Washington Journal of Modern China

China and the World Bank
Pieter Botellier

China’s Growing Role in Africa
Raymond W. Copson

China’s Energy Strategy in Latin America
Chietigj Bajpaee

China’s New Internet Politics
Yang Guobin

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Editor’s Note:
Returning to the editorship of this Journal is a special challenge and pleasure. My first stint as editor was when the Journal first published in 1992. At that time, China as a topic of study and interest had to compete with many other often more pressing international issues and events. Times have changed and continue to change rapidly. China, in its many aspects, is now on the agenda for more than just the policy analyst. The country, its people, livelihood, culture and education, as well as its politics, strategic direction, and economy, all are now receiving broad national and international attention. In order to meet this growing interest, the Journal will take a broader view of China matters, departing somewhat from its past more specific focus. In addition to the traditional and scholarly policy articles, it will include less formal presentations, notes on talks, events of interests, individual perspectives, travel observations, and as before, book reviews. We hope to provide readers who are specialists and the non-specialists with useful professional material that can serve and inform. And as this new direction continues to take shape in this and future issues, we welcome your comments, suggestions and reactions. Ed.

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China and the World Bank: How a Partnership Was Built

Pieter Bottelier

China’s economic reforms were facilitated by a pro-active relationship with multilateral agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Both institutions provided unique opportunities for China to learn from the experience of other countries in a professional and politically neutral international setting. China used the World Bank well and the Bank was responsive to China’s needs. Although China was a founding member of the World Bank, it did not begin to draw benefit from it until China’s representation on the board of the World Bank was shifted from Taipei to Beijing in 1980. The relationship with the Bank quickly became very broad and deep, covering most sectors of the economy as well as macroeconomic reforms. China became the World Bank’s largest borrower and one of the largest recipients of technical assistance in the early 1990s.

The relative importance of the Bank for China declined as the economy matured, Chinese experts gained expertise and China accessed international capital markets. China lost access to the Bank’s soft-loan window (the International Development Association) in 1999. Around that time commitments for loans on standard World Bank terms had to be scaled back to avoid “over-exposure” to China on the Bank’s balance sheet. The smaller, lower-profile role of the Bank in China since that time is a sign of success, not of failure. From the late 1990s China relied on the bank primarily for selected technical, institutional and conceptual innovations in development.

Getting to Know Each Other

Not long after the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the United States and China on 1 January 1979, there were indications that Beijing wished to resume China’s representation on the board of the World Bank. The Bank’s first official mission to China was led by its president,
Robert McNamara in April 1980. The mission was received by Deng Xiaoping who told the mission: “We are very poor. We have lost touch with the world. We need the World Bank to catch up. We can do it without you, but we can do it quicker and better with you.” In May 1980 the Bank’s board approved Beijing’s request.

Robert McNamara – Deng Xiaoping meeting, April 1980

McNamara saw a historic opportunity, but also realized that helping China reorient its development model presented unprecedented challenges for the World Bank. In personally leading the Bank’s first official mission to China, he brushed aside U.S. government reservations about Beijing’s early return to the World Bank. He thereby established credibility for the Bank as a non-political multilateral agency which was very important for the Chinese. The Bank’s reputation for independence was reinforced when Barber Conable, President of the World Bank from 1986 to 1991, approved a mission to China, over the objection of the U.S., only weeks after the Tiananmen massacre of June 4th, 1989. The purpose of this mission was to discuss how the economic reform momentum could be maintained in spite of the political turmoil. At that time many countries had withdrawn their embassy staff from China and imposed sanctions.

Though anxious to receive large amounts of financial support as quickly as possible after rejoining the World Bank, the Chinese showed patience and understanding for the Bank’s need to carefully select priority projects and understand their sectoral context. China not only accepted the need for up-front economic and sector studies, it actively participated in them. The country had been closed to the outside world since the early 1950s and was essentially a black box for the World Bank in 1980. The
Bank was seen as a valuable source of technical advice and information on how other countries had succeeded or failed in their development efforts. The Bank was cast in the role of a guide. Since it was perceived as an independent, apolitical organization, it was able to serve as a kind of air-lock between China and the western world during the initial stages of reform.

The Chinese sent a mission around the world to study the experience of other developing member countries with the World Bank, following which the State Council (China’s cabinet) assigned responsibility for dealing with the Bank to the Ministry of Finance. The State Planning Commission (since 2003 the National Development and Reform Commission) also played a key role in the relationship, ensuring that the Bank’s program became an integral part of China’s development plan. Few, if any member countries, equipped themselves so purposefully for dealing with the World Bank as China did.

Two urgent tasks faced the Bank after the resumption of China’s membership: (1) to agree on project priorities and administrative procedures, and (2) to understand the broader economic and sectoral context of projects to be supported. There was no administrative infrastructure in China for processing World Bank loans at the time. In July 1980, a World Bank mission reached agreement with the Chinese on key procedural and administrative principles and on the need for an overall study of the Chinese economy. For the first time since 1949, a “western” agency was invited to make a comprehensive study of China’s economy, with the active participation of Chinese experts.

In the fall of 1980, 32 Bank staff (economists, engineers, health experts, education experts and other specialists) participated in the first economic mission to China. The Chinese organized a counterpart team which included Zhu Rongji (China’s PM from 1998 to 2003), who had just been politically rehabilitated and worked as an economist at the Institute of Industrial Economics. The Bank’s team was surprised to find serious weaknesses in China’s Soviet-style “material balance” projections used for central planning purposes. For example, the team predicted that China would become a net-importer of oil around the mid-1980s if China did not invest in new extraction technologies, discover new reserves and bring them into production. The government was taken aback by these observations; it had just signed a long-term agreement for oil exports to Japan in the expectation that China would have oil surpluses indefinitely. In fact, oil and other raw
material exports were then regarded China’s best hope to generate enough foreign exchange earnings to pay for the imports that would be needed for the country’s modernization. In the event, China became a net importer of oil in 1993.

The mission’s findings were reflected in a 1,000-page report entitled “China: Socialist Economic Development”. It was translated into Chinese and made required reading at economic faculties. A summary of the report was discussed at the highest levels in government. Two years later the Chinese agreed to the unrestricted distribution of the report, a breakthrough toward greater openness.

The tone and thrust of the report are reflected in the following quote from its Summary:

Thus the appropriate response to the present problems may be increased attention to designing a balanced and integrated program of reforms for the next few years. This need not aim at more than a modest interim stage of reform. Nor need it imply that reform should be implemented quickly, which in fact seems inadvisable, given the present structural imbalances, gross price distortions and weaknesses of financial institutions and instruments. But better account should be taken of the linkages between different aspects of reform, and of the need to progress on different fronts at a mutually consistent pace and in an appropriate sequence. It is also important to recognize that the current effort to regain central control of investment and prices could go too far: experience in both China and other countries suggests that the central planner is always “partially ignorant” and that attempts to plan everything directly and rigidly from above can result in gross inefficiency and sometimes even a breakdown of the system.

Initially, the Chinese were keenly interested in the experience of East European countries such as Hungary, where efforts to subject the state-dominated economy to market mechanisms had started in the late 1960s. To facilitate the learning process, the Bank organized a conference with East European experts – The Muganshan conference of 1982. The Chinese concluded that the East European economic reforms were more price adjustments than real market reforms and began to look beyond Eastern Europe for their reform strategy. A few years later, at the Bashan boat conference, also organized by the World Bank, the Chinese learned first
hand from seven top western economists about the functioning of modern market economies while sailing down the Yangtze river from Chongqing to Wuhan.

