But in general, the pattern of similarities he reports is convincing. Regardless of the difference in political systems, he sees tendencies toward a similar pattern in protests, proceeding first from petition to boycott and finally to financial remuneration. His observation that concern about the environment is local—people are concerned about their trash and pollution, not their fellow citizens' problems—seems particularly prescient. National figures in both China and Taiwan fail to understand and communicate their concerns in ways that resonate with local citizens, often ensuring that legal and educational efforts fail. This seems like a particularly appropriate insight for mainland officials.

These four books provide valuable insight into the state of the Chinese environment and how it got that way. They tell us that Chinese environmental problems are not only contemporary, but also historical, that China and Taiwan share many problems, and that, especially on the mainland, they are acute. Is there a solution? It is clear that while the Chinese have made much progress in passing laws, setting up organization and publicizing their problems with the environment, it is equally obvious that they are just at the beginning of the task. Laws are vague and inadequate, the environmental bureaucracy is often dependent on non-responsive central or local government, and enforcement is patchy. In Economy’s view, further democratization is an important ingredient
for future success. She quotes the environmental activist Tang Xiyang to the effect that “the chief guarantee of nature protection [is] the practice of democracy.”

She sketches out three possible scenarios for China. The first, “China goes green” would see a growing economy and focus on the environment, enhanced by effective application of the rule of law, greater citizen participation and the strengthening of civil society and international cooperation. Economy highlights the environmental success of the cities of Dalian, Shanghai, and Xiamen. In all cases she argues, the driving force was a mayor who perceived that his reputation and that of his city was linked to an improved environment. A less optimistic scenario where inertia toward the environment sets in and the environment is not accorded priority is a second possibility, while the third is environmental meltdown, likely accompanied by an economic slowdown and possibly wide-scale civil strife. Economy does not suggest which scenario is the most probable.

Reviewed by Kathy Ogawa

In this work, Veronica Li tells the life story of her mother, Flora Li, born in Hong Kong as the only daughter of a traveling Swatow merchant and his number two wife. The many trials and tribulations of her personal life are superimposed against those of her country as China goes through the war against Japan, faces civil war, and then the confusion and chaos of the Cultural Revolution. Together these events force Flora to move from Hong Kong to various cities on the mainland, to Bangkok, Taipei, and finally to the United States, thus the title “Journey across the Four Seas.” The book, written as Flora’s narrative, is based on stories Veronica had heard many times from her mother while growing up. Many decades later, Flora would narrate these stories to Veronica’s American friends who found them fascinating and worthy of broader dissemination. This realization led Veronica to share them with a wider audience in the form of this book.

Flora’s first trial is triggered by the early death of her father and the subsequent loss of his family’s portion of the inheritance to a member of the paternal clan. Through sheer determination and strength of character, Flora’s uneducated mother manages to keep her impoverished family together, and with the encouragement and support of a school teacher friend, Flora becomes the first member of her family to enter Hong Kong University.

During her university years, owing to the war and its aftermath, she is forced to evacuate from Hong Kong to Chongqing and to Chengdu. These would be the first of Flora’s odysseys. Her English skills prove useful in landing jobs, and it is through one such assignment that she meets a rich publisher, Wang Yun-Wu who would later become Deputy Prime Minister in the nationalist government. Wang arranges for Flora to meet his eldest son, Hok-Ching, and after a brief courtship the two are married in Chongqing. With this marriage, and with the success of her businessman brother (a kind and generous soul who is always there to render moral and financial support), Flora attains a certain level of comfort and security, but a different set of issues now confront her. First, her dashing and handsome husband cannot hold a job for long, and
whenever workplace problems arise, as they inevitably do, his solution is to move to a different city and start afresh (hence the family’s move from Chongqing to Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Nanjing, Bangkok, and back to Hong Kong and later Taiwan). He also manifests symptoms of what would later be diagnosed as paranoia and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Secondly, her powerful father-in-law and family patriarch is forever “arranging” the lives and work of his clan including Flora, her husband, and her children. In addition, China is going through much social, political, and economic turmoil throughout this period, with no likely closure in sight. While Flora can still count on a roof above her head and food on the table, any kind of permanent home or long-term planning for the family is hard to come by.