The next formal World Bank economic report on China was completed in 1985. The focus of this report had been agreed during a visit to China in 1983 by World Bank President Tom Clausen (McNamara’s successor) in meetings with Deng Xiaoping and PM Zhao Ziyang. Deng requested an assessment of the feasibility of the government’s plan to quadruple national income by 2000. Thirty one World Bank experts participated in this mission. Unlike the first economic report, this one was mainly forward looking and focused on the management of economic transition. It dealt with all major sectors of the economy and stressed the need to develop institutions and policies for indirect macroeconomic management. The report concluded that a quadrupling of national income by 2000 was possible under certain conditions. The Chinese again agreed to the unrestricted distribution of the report. Although links between the foreign advice and China’s policy decision are always hard to trace, there can be little doubt that this second economic report, like the first one, was very influential in China.

The tone and thrust of this report are reflected in the following quotes from its Summary:

China’s economic prospects will depend...on success in reforming the system of economic management, including coordinated progress on three fronts. First is greater use of regulation by markets to stimulate innovation and efficiency. Second is stronger planning, combining direct with indirect economic control. Third is modification and extension of social institutions and policies to maintain the fairness in distribution that is fundamental to socialism, despite the greater inequality and instability that regulation by markets and indirect controls would tend to cause.

Whilst recognizing the need for careful transition management, the report warned of the dangers of incomplete reforms: “Very few countries have combined state and market regulation in such a way as to produce rapid and efficient growth and fewer still have also managed to avoid intolerable poverty among substantial segments of their populations.” The last comment was prescient indeed. After initially falling, from the mid-1980s social
inequality in China increased dramatically. It is one of the top government concerns at the start of China’s Eleventh Five Year Plan in 2006.

With respect to the role of foreign investment, the Bank’s second economic report says:

…China seems wise to encourage direct foreign investment, less for the foreign capital or advanced technology it brings for the demonstration effect of modern management techniques. The example of, and competition from, well-run foreign companies can help domestic firms identify weak links in management, product design, material supply, and so on, and spurt them to make changes they might otherwise never consider…The requires foreign and joint ventures to be spread…among a wide range of localities and activities, rather than confined to special zones or particular sectors.

Over the years, economists and sector specialists in the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC – the Bank’s subsidiary for loans to and equity investment in private enterprises in developing member countries) produced hundreds of reports on various aspects of the Chinese economy. Often, these studies were undertaken at the request of Chinese counterpart agencies who almost always participated in them. Many reports were translated into Chinese, published and made available to the public through libraries and bookstores.

As China’s appreciation of the importance of private sector development grew and private foreign financing became more easily available, the role of the IFC expanded and the World Bank withdrew from sectors where the private sector could take over (e.g. telecommunications, commercial ports, conventional thermal power plants and highways). At the same time, the central focus of the Bank’s program for China shifted from infrastructure to rural development, health and education, poverty reduction, legally system development, and environmental protection. The geographic location of projects shifted from coastal to less developed interior provinces, especially towards the end of the 1990s.

The World Bank Institute (previously Economic Development Institute) contributed significantly to building the Bank-China relationship through numerous courses and training programs for Chinese officials, in Washington and around the world. A China-specific EDI program (financed
by UNDP) provided a variety of course tailored to China’s requirements in English and Chinese. Many alumni of these training programs are now in senior government positions in China.

Projects as Vehicles for Technical Assistance

In April 1980, the Chinese indicated to McNamara that they were seeking financial and technical assistance for projects in agriculture, light industry, heavy industry, energy and transport. McNamara suggested including higher education and overseas training. A few months later another mission agreed with acting Premier Zhao Ziyang that the Bank would support five projects during the first few years: in higher education, agriculture, ports and industrial reform. The mission also reached agreement on key administrative issues such as contract and competitive bidding procedures (including the preparation of bidding documents in English!), the use of foreign consultant and the supervision of project implementation.

The Bank also sent a group of experience project engineers to assess China’s capacity to prepare and implement projects suitable for World Bank support, in compliance with Bank requirements. This mission found that China had achieved a much higher level of technical capacity for planning, designing and implementing even very large projects, than most World Bank borrowers. What was found lacking, however, was a capacity for innovation, economic cost-benefit analysis, modern accounting standards and project management techniques.

The Chinese did not become convinced of the merits of international competitive bidding until a Japanese firm underbid a Chinese state-owned company by 30% for the first infrastructure project supported by the Bank. Before 1980, China’s technical ministries were owners as well as consultants, contractors, manufacturers, suppliers and operators of the projects they undertook. To organize competitive bidding and international contracts complying with World Bank norms, the government created several specialized procurement agencies. The Chinese initially resisted the use of expensive foreign consultants, but later accepted the need for it on a selective basis. The Bank designed its support for China projects to systematically address the institutional and other weaknesses that had been identified. In this way projects became primary vehicles for institution building and a large flow of technical assistance in many sectors of the economy.
The first project submitted for board approval (June 1981) was a higher education project. It provided finance for equipment and materials to upgrade 26 universities and a large number of scholarships for study abroad. The second project, approved a year later, provided irrigation and drainage facilities as well as agricultural support services for large areas of farmland where productivity has sharply fallen due to excess soil salinity, the third project, approved in November 1982, supported modernization of the ports of Shanghai, Tianjin and Guangzhou. It included container handling facilities which facilitated rapid trade growth. The first three projects were implemented on schedule and achieved their objectives. Together with the Bank’s first economic report on China, they laid the foundation for what became the largest and one of the most successful programs in the history of multilateral development assistance.

In 1993 China became the World Bank’s largest borrower and remained so until the late 1990s. To manage the program, the government established project units all over the country. The number of Chinese staff on government payrolls involved in managing the Bank’s program was estimated at 10,000 when the program was at its peak in the second-half of the 1990s. During those years, there was rarely fewer than 100 World Bank experts in China at any point in time to help prepare or supervise projects, or to undertake studies.

With the exception of one quick dispersing “adjustment” loan in the late 1980s, all World Bank loans for China financed investment projects or technical assistance. Loan conditionality was linked to agreed project objectives. There were relatively few serious compliance problems. On one occasion when the municipal water authority of Shanghai refused to raise water tariffs as required under a Bank-supported waste water treatment project, the problem was resolved when the Bank threatened to suspend disbursements.

All participants in the Dalian conference were invited to meet with Vice Premier Zhu Rongji. Zhu was particularly interested in hearing the views of foreign participants, because, as he explained citing an old Chinese proverb: “Foreign monks know more than local monks”. The foreign monks explained that the economy had, in their view, become dangerously overheated and that forceful remedial action was urgently needed. After the conference a small group of Chinese participants met privately with Zhu to
submit their recommendations. A few weeks later, in July, top CCP leaders agreed on the nature of China’s inflation problem and on a program of macroeconomic stabilization. This program—summarized in 16 points—was ultimately successful in achieving a “soft landing” in 1996. It was the first macroeconomic stabilization plan that relied, at least partially, on indirect policy instruments. It had far-reaching implications for macroeconomic management and institutional change in the years that followed and contributed to a partial re-centralization of fiscal and financial controls.

Like the earlier Muganshan and Bashan boat conferences, the Dalian conference was a key event and building block in the evolution of China-Bank relations. The conference marked a turning point in the national debate on two major issues: (a) the appropriate degree of administrative centralization for China; and (b) the management of aggregate demand in China’s semi-reformed economy.

From Dalian to the Third Plenum of November 1993 and Beyond

Domestic and international reactions to the 16-point macro-stabilization program of July 1993 were highly favorable. So favorable, that investor confidence and consumer spending actually increased, driving inflation even higher before a gradual cooling of the economy began in 1994. Another reason for delay in the program’s effectiveness was the weakness of existing macroeconomic institutions. Local branches and state-owned commercial banks and even central bank branches were still effectively controlled by local governments and fiscal system remained chaotic. The interbank market operated as a credit channel outside the credit plan.

Although broad agreement on the need for drastic change had been reached, the government had yet to decide (1) how to control excessive local investment growth and credit expansion while ensuring that credit would continue to flow to state-directed projects such as e.g. the 3-Gorges project; (2) how to finance budget deficits in light of the decision to discontinue borrowing from the central bank for fiscal purposes; (3) how, when and what level to unify the confusing and distortive multiple exchange rate system.

These and other complex issues were the subject of intense debate within the government during the fall of 1993. The World Bank participated in several of the workshops organized by the Chinese to seek foreign advice
in preparation for the Third Plenum of the Fourteenth Central Committee of the CCP later that year. An 8-page assessment of China’s macroeconomic situation and need for additional reforms by the World Bank’s Resident Mission in Beijing impressed Zhu Rongji, who asked the Bank to publish the entire piece in the People’s Daily, which was promptly done.

In November 1993 the Third Plenary Session of the Fourteenth Central Committee of the CCP adopted a comprehensive package of 50 interrelated economic reform decisions, setting the stage for a new phase of China’s market reforms. For the first time since the start of the reforms in December 1978 China had defined the goals and the methods of economic transformation, at least in general terms. The Dalian conference had been an important building block in the process that led to this point. The Third Plenum of November 1993 triggered follow-up institutional changes and policy action in numerous areas, including the flowing:

1) Fiscal reform. On 1 January 1994, for the first time in China’s history, a Nation Tax Administration agency was created. A modern valued added tax, a personal income tax, several other tax reforms and clear central-local government revenue sharing formulas were introduced. The government’s new requirement that Fiscal deficits had to be covered through borrowing on capital markets led to accelerated development of primary and secondary bond markets.

2) SOE reform and privatization. The Plenum’s decision to establish a “Modern Enterprise System” through the corporation of state-owned enterprises (SOE and other reforms led to enactment of PRC’s first Company Law in 1994 and the start of privatization. SOE employment peaked in 1995 and dropped by an astonishing 45 million jobs by 2003. From 1995 all net-employment growth in China has been due to non-state enterprises, mostly domestic private companies.

3) Exchange rate reform. China’s complex, multiple exchange rate system was unified on January 1, 1994. This bold action removed an important source of corruption and market distortion. A few months later an interbank foreign exchange market was established in Shanghai.
4) **Banking reform.** To facilitate the reform of China’s four major state-owned commercial banks, three state-owned “policy banks” were created in the course of 1994. Efforts to separate policy lending from commercial lending were derailed by the Asian financial crisis of 1997/8. In 1995 the first Central Bank Law and the first Commercial Bank Law were enacted.

The institutional and policy reforms of the early and mid-1990s made China’s reform process irreversible and integral in scope. The World Bank played a supporting role in shaping several key decisions and in training Chinese staff responsible for managing the new institutions. Meanwhile, technical assistance for policy development and institution building through World Bank-supported projects and studies continued. Most notable was the work on pension reform, urban housing reform, electricity market reform, environmental protection and labor market development. Following the breathtaking economic reforms of the early and mid-1990s, the next milestone in China’s economic transition and in becoming a key player in global markets was the accession to WTO in December 2001.
China's Growing Role in Africa

Raymond W. Copson

China began to pay attention to the region in the 1950s as the colonial era started to draw to a close. It was quick to establish diplomatic ties with the newly independent states, and trade and aid soon followed. China built stadiums around the continent, as well as party headquarters and government buildings. Premier Zhou Enlai's two-month swing through the region in 1963-1964 rang alarm bells in western capitals and Moscow.

In southern Africa, where white rule persisted, the liberation struggle turned violent in the 1970s. China was there with assistance for African liberation movements, including Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union in Rhodesia. China has a very close relationship with Mugabe today, and this is a source of frustration in the west, but it is important to note here that the relationship goes back a very long way. The most remarkable project of this period was the construction of the TanZam railroad, a 1,100 mile line from the Zambian copper belt to the port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, giving the struggling front line states an alternative to dependence on apartheid South Africa as a supplier and for port access. Thousands of Chinese workers came to the region from 1968 through 1976 to complete this project, which left a legacy of good feeling toward China throughout the region.

In the 1980s and into the 1990s, China seemed less engaged. Perhaps it lacked the resources needed to compete with the western aid agencies during the droughts, famines, and wars that occurred in this period. In the later 1980s, the Sino-Soviet rivalry came to an end with the demise of the Soviet Union, removing one key reason for Chinese involvement in Africa. But China's engagement intensified once again in the later 1990s as the country's remarkable rise as a global industrial power gathered force.

Here are just a few indicators:

In 2002-2004, China's trade with Africa grew by 142% to $24.4 billion, still well below the US trade of $46.4 billion, but catching up: U.S. trade growth over the same period was 87%. In 2004, Chinese exports to Africa exceeded U.S. exports, although U.S. imports continue to exceed
China's by a wide margin due to oil purchases. China's trade with the region as a whole, including North Africa, was up by well over a third in the first 11 months of 2005.

In October 2000, China launched the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, which includes 45 African countries. At meetings held every three years, the forum brings together foreign ministers and ministers of trade and industry, as well as representatives of Chinese companies and the African business community. The CACF is slated to convene in Beijing later this year. The forum, which has its own website, provides an umbrella for ongoing discussions and interactions between Africa and China on a wide range of issues.

China offers scholarships to more than 1,500 African university students each year, and plans have been reported to expand this number. China deploys hundreds of medical doctors to Africa, providing training to African health workers and earning the gratitude of thousands of African patients each year. China also offers training to African military personnel, and it ranks third, behind Western Europe and Russia, as an arms supplier in the region. Chinese arms and equipment tend to be simple and rugged, making them attractive in the African market. China has promised 400 peacekeeping troops to the United Nations force in southern Sudan, and hundreds are already serving in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia, something one never heard of in years past.

In the civilian sector, China is a growing supplier of manufactured goods, often sold in Chinese-owned shops, including motorcycles, cell phones, as well as cheap jeans, jewelry, and videos. China is also investing in Africa - setting up motorcycle and cell phone assembly plants in Nigeria, for example, and promising a rubber processing facility in Liberia. Chinese firms are opening hotels around the region as more and more countries receive approved destination status for Chinese group tours.

China is willing to take on infrastructure projects in Africa that western companies and donor agencies likely would not touch. A Chinese firm is building a 600 foot-high hydroelectric dam in Ethiopia, for example; another company is undertaking a much-needed project to rehabilitate Nigeria's railways, facilitated by a $2 billion loan from the Chinese government.
There are other surprising areas of involvement. China has just opened an FM transmitter in Nairobi which will deliver 19 hours of programming per day in Chinese, English and Kiswahili. China has put a sumptuous blue tile roof on the home of President Mugabe in Harare, the Zimbabwe capital, giving rise to much wry comment there. A Chinese firm is reconstructing and expanding the State House in Uganda, and a new China-built senate building is under construction in Gabon. The list goes on.

What lies behind China's African offensive?

Simple business is part of it. Chinese business people see opportunities in Africa that western companies will not exploit due to concerns over political risk, safety, and corruption. The Taiwan issue and the One China policy are another part of China's motivation. In October 2005, Senegal finally agreed to adhere to a One China policy, winning itself a visit by the Chinese foreign minister in January 2006, as well as $18.5 million in debt cancellation and funding for hospitals, roads and other infrastructure. Senegal's decision reduced the number of African countries recognizing Taipei to seven.