Despite the issues confronting both country and family, and the displacement this causes Flora, she remains focused on her top priority, the welfare of her five children. As they reach school age, the driving force for the “search for home” boils down to the best environment for their education. Thus follows the move from Hong Kong to Taipei, back to Hong Kong, and finally at the ripe old age of 50, the big move across the Pacific to start a new life in the United States. Unlike the earlier moves initiated by her husband for business reasons, these later moves were all initiated by Flora, for the benefit of the children. Flora tells her reluctant husband, even as the marriage is crumbling: “I have a ten-year plan. During this period, the two of us will unite our hearts and combine our strengths to achieve the same goal. We’ll bury ourselves in work. We’ll spend on ourselves only what is needed to keep us alive. We’ll think of nothing but putting our children through college and graduate school. Ten years is my estimate.” This is exactly what they do, Flora works as a data processor, and her husband becomes an office manager. The ten-year plan is completed right on schedule, and the children reciprocate by becoming a successful social worker, a lawyer, a dentist, and an accountant. After a successful career working for the Wall Street Journal, Asia and the World Bank, Veronica turns her talents to writing, first producing a work of fiction, Nightfall in Mogadishu, and now the present book.

Three elements jointly make Flora’s story memorable. First of all, it puts a human face on the turbulent times the Chinese, especially Chinese women, went through during a critical period in China’s history. Told through the eyes of a woman who simply
yearned for a peaceful and stable life for her family, but whose life could not help but get caught up with the historical events, her story is largely devoid of political or ideological coloring (although Flora does occasionally share her thoughts on the evolving Chinese political situation). No doubt millions of women fought through similar trials, coping with the constraints and disadvantages that the traditional patriarchic society imposed on women. While this is Flora’s personal story, it is also the story of all those courageous Chinese mothers, wives, and daughters who strove so hard to survive and keep their families together.

Secondly, Flora’s story is refreshingly void of the “victimization” mind set. She is not telling us the story so we might sympathize with poor little Flora. She is not blaming anyone or anything for her hardships, and she is not feeling sorry for herself. In fact, she has no time to feel sorry, instead she charges ahead with a spirit of optimism and drive even when resources and options are limited: in her early days, for sheer survival, and once married, for her husband and five children. Her struggle connects her to all brave and determined women, not just the Chinese.

Finally, the narration as rendered by Veronica’s superb style, interspersed with genuine warmth and humor, holds the reader’s attention and makes it hard to put the book down. Chapter after chapter, through Veronica’s pen, Flora’s lively personality permeates the pages even as she is confronted by one trial after another. It becomes enjoyable to get to know her and travel across the four seas together.

For readers not familiar with China, Journey Across the Four Seas: A Chinese Woman’s Search for Home captures the Chinese family, its values and traditions, its comforts and constraints, and the characteristic patience and perseverance of the Chinese women. To all readers, it is a very lively story of a remarkable woman who accepted circumstances she could not change, who never complained about the cards life had dealt her, but was ready to make courageous choices when the opportunities arose.

*Reviewed by Wu Yue*

Many political analysts have focused on the controversial Iraq War and declining economy as the primary legacy of former President George W. Bush. Chi Wang, a professor of Chinese history and Sino-American relations, however, has turned his attention toward a generally overlooked part of the administration in his newly released book *George W. Bush and China: Policies, Problems and Partnership*.

Dr. Wang writes that while the Bush administration created unnecessary tension between the countries at the beginning of his first term, the transposing of security priorities after September 11 prompted Washington, DC to embrace China and brought a short period of stabilization and amity in relations.

According to the author, in his first nine months in office, President Bush adopted a “provocative and incoherent approach” to China, largely because of inexperience on the part of both the president and his staff.

Lack of extensive knowledge and experience about China directly resulted in some dramatic episodes in the early days of the administration. One involved inconsistent remarks Bush made in April 2001 about defending Taiwan while on ABC’s “Good Morning America” and a few hours later in a CNN interview. Though the incident did not lead to long-term consequences, the author argues it demonstrated the Bush administration did not understand the intricacies of US-China relations.