Africa's great natural resources are the major driver behind China's presence on the continent. China's industrialization requires the resources that Africa has to offer. Approximately 27% to 30% of China's oil imports come from Africa today, and this is expected to increase. Most oil imports are in the form of open market purchases, but China's oil companies are acquiring a direct stake in Africa's oil industry, most notably, or most notoriously, in Sudan, which is exporting about 150,000 barrels per day to China. There, the China National Petroleum Company (CNPC) has developed an oil field in the south, and constructed a 900-mile pipeline to the Red Sea, sweetening the deal for the Sudanese government by building an oil refinery in Khartoum, the capital. SINOPEC has launched an exploration program in oil-rich Angola, where CNPC already owns a share in a petroleum production block. In January, CNOOC (China National Offshore Oil Corporation), thwarted in its attempt to purchase Unocal, agreed to pay $2.3 billion for a major stake in a Nigerian oil field. China's interests extend beyond oil and include timber, coal, and minerals as well as tobacco from Zimbabwe to supply China's millions of smokers.
Is China's escalating role in Africa good for Africa?

Africa has been experiencing 5% GDP growth in recent years, and some predict that it will do a little better than this in 2006. The rise in global resource prices driven by China's rise is a major reason. To the extent that China is rehabilitating and expanding Africa's infrastructure, rehabilitating railways, or providing cell phone services where land lines had never reached or rarely worked, that's got to be a good thing. Educating university students, providing medical assistance and technical advisors, these are all positives.

But there is a downside. Competition from Chinese textiles and consumer goods is a problem for African manufacturers, particularly in South Africa, which has a well-developed industrial sector. The leading business daily in that country has taken to complaining of the "Red Tide," and the government has had to act to persuade China to agree to temporary voluntary constraints on textile exports. In addition, China's growing presence means competition for small traders who used to deal in used clothing, for example - in Cameroon, according to a student of mine, Chinese have taken over the baking and sale of beignets, the popular donut heretofore produced artistically by Cameroonians. Exactly how much job creation results from Chinese activity is in question. The management of Chinese enterprises is in the hands of Chinese, and the large Chinese infrastructure projects are being built by temporary workers from China.

What most worries analysts is that the availability of China as a partner is depriving western donor countries and the international financial institutions of the leverage they had been using to press African elites for improvements in governance, greater democracy, respect for human rights, and enhanced transparency. The prime example of this is in Zimbabwe, where the United States and other western countries have been seeking to isolate the regime because of its anti-democratic, economically disastrous policies. China has stepped forward to provide Mugabe with arms, including jet trainers, and has launched a range of business deals probably paid for by exports of resources and tobacco, although we don't know the details. In July 2005, Mugabe was feted in Beijing as a "much respected friend of the Chinese people," and made an honorary professor at China's foreign affairs university. This warm welcome was extended at a time when
Mugabe's government was bulldozing urban slums, whose residents were regarded as sympathetic to his political opposition, leaving an estimated 700,000 homeless.

Another case is Sudan, where China has reportedly built three weapons factories at a time when government-backed militias are carrying out what the U.S. Government has called a genocide in the Darfur region. China is providing Sudan with protection from sanctions at the U.N. Security Council. Angola, regarded as one of the world's most corrupt countries, has been given a $2 billion line of credit by China enabling the regime to pay much less attention than would otherwise be the case to the concerns of the IMF and western campaigners about accountability in the use of oil revenues.

**Is China's involvement in Africa good for China?**

China experts report that China is very wisely looking to the long term in Africa, planning for decades or even a century down the road, when they expect there will be large numbers of Chinese people living in Africa managing a substantial and mutually beneficial flow of goods and services in both directions. Others believe that China has made a number of bad investments in Africa, in oil fields that will not yield profits even at high prices; and in billions of dollars of loans that may not be repaid. Africa's many problems, such as endemic corruption, ethnic and religious conflicts, and crime will inevitably force the Chinese to scale back at some point, in this view.

**What should the United States do about China's growing involvement in Africa?**

This is a difficult challenge, because it seems that at least China's engagement with Africa is being very effectively managed and presented. China has mastered the package deal: a loan from the government, coupled with an infrastructure project by a state-owned or state-affiliated company, encouragement of trade and investment by Chinese entrepreneurs, and in the oil rich countries, perhaps purchase of a production block by a Chinese oil company. This is called tied aid and there are rules against it among the western donor countries, where it is thought as inefficient and wasteful, and likely to lead to white-elephant projects.
Chinese involvement is being managed in a way that is very flattering to African egos, and this is hard for us to match. Every year, the very first trip taken by the Chinese foreign minister is a swing through Africa. Meanwhile, African leaders are courted through high level visits to China. In mid-February the president of Togo visited Beijing with an entourage and was honored by a meeting with President Hu Jintao. There is a steady parade of African leaders through Beijing throughout the year. This is hard for us to match not only because the President's time is limited, but also because China welcomes leaders who would not be welcome in Washington, the President of Togo is a case in point. He is the son of the previous strongman and came to power in a violent April 2005 election that the State Department criticized.

In U.S. statements on Africa policy, we tend to emphasize what we want from Africa: more democracy, more governance reforms, more transparency, and cooperation in the war on terrorism. We demand that even friendly African countries, such as Kenya, sign unpopular pledges not to surrender U.S. citizens to the International Criminal Court, and if they refuse they risk a cutoff in military assistance. Such pressures are especially problematic at a time when allegations of human rights violations and anti-democratic practices against the United States itself are much in the news.

The white paper on Africa policy that China issued on January 12, 2006 takes a quite different approach. The paper made clear that China wants its African partners to adhere to a One China policy, but apart from that it simply stated that there should be more cooperation in a variety of fields from health care to the military; more exchanges of all types: high level, legislative; teacher and student exchanges; more trade, more investment; all couched in phrases of considerable humbleness, friendship, and mutual respect. The paper said that China and Africa should learn from each other. I don't recall hearing a U.S. diplomat say that. So there is a tone there that is very appealing to African ears. China constantly affirms that it cooperates with Africa without conditions, whereas our cooperation is replete with conditions. I'm not suggesting that the United States pull back from its advocacy of democracy, reform, and good governance in Africa. These have been important components of our policy for a long time and they have contributed to positive changes.
But if we don't give up on conditionality, what can we do?

Some say US businesses ought to become more competitive in Africa in order to meet the Chinese challenge. I think prospects are limited here because we don't compete with China in the inexpensive manufactured goods the African market demands. The caution of U.S. businesses with respect to Africa is deeply rooted and not likely to change, and in any event, there are many opportunities for investment elsewhere. Some say we ought to explore opportunities for cooperating with China in Africa. Again, I think the prospects are limited here. China has a successful formula with its unconditional involvement and seems unlikely to change it. But I do think that we could do more to strengthen our soft power in Africa even as China rises: to make it clearer to everyone in the region that the United States is also a friend of Africa, not just a critic; that we too want to cooperate, and to support Africa's long-term development.

This would be worth doing because China's engagement in Africa does pose a challenge to U.S. interests. We see authoritarian rulers around the continent from Mugabe in Zimbabwe to President Omar Bashir in Sudan who pay little attention to what we have to say with respect to democracy and human rights, partly because of the availability of China as an alternative partner. U.S. policy makers will tell you that our policy is based on four anchor states: Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Africa, which are to be pillars of regional stability. Yet China is active in all of these, particularly Ethiopia and Nigeria. Indeed, Nigeria has entered into a formal "strategic partnership" with China, and China Aerospace plans to launch a communications satellite for Nigeria in 2007. Thus, it seems reasonable to ask whether these countries will see any particular reason to cooperate with the United States in realizing its policy objectives in the years ahead. It is also interesting that China is active in the countries slated to be participants in the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI), a major Administration effort. China's foreign minister visited Mali in January, and there seems to be a flirtation with Chad, which still recognizes Taiwan, but is newly oil rich. And of course, China's growing role can mean lost business opportunities for Americans and strong competition in the resource sector.