But in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Bush administration began to embark on the “global war on terror” and found its relationship with China increasingly important. In addition to economic interests, the countries share common ground on issues such as the fight against terrorism and nuclear proliferation in North Korea.

In his discussion of Bush’s foreign policy toward China, the author examines several important events in China, including high-level meetings between the sides during that time, and analyzes
how these issues shaped US foreign policy toward China. This approach is especially valuable because most American scholars studying Sino-American relations usually, if not always, take an inward perspective and focus on internal political dynamics in the United States. Given the author’s close ties with members of China’s politburo and academia, his way of looking into Sino-American relations is both effective and informative.

The book also includes a revealing chapter about how Bush’s foreign-policy advisors engaged China personally and institutionally. The author points out although none of Bush’s foreign policy advisors could be considered an advanced China expert, most adopted a very pragmatic approach toward China. This enabled the Bush administration to overcome long-term ideological differences between the nations and eventually improve its relationship with China.

After discussing Bush’s foreign policy before and after 9/11, the author addresses four other important aspects of Sino-American relations: Taiwan; security in North Asia; military-to-military contacts; and economic relations. Drawing on his expertise from more than 40 years of teaching and researching Sino-American relations, the author examines these complicated issues in a succinct and informative manner. For those who want to master the general trend of Sino-US relations but do not have enough time to spend on extensive reading, this book should be the first choice.

The book’s main focus is Bush’s China-policy, yet many of the author’s insightful observations provide valuable suggestions the new administration may find helpful. Take the currently stagnant Six Party Talks. While the author acknowledges the active role China played in initiating dialogue between North Korea and the United States, he argues it is a combination of a lack of political will and clout that prevents China from exerting more influence. Based on this assumption, the author proposes “in order for China to fully embrace its role as conflict mediator and take advantage of its leverage in North Korea, the United States should be more open to China’s recommendations and cooperate with China as equals.”

For the highly sensitive Taiwan issue, the author suggests the administration should keep “a clear and consistent policy,” because without articulating this policy clearly, China and Taiwan
would have difficulty gauging American national sentiment and predicting possible US actions.

The human rights issue remains very contentious in Sino-US relations. The author does not discuss human rights in the main body of the book, but he includes in the postscript several legitimate reasons for that. What merits special attention in this part of the discussion is the author’s personal view on human rights, through which the American reader can get a glimpse of how the majority of contemporary Chinese regard the issue.

It is true the war in Iraq defined Bush’s foreign policy in many important ways, but there are definitely other aspects, such as his close ties with India and a pragmatic relationship with China, which deserve serious credit. This point is exactly the main theme of the book George W. Bush and China.

Reviewed by Robert Sutter, Ph.D.

China’s rise in prominence in Southeast Asia in the 21st century has resulted in an outpouring of commentaries and assessments along with a number of very good books. The assessments and books tend to focus on two questions—how powerful China has become in Southeast Asia and what does this mean for the emerging order in Asia and the US position in the region.

A common refrain in media coverage and several recent scholarly assessments is that China’s rapid rise is creating a new order in Asia with China at the center that coincides with and takes advantage of a widely perceived decline in the US leadership position in Asia. A recent book by Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China’s Soft Power is Transforming the World* (Yale University Press, 2007) conforms strongly to this view. Reading the book leaves the reader very concerned about the implications of China’s rise for the region and the US position in the region.

In contrast, a recent study by Bronson Percival *The Dragon Looks South: China and Southeast Asia in the New Century* (Praeger Security International, 2007) is more balanced in assessing both the strengths and limitations of China’s rise in Southeast Asia, and the strengths and limitations of the United States, and its position in Southeast Asia. He argues that China’s rise in Southeast Asia actually has little negative impact on core US interests in the region. Unlike Kurlantzick, Percival is not seriously concerned that China’s rise has affected or will likely affect negatively what he sees on balance as a continuing strong US position in Southeast Asia.