I have some suggestions on ways to reinforce our soft power in Africa
vis a vis China, ways to make it clear that we too are friends of Africa and the African people without enhancing the influence of authoritarian rulers and human rights violators.

In education. Let's get back in the business of supporting higher education in Africa as we did in the post-colonial era. We could help develop and rehabilitate African universities through teacher exchange, textbook, and construction programs. We could compete with China in scholarship programs. There is no guarantee that a university student educated here will have a good experience or become a friend of the United States. But overall it seems likely that educating members of the next generation of African leaders in the United States is a good way to build understanding. We could expand legislative exchanges, bringing members of parliaments in democratizing countries to the United States to observe our state and national legislatures at work, and doing more to support research services and parliamentary libraries in Africa.

In agriculture. What better way to win friends at the grass roots in Africa than by fulfilling our promise to eliminate the trade barriers that discriminate against African growers of cotton and sugar? Our position now is that we will end these programs when Europe does. Why tie ourselves to what Europe may finally do or not do? And for that matter, as former USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios advocates, why not begin to strengthen African agriculture by providing a substantial portion of our food aid in the form of money rather than commodities that compete with African products? We could also support agricultural extension services in Africa as we once did, as well as agriculture programs at African universities.

The Infrastructure. The United States largely withdrew from this area because of concerns over expense and the inability of African countries to maintain completed projects. Also, there was a sense that infrastructure tended to benefit those who are better off rather than the poorest of the poor. We need to reconsider this approach and look at possible projects that would provide clear benefits to the poor, such as road rehabilitation or well-drilling.

These are just a few suggestions for reaffirming our friendship with Africa and the African people, and more could be given. Suffice it to say here that we need to intensify our engagement with Africa if we are to win back some of the influence unnecessarily lost to China.
Chinese Energy Strategy in Latin America*

Chietigi Bajpaee

Latin America is fast emerging as the major stage of competition for oil and gas resources among the global powers. The region, which has traditionally come under the U.S. “sphere of influence,” caught the attention of China following the significant growth potential of its energy resources. Latin America is estimated to hold 13.5 percent of the world’s proven oil reserves but accounts for only 6 percent of total output. Although China has tapped energy resources in Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador and Peru, and has begun to tap Argentina and Bolivia, there still exists significant room for expansion, especially given that China still depends on the Middle East for 60 percent of its oil imports and wishes to further diversify.

China’s domestic energy needs and regional developments in the Asia Pacific region are likely to fuel Beijing’s desire to access Latin American energy resources. China, which has been a net oil importer since 1993, is the world's number two oil consumer after the U.S., importing one third of its crude oil consumption. In the presence of sporadic power shortages, growing car ownership, cross-country air travel, and the importance of energy to maintain China’s burgeoning growth rates, pressure is mounting on China to access energy resources on the world stage. Furthermore, China’s limited progress in accessing local energy resources due to poor relations with neighboring states (witness the Sino-Japanese dispute over the energy-rich East China Sea, the disputed status of the Spratly and Paracel islands and growing political instabilities in Central Asia) have forced China to search for energy further afield. However, China’s growing presence on the international energy stage could ultimately bring it into confrontation with the world's largest energy consumer, the U.S. Nowhere is the Sino-U.S. energy competition more evident than in the United States’ backyard.

The competition for energy resources in Latin America is unlikely to be confined to the economic sphere as seen by developments in other regions where China is attempting to access energy resources. For example, China’s military cooperation with Myanmar, Sudan and the Central Asian

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Republics, cannot be separated from its attempts to access energy resources in these states. While not a zero-sum game, growing inter-linkages and interdependence between China and Latin America is likely to come at the cost of the United States’ relations with its neighbors, which will only undermine U.S. ability to access the region’s energy resources. This will force the U.S. to rely on energy resources from more remote and less stable regions, such as West Africa, the Caspian and the Middle East.

As the world’s number five crude exporter, with the largest proven oil reserves in the Western hemisphere, Venezuela is emerging as a major prize in the competition for energy resources in Latin America. While Venezuela sells 60 percent of its crude oil exports to the U.S. and is the United States’ fourth largest oil supplier, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is attempting to reduce his country’s dependence on the U.S. market. President Chavez has stated that "We have been producing and exporting oil for more than 100 years but they have been years of dependence on the United States. Now we are free and we make our resources available to the great country of China." Easier said than done, as China’s refineries will have to be refitted to process Venezuela’s heavy crude oil. Furthermore, transporting energy resources from Venezuela and Argentina is particularly difficult given that both states are on South America’s Atlantic coast although there have been discussions to overcome this by constructing a pipeline from the Atlantic to the Pacific through Panama.

Nevertheless, China has made significant inroads in accessing Venezuela’s energy resources. During Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's visit to Beijing in December and Chinese Vice President Zeng Qinghong's visit to Venezuela in January 2005, China committed to develop Venezuela’s energy infrastructure by investing $350 million in 15 oil fields, $60 million in a gas project as well as upgrading the country’s railway and refinery infrastructure. In exchange, China will get 100,000 barrels of oil a day, 3 million tones of fuel oil a year and 1.8 million tones of Orimulsion, an alternative boiler fuel from Venezuela. China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has also been given significant oil and gas development opportunities in Venezuela including the fields at Zumano in eastern Venezuela, which has an estimated 400 million barrels of oil.

Apart from Venezuela, China has made significant progress in tapping the energy resources of numerous other Latin American states. While attending the annual meeting of the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation
At the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference in Chile in November 2004, Chinese President Hu Jintao announced a $10 billion energy deal with Brazil for investments in energy and transport infrastructure over two years. This supplements plans for a $1.3 billion deal between China’s Sinopec (China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation) and Brazil’s Petrobras for a 2,000 kilometer natural gas pipeline. China is also acquiring oil assets in Ecuador as well as investing $5 billion in offshore petroleum projects in Argentina over the next five years. During Chinese Vice President Zeng Qinghong's visit to Latin America in January, he also signed an oil exploration agreement with Peru.

Latin America’s increasingly symbiotic relationship with China is not limited to energy. Progress in trade, investment, and political and military cooperation reinforce cooperation in the energy sphere. China has increasingly purchased raw materials from Latin America to meet its consumption and growth needs in exchange for Chinese investment in Latin America’s infrastructure. While the United States has traditionally looked to Latin America as its source of numerous raw materials and a market for its finished products, China is fast replacing the United States in these roles. China buys vast quantities of iron ore, bauxite, soybeans, timber, zinc and manganese from Brazil while looking to Bolivia for tin and Chile for copper. In 2004, China displaced the U.S. as the leading market for Chilean exports while becoming Brazil's second-largest trading partner in 2003. China is the world’s largest consumer of copper, with Chile accounting for more than 40 percent of its copper imports.

During Chinese President Hu Jintao’s visit to Latin America in November 2004, he also secured “market economy” status from Brazil, Argentina and Chile in exchange for pledging to invest $100 billion in Latin America over the next decade as well as reducing restrictions on the access of Latin American products to the Chinese market. In January, Chilean and Chinese trade officials also began discussions on a free trade agreement in Beijing, while Brazil is also pushing for the creation of a free trade area with China. Chinese investment into Argentina has been especially welcome as it comes in the wake of Argentina's devastating economic crisis three years ago.

These growing linkages have also resulted in a strengthening of political relations. It is no secret that a growing number of Latin American states with left-leaning regimes hold hostile views of the U.S. Hugo Chavez’s Venezuela and Fidel Castro’s Cuba have been open in condemning
U.S. foreign policy. Venezuela has raised taxes on foreign oil and gas companies operating in Venezuela, such as Exxon/Mobil. Argentinean President Néstor Kirchner called for a boycott of the Royal Dutch/Shell Group's Argentine affiliate to protest a gasoline price increase, which forced Shell to back away from its price increases. Even Mexico appears to be distancing itself from the U.S., with Mexico City's popular left-wing mayor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, gaining popularity ahead of Mexico's July 2006 presidential election. Many Latin American states also opposed Washington’s candidate for the head of the Organization of American States and elected José Miguel Insulza, a leftist from Chile.

Bolivia’s Congress recently approved a new energy law that increases taxes on foreign companies accessing its oil and gas reserves while street protesters have called for a nationalization of Bolivia’s hydrocarbon reserves, which culminated in the resignation of U.S.-backed pro-free market President Carlos Mesa. Elections will be held within the next six months and Evo Morales -- an anti-US leader of the Movement Towards Socialism party -- has emerged as a strong contender for the presidency.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has also tried to distance himself from U.S. influence to emerge as a leader of the developing World, as seen with the G33 bloc at the World Trade Organization, and Brazil’s bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. President da Silva has also backtracked on the U.S.-backed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) while favoring a “strategic alliance” with China, India and other developing countries in order to enhance south-south cooperation. Finally, Peru and China also have strong relations with diplomatic ties going back 150 years and Peru having the largest Chinese immigrant population in South America.

China's growing energy interests in the Americas have been accompanied by a growing involvement in the region's security. In October, in its first military deployment to Latin America, China sent a UN peacekeeping contingent to Haiti comprising 140 Chinese policemen with plans to deploy an additional 125 personnel. Ironically, Haiti is one of only 25 states that recognize Taiwan rather than China. Recently, the issue of extending the mandate of the 6,000-strong UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which is due to expire in June, has come under pressure from Sino-Taiwanese frictions. While UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and the interim government of Haiti have asked that the mandate be
extended by one year in order to oversee the municipal, legislative and Presidential elections to be held later this year, China is pushing for only a six month extension due to a scheduled visit by interim Haitian President Alexendre Boniface to Taiwan in July. While having to accept the humiliation of aiding a state that engages in relations with Taiwan’s “secessionist” forces, China has garnered the goodwill of Latin American states, which will come in handy when negotiating energy and other deals.

The U.S. is looking on with caution as China encroaches upon a region that has traditionally been a major supplier of energy resources. Venezuela and Canada together provide the U.S. with a third of its energy imports. For every barrel of oil that China purchases from Latin America there is potentially one less barrel available for the U.S. Furthermore, as the American states reduce their reliance on the U.S. oil market, they will have greater political leverage over the U.S. on contentious issues such as Canadian trade disputes with the U.S. over lumber and beef, and tensions over human rights abuses in Venezuela.

Finally, the competition for energy resources in Latin America is not limited to the U.S. and China. In October 2004, several oil companies including China’s PetroChina and India’s ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas Corporation) were looking into acquiring oil assets valued at $1.5 billion in Ecuador. Japan and South Korea are also stepping up efforts to secure raw materials in Latin America. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited Brazil in September 2004 and South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun also made trips to Argentina, Brazil and Chile in 2004.

Friction between China and the U.S. has so far focused on the question of China’s undervalued exchange rate, its human rights record, relations with “rogue” states and the issue of Taiwan. However, the competition over energy resources is now becoming an additional area of contention. While China and the U.S. have launched the U.S.-China Energy Policy Dialogue, both states are also engaged in a competition for energy resources in Russia, the Caspian, the Middle East, Africa and the Americas. This competition could foresee ably combine with other areas of friction. For example, if the U.S. were to side with Japan on its territorial dispute in the potentially oil and gas rich East China Sea or support India over China in meeting its growing energy needs, strategic blocs or alliances could form in the international energy arena. Latin America is likely to emerge as a major stage of this energy competition or confrontation.
Between Control and Contention: China’s New Internet Politics*

Yang Guobin

The current talk of the town about the internet in China concerns the growing sophistication and ubiquity of state control. Over a period of ten years, an entire apparatus of internet control has emerged in China. This apparatus combines traditional forms of regulation and repression with new techniques of surveillance, control, and governance, all in order to reign in the internet Trojan horse run amuck. Less analyzed is another equally significant trend. During the same period, popular contention on the internet has not decreased in intensity or frequency, but has increased. Radical forms of communication such as petitions and protests routinely take place on or via the internet. Offline protest activities in villages and cities increasingly spill over onto the web. Many influential cases of internet activism have occurred in recent years with tangible political impact.

The paradoxical coexistence of internet control and activism is a dominant feature of internet politics in China. Understanding this paradox holds the key to the Chinese internet. To the extent that the politics of the internet encapsulates broader political trends, analyzing this phenomenon will shed light on the changing character of contemporary Chinese politics. By analyzing the nature, forms, and causes of internet activism, I will suggest that the internet has transformed Chinese politics even as it itself undergoes transformation. Chinese politics is becoming informational politics, where information can be a critical source of power for both the governing and the governed. In this kind of politics, the internet becomes a central means, with valuable stakes, and an arena of tension between a citizenry in pursuit of free and open access and a state apparatus seeking to maintain control. As a result, while the state has instituted new techniques of control, a significant segment of Chinese citizenry has entered a new era in its persistent quest for a more open and democratic society.

* The Editor wishes to thank Peggy Christoff for making the arrangements for the journal to acquire this article.
The Landscape of Internet Activism

Chinese internet activism covers a spectrum of activities ranging from the less to the more contentious. Among the less contentious activities are the social and political communications and discussions that take place online daily. These discussions touch on all imaginable issues. There are political rumors and jokes as well as serious intellectual analyses of social issues. One example is the “super girl” phenomenon that took place in September 2005, when a 21-year-old woman from Sichuan province won a national “super girl” contest after singing her way through thousands of contenders, a Chinese version of the “American Idol.” Following the contest, internet bulletin boards were filled with responses. Some discussed the criteria of female beauty; others pontificated about the development of popular music; still others saw in the contest an unprecedented grassroots experiment in democratic voting because 3.5 million viewers “elected” the winner by sending in instant messages on cellular phones.

Contentious activities include web campaigns, petitions, and outright protests. Typically, they appear in reaction to outrageous incidents of social injustice. In recent years, protests are particularly common concerning corrupt officials or business entrepreneurs, physical harm to vulnerable individuals, and disenfranchised social groups such as peasants, laid-off workers, and migrants. Earlier examples included the protests about the murder in 2000 of Qiu Qingfeng, a female student in Beijing University. More recent cases include the protests surrounding the beating to death of Sun Zhigang in 2003 in a detention center in Guangzhou and the killing of a peasant by a BMW owner in 2004. Besides protests involving incidents of social injustice, nationalistic protests are an important part of the picture. “The popular bulletin board system (BBS) “Strengthening the Nation Forum” was the product of protests against the NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999. Some of the anti-Japanese protests in the spring of 2005 were organized by internet activists such as those associated with the website, “Chinese Patriotic Alliance.”

Although some internet protests are organized, most are spontaneous and individualized action done by people sitting in front of their personal computers. When an internet protest arises, we may witness the following: large volumes of contentious messages posted in the numerous online bulletin boards; rapid diffusion of protests through the cross-posting of messages; and discussions about the possibilities of taking offline action.
Internet protests typically spread quickly, but they are rarely completely confined to the internet. Instead, they are linked in various ways with the offline world through online-offline interactions and the interface with the mass media.

What accounts for this sustained internet activism under conditions of growing control? Before addressing this question, it is necessary to examine the apparatus of control.