Professor Brantly Womack of the University of Virginia has gone beyond the recent debate about China’s rise in Southeast Asia to provide a new theoretical understanding of the asymmetrical relations between China and its Southeast Asian neighbors, in this case Vietnam. Womack’s new theory, asymmetrical theory, is an approach he has developed in recent years which provides a framework of analysis for assessing the relationship between two powers of different size. His theory
borrows from other International Relations theories but differs from what Womack views as poorly developed perspectives of asymmetry in conventional International Relations theory.

Womack finds that key determinants in the Sino-Vietnamese relationship flow from their large differences in power. These differences lead to differences in interests and perceptions between the stronger and weaker sides of the relationship. Even though the relationships between asymmetric powers are rarely without problems, Womack shows they often achieve a type of stability through a learning process where both sides come to accept their unequal relationship as normal. The author sees the larger power as often inattentive and the smaller power as often over attentive to their bilateral relationship. These tendencies can easily exacerbate differences and occasionally result in crises caused by what Womack calls vicious cycles of misunderstanding. However, hostility rarely solves the problem, resulting in stalemate and a learning process leading to normalization.

Womack explains his theory in the course of examining the several thousand year history of Sino-Vietnamese relations. Patterns of conflict and normalization emerge at various times in Sino-Vietnamese relations. Womack focuses special attention on the twists and turns of Sino-Vietnamese relations in the 20th century. He says that despite continuing bilateral differences, Beijing and Hanoi have reached a recent stage of normalization and what Womack calls “mature normalcy.”

Womack acknowledges that his view of China-Vietnam relations and asymmetrical theory challenges conventional views in International Relations theory of how powers of different sizes relate to one another. He sees the theory having broader applications, including important implications for understanding international relations in today’s world, which is characterized by US power and leadership.

Although theoretical assessments may be hard for non-specialists to understand, Womack conveys his ideas and insights in clear and well organized prose. The initial chapter of the book provides a road-map guiding the reader carefully through the various chapters. Several of the main chapters in the book deal with theoretical points, but when needed Womack provides useful summaries that direct the reader along the right path.
The first part of the book (three chapters) assesses longstanding determinants of Chinese and Vietnamese external relations, and explains the politics of asymmetry and its key features. The rest of the book (six chapters) is a masterful review of the course of three thousand years of Sino-Vietnamese relations. Those chapters show how the framework of asymmetry emerges from and helps to explain relations between these two powers over time. The author's review of the often dramatic turns of Sino-Vietnamese relations in the modern period makes a particularly important contribution in how to assess these important relations and what they mean for the emerging order and international politics in Asia in the 21st century.

**Reviewed by Meghan A. Crossin**

While China’s one-party state currently remains firmly authoritarian, the dramatic growth and change the country has experienced over the last decade have prompted intense debate about how China’s development will shape the character and function of the country’s government. In *The China Fantasy*, former *Los Angeles Times* Beijing Bureau Chief James Mann questions the suppositions that have guided American policy toward China since the Nixon administration, challenging the logic and motivation of those who downplay current government abuses based on an assumption that the current repressive system will eventually be replaced. Mann’s sharp polemic urges readers to consider a very real alternative: what if China’s economy continues to expand but its government remains as dismissive of democracy and human rights as it is now?

Mann begins by outlining two existing scenarios regarding China’s future development. He explains that reigning American views on the subject have generally been condensed into two overarching camps: the optimists and the pessimists.

The optimists believe China’s dependence on free trade for economic growth will result in the eventual arrival of a democratic government. Dubbed the *Soothing Scenario*, this dominant theory, which is widely embraced by China experts and policymakers, promotes a “quiet diplomacy”—the belief that growth in trade will eventually lead to an increase of democracy and freedom in China over time. Many advocates of business and free trade use this “two steps forward, one step back” rationalization to argue for a continuing expansion of America’s economic relationship with China. Adherents of this scenario point to the fact that China is basically headed in the “right direction;” the Chinese economy is doing amazingly well, the Chinese people are getting wealthier, and there is some evidence to suggest a parallel trend towards increased freedom of information and expression in China.