**The Apparatus of Control**

The Chinese control of the internet has several notable features. First, the internet regulatory regime has evolved over time. The historical trend shows an increase in the types, scope, and sophistication of control. For example, BBS forums are now carefully monitored but were not a major locus of control in earlier years of the internet. Over the years, more and more regulations have appeared concerning the use of the internet and the provision of internet services. Second, the agents of internet control appear to be dealing with a hierarchy of issues, monitoring some issues more closely than others. For example, among China’s internet users, it is well known that topics related to Falun Gong and the 1989 student movement are off limits whereas many other topics are tolerated most of the time.

Third, the techniques of control include both negative and positive ones. Negative techniques of control have evolved along three lines. One is social and political control. Examples include arresting a cyber-dissident or assigning bulletin board managers to censor posts. Another is technological control. Filtering key words and blocking websites are examples of this kind. The third is psychological control. The first two kinds of control, when widely known to internet users, have the effect of creating an atmosphere of constraint. By accustoming citizens to the idea that they are always being watched, the agents of control may induce self-disciplined and conformist behavior. All contentious internet activities in China take place in this environment of control. That these activities are taking place at all indicates both the limits of control at the current stage of internet development and the resistance and creativity of social actors.

To supplement negative techniques of control, the Chinese state has also begun to take positive approaches to control, positive in the sense that users are guided to do things in line with state agendas. For instance, as a
means of channeling internet users to follow official sources of news and other information, all the major newspapers have gone online in what is known as an official project to “occupy” the new frontier. Apparently in order to compete with the colorful attractions of commercial portal sites, even the highest-level official online news organs such as People’s Daily Online and Xinhuanet are not beneath sexing up their headline news page with pictures of barely-clad female models. These websites also support large online communities with lively online forums. The online forums resemble most other non-official forums, but differ in one notable way. In addition to the routine discussions that go on in the forums, they try to guide the discussions by regularly publicizing designated discussion topics, much as the print version of People’s Daily is intended to publicize state policies and guide public opinions.

The combined use of negative and positive techniques of control has powerful constraining effects on the free and open use of the internet. The first ten-year period of the internet in China will probably go down in history as a period of simultaneous expansion of the internet and contraction of internet freedom. Yet it is surprising that even as the Chinese state is shaping up control, internet activism has still persisted. To understand this paradox, we must seek answers both inside and outside the domain of internet activism. Below I will focus on three conditions, the rise of a contentious Chinese society, the Chinese internet culture, and the network structure of the Chinese internet.

A Contentious Society, Wired

Since early 2005, Chinese leaders and mass media have been promoting the notion of building “a harmonious society.” Although democracy, the rule of law, equality, and justice are part of the package, what this prescription does not say is more revealing than what it does. It is only because of the alarming ascendance of social conflicts in recent years that a project to build social harmony has taken on urgency. The call to build a harmonious society reflects the reality of a contentious society.

Western scholars and mass media have documented numerous instances of popular contention in contemporary China. For example, citing Chinese official sources, Professor Pei Minxin reports rising numbers of collective protests of significant size, from 8,700 in 1993 to 11,000 in 1995; 15,000 in 1997 to 32,000 in 1999. Sociologist Ching Kwan Lee shows the
rising numbers of strikes, from 480 in 1992 to 1,870 in 1995 and 1,740 in the first nine months of 1996. In their work on peasants, Thomas Bernstein and Lü Xiaobo piece together a picture of a contentious rural China with growing numbers of violent confrontations in the 1990s. As recently as in August 2005, the New York Times reported 74,000 mass protests in 2004, an increase from 58,000 the year before, and 10,000 a decade ago. In 2005, the number of mass protests rose to 87,000.

Besides more violent and confrontational forms of protests, there have appeared other forms of contentious activities. Especially in urban China, there is consumer activism, environmental activism, HIV/AIDS activism, women’s activism, and so forth. These newer forms of urban activism tend to have more of an organized base than the more violent forms of protests. Urban environmental activism, for example, is managed by environmental NGOs, whereas various stripes of women’s organizations form the basis for women’s activism.

Against this background, internet protests appear to be only part of a larger picture of popular contention in China, but it is an integral part. Internet activism is not cut off from protests offline. Sometimes the internet is used deliberately to organize and publicize offline protests. More often, the offline protest activities almost inevitably spill over onto the internet, thus virtually extending the scope and reach of traditional forms of protest.

Moreover, the various voluntary associations in urban China are making increasing use of the internet to organize activities. A survey of 129 urban grassroots organizations I conducted in 2003 showed that 106 (82%) organizations were connected to the internet and 69 (65%) had websites as of December 2003. This is similar to the level of internet uptake by voluntary associations in other developing countries. Among the various network applications, not surprisingly, email is the most frequently used by Chinese civic associations, followed by search engines and websites. What is surprising is that 25% of the surveyed organizations report frequent use of electronic newsletters; over 14% indicate frequent use of discussion forums, an activity that has been slow to take off in voluntary organizations in developed nations such as the United States and Great Britain.

We see therefore a picture of a contentious society that is wired. Of course, only less than 10% of the Chinese population has access to the internet and the challenges of this digital divide must not be underestimated.
But the wired population plays a strategic role. Individually or through organizations, this population segment not only acts up online, but also provides linkages between the online and offline realms. These linkages make it hard for the state apparatus to prevent offline protests from going online or vice versa. The interactions between online and offline spaces constitute part of the broader internet culture in China. What is often missing in popular reports on the Chinese internet is a sense of this broader internet culture. Since internet activism happens as part of this broader culture, one cannot fully understand the power and limits of the internet without contextualizing it into the landscape.

An Expressive Internet Culture

One of the hallmarks of social change in reform-era China is that the party-state gradually withdraws from the invasion of citizens’ private time that characterized the Maoist era. A flourishing culture industry begins to offer multiple avenues for leisure, entertainment, and public communication. In an important sense, the wide-spread cultural discussions facilitated by a growing publishing and television industry in the 1980s made the cognitive preparation for the rise of the pro-democracy movement in 1989. One might argue that after decades of totalitarian control, an expressive public culture finally began to form in the 1980s, only to be cut short by the repression of the student movement.

To the extent that an expressive public culture emerged in the 1980s, it was largely elitist in nature. A small minority of intellectuals controlled the channels of expression. From the very beginning the internet promised opportunities to significantly larger numbers of ordinary people to express themselves publicly. This was reflected in the great enthusiasm with which people embraced it. Beginning in 1997, when commercial internet service providers (ISP) and internet content providers (ICP) began to operate, numerous personal websites and BBS forums appeared in free or loaned web spaces. Users often compared BBS forums to virtual wall posters, public squares, tea houses, and even coffee shops. They considered the internet as a new world of self-expression.

Expressive behavior on the internet encompasses all imaginable genres, styles, formats, and contents, from the political to the apolitical, from the serious to the playful. Besides social and political discussions, there are confessional diaries, poems, novels, stories, essays, academic treatises, and
so forth. On the “serious” side are many intellectual websites devoted to academic discussion and publishing, but even these usually have accompanying BBS forums for more sociable communication. On the less serious side are the numerous forums for entertainment such as sports, travel, computer games, movie stars, and jokes. In between there are websites having practical interest, such as health, mothering, and gardening. In all of these, the main activities are endless talk and back-talk.