The *Upheaval Scenario*, a theory that predicts China is headed for an eventual collapse, is the less popular alternative espoused by the pessimistic camp. According to this scenario, the
contradictions inherent in Chinese society, such as the ever-widening wealth gap between the rich and poor and between the increasingly capitalist economy and the unyielding one-party government, will eventually lead to the country’s collapse. Advocates of the Upheaval Scenario cite the numerous instances of political unrest in contemporary China, the increasing social polarization that has developed as a result of the vast economic chasm between the urban and rural populations and the mounting environmental problems confronting the nation as evidence supporting their claim.

Mann argues much of the logic supporting both dominant theories is flawed. He dismisses the successful developmental experiences of Taiwan and South Korea, recent historical examples often referred to by proponents of the Soothing Scenario, maintaining there are irreconcilable differences in the political, geographic, and historical climates of the respective countries. Since China is exponentially larger in both economy and geographic size and is not dependent on America for military protection, Mann argues it is, therefore, not possible to draw on the examples of Taiwan and South Korea when forecasting the probable direction of China’s growth.

Citing the overambitious remarks of Senator Kenneth Wherry in 1940, that “With God’s help, we will lift Shanghai up and up until it is just like Kansas City,” Mann suggests that those who are attracted by the convenient allure of the Soothing Scenario ignore the lessons history has taught. “To make this assumption about China is to repeat the mistakes others have made in the past—that is, to think wrongly that the Chinese are inevitably becoming like us.” He alleges that individuals who argue China’s political system is indeed changing have focused on minor differences that do little to fundamentally alter the status quo, but rather diverts attention from the larger, darker picture of political oppression.

To the proponents of the Upheaval Scenario, Mann points to China’s millennia-long history of cohesion. Despite periods of temporary dissolution, such as during the Warring States period, the Japanese invasion, and the Chinese civil war, the Chinese mainland has always managed to re-emerge as a distinct and unified political entity. Furthermore, he states that since China is such a large country, events in one region do not necessarily give an accurate portrayal of the country’s overall political situation. As
Mann points out, “Labor strikes may spread through all of Northeast China or political demonstrations may sweep through many of its leading cities; still, in the end such events don’t determine the future direction of China.”

Mann challenges readers to consider a third scenario: what if the Chinese economy maintains its current economic growth but the government fails to liberalize? This *Third Scenario* contends China will continue to gain wealth and influence on the world stage, but it will not alter its basic political structure in any fundamental way. Therefore, Mann concludes, it is necessary for the US to adopt a concrete course of action to compel the Chinese leadership toward democratic change. He warns that failure to act will result in wide-reaching consequences not only for oppressed Chinese people, but also for America and for democracy-building efforts throughout the rest of the world.

Mann cites China’s involvement in a growing number of so-called “unsavory” regimes, including Zimbabwe, Burma, Uzbekistan, and Sudan. By providing economic and military assistance to these undemocratic regimes, Mann maintains China is giving “what amounts to ideological sustenance to these dictatorships; it lends support to the idea that democracy is an alien Western concept, something imposed by Americans or Europeans.” If China continues to gain influence over global affairs while retaining its authoritarian government, Mann suggests China’s aversion to democracy could harden the resolve of anti-democratic countries and undermine the commitment of nascent democracies.

In summary, *The China Fantasy* is a thought-provoking book that raises concerns about a subject of great contemporary significance—a must-read for anyone interested in global affairs. Mann is justified in noting that the US must seriously consider the fact that America’s current China-policy amounts to the following unstated bargain: “We have abandoned any serious attempt to challenge China’s one-party state, and we have gotten in exchange the right to unfettered commerce with China.” Mann’s challenges to America’s current China-policy will hopefully inspire a reexamination of the US approach to see which policies have worked and which ones may need to be revised.
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CHI WANG

This is a little gem of a book. It very succinctly chronicles the evolution of American China policy under George W. Bush, outlines the key issues (Taiwan, Korea and other northeast Asian security matters, military-to-military ties, and bilateral economic interaction), and insightfully relates all this to the Bush administration’s personalities and politics.

~ Ambassador Chas W. Freeman, Jr.

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