One might wonder why people would spend so much time on such seemingly unproductive activities as chatting, debating, and socializing on the internet. Some worry that life on the screen may weaken social relationships and traditional communities. Others argue that time spent on the internet may supplement offline social relationships or build new ones. It is hard to deny that, as many social theorists have argued, the need for a sense of social belonging and self-affirmation is growing in tandem with the speed of social transformation in the contemporary world. Personal expression and social interactions on the Chinese internet, as in many other societies, reflect this need for inclusion and self-affirmation. As the owner of a personal website writes, “My purpose in designing this personal webpage is as much to show you my personal travels as to give myself an opportunity to express my thoughts and feelings.” Another puts it in even stronger terms by considering expression on the internet as her condition of existence. She declares “I write therefore I am.” The popularity of blogs, a kind of online diary, further attests to the strong need for self-expression. Any attempt to understand the politics of the internet in China must include the culture of self-expression behind it, for it is this expressive culture that drives the more publicized side of the Chinese internet politics. There would be no internet politics to speak of without the active participation in internet expression of numerous individual users. These expressive and non-contentious activities serve to build the social basis for more contentious activities.

The Network Structure of the Chinese Internet

Besides offering spaces for an expressive culture, the network structure of the Chinese internet is conducive to internet activism. It is important to recognize that the internet is not just another mass medium, but as Manuel Castells states, it is a galaxy of networks. Regulating internet activism entails the regulation of the internet galaxy. This does not mean the internet is not susceptible to control. Indeed, insofar as the internet galaxy encompasses the entire society, complete control of the internet likely
requires a matching system of totalitarian social control. But as theorists of networked social movements remind us, networks can reduce the chances of political repression because while some nodes may be destroyed, others may survive.\textsuperscript{10} Control is most effective when it penetrates the entire network. Resistance, however, can emerge at any entry point of the network. Moreover, as political scientists Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye suggest, by vastly increasing the channels of contact between societies, the information revolution further contributes to complex interdependencies in international relations.\textsuperscript{11} This implies that the transnational network structure of the internet may also contribute to complex interdependencies in Chinese domestic politics, adding to the difficulty of state control.

The key to an effective network is linkages. To observers of Chinese politics, this should not be an entirely new revelation. From the Red Guard Movement to the student movement in 1989, linking up (\textit{chuanlian}) was an effective tactic of trans-local mobilization and much feared by the state. The Chinese internet is linked up both internally and externally. Internally, a website can connect to another by setting up a hot link. Many Chinese websites are mutually linked in this way. For example, in a survey of websites of 40 environmental NGOs conducted in March 2004, I found that most environmental NGOs were closely linked to peer organizations and fairly closely linked to international organizations, forming a loose network structure. On average, the website of each organization surveyed contained links to about eight peer organizations and two international organizations.

Many BBS forums are linked in this way as well, but they are also connected through the common practice of cross-posting messages. Often, a particularly insightful or well-written message will be cross-posted in many different bulletin boards. In addition, internet users can seek out linkages among different websites through use of search engines. Thus a key word search can show the websites on related themes. One of the trends in internet use in China is that search engines have consistently ranked among the most frequently used network services. The two most recent internet reports released by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) found that about 65\% of internet users chose search engines as their most often used service, next only to email and news services. When it comes to finding new websites, search engines are the most important channel, followed by website links and recommendations from friends.
The internet also has numerous external linkages. There are two trends here, first the integration of the internet into social life, and then the convergence of the internet with other media. According to a survey report released in July 2005 by CNNIC, regular internet users in China spend about 14 hours online weekly, almost equivalent to two full work days. The same report also showed that about 60% of internet users say that the internet is important or very important in their daily life and more than 75% say it is important or very important for work purposes. This indicates that people rely increasingly on the internet in all aspects of life.

The convergence of the internet with other media takes two forms. On the one hand, conventional mass media in China have gone online. A study published in 2002 found 87 online editions of print newspapers. On the other hand, large portal sites such as Sina.com, Netease.com, and Sohu.com are performing the functions of conventional media, such as providing news and social analysis. Admittedly, they are not authorized to produce their own news, but they can do so through partnerships with official media. Moreover, by featuring the “most read” postings, they publish an endless slew of information that appears in their BBS forums. These postings often have news value such as exposing a local corrupt official.

Despite systematic blocking practices by China’s internet control agencies, the Chinese internet is also linked with websites and mass media outside of China. The internet is not disassociated from territory, but is in many ways a cross boundary medium, including national boundaries. International organizations and foreign media regularly monitor internet activities in China. Their reports are sometimes posted back to Chinese websites by interested users, in English or Chinese translation. For instance, Jim Yardley’s report on the dam-building project on Nu River published in The New York Times on March 10, 2004 was posted on the same day in Tianyaclub.com, one of the largest online communities in China with a million-strong registered membership.

Furthermore, thanks to the early history of the internet, the most popular Chinese-language websites outside China are well-known to domestic users. Long before the internet entered China, Chinese students and scholars abroad had already begun to publish online newsletters and internet magazines. Two of the most influential ones are China News Digest and New Threads. Launched in 1989, China News Digest started as an English-language newsletter and then set up a Chinese-language weekly
magazine. *New Threads* was launched in 1994 and carries literary works as well as news and other non-literary writings, all in Chinese. Dissatisfied with the scarcity of information in the Chinese cyberspace and curious about the outside world, early internet users in China often visited these Chinese-language overseas websites. There they found a source of inspiration as well as information. The founder of a popular cultural website, *Golden Book Cottage* (*huangjin shuwu*), recalled that he had launched the website in 1998 after visiting *New Threads* and realizing that a similar website would be popular in China, too.

The connections between overseas and domestic Chinese-language websites take many forms. Some news items circulate in both types of websites; overseas websites attract both readers and authors from inside China, although not surprisingly, the websites that are most contentious can only be accessed from China through proxy servers or anti-blocking software. One of the most remarkable developments is the symbolic power that *New Threads* and its California-based founder Fang Zhouzi have developed in the domestic Chinese public sphere. Among other things, Fang uses *New Threads* to publish essays and reports about plagiarism and other kinds of corrupt and unethical practices found within Chinese academic and cultural circles. Over the years, these online publications have gained so much influence that in 2004 a Chinese local newspaper selected Fang as one of 50 most influential public intellectuals.

The internal and external links of the internet mean that critical information may be leaked to the internet at any time through one or another of the numerous network nodes. At any given time of the day, there are people using the web, mostly for fun. As the occasion arises, however, these netizens, or *wangmin* in Chinese, can quickly go into action, filling the web with queries, information exchanges, debates, and protest. The more outrageous the incident, the more likely it is to arouse the virtual crowd, always lurking and always on the alert. Though not always actualized, the potential for contention is always there and hard to predict. Part of the power of the internet network is that it harbors this latent political potential.

**The Dynamics and Power of Internet Protests**

Having examined the nature of the Chinese internet network and its social and cultural environment, I will now illustrate the dynamics of internet activism with a few examples. The most influential cases of Chinese
internet activism have largely followed three paths of diffusion. In the first trajectory, protests start on the internet and then move between online and offline realms. The second is “internet to media,” where critical information first enters the internet and then spreads to the mass media. The third is “media to internet,” by which a mass media agency first breaks the news which then attracts wider attention by entering the internet network. The key dynamics are the interactions between online and offline activities and the interfacing of the internet and the mass media.

The following case illustrates the “media to internet” pattern of diffusion. It concerns a fatal disaster in a tin mine in Nandan, Guangxi. The accident occurred on July 17, 2001 and killed 81 miners. The local government and the mine authorities covered it up for about half a month. News about the accident first hit internet bulletin boards around July 27, but was phrased in vague and uncertain terms such as “it was rumored.”

A journalist from a People’s Daily branch station in Guangxi went to Nandan on July 30 to investigate the disaster. Based on the investigation, the People’s Daily local team dispatched an emergency report back to its headquarters in Beijing. At 3pm on July 31, People’s Daily Online published a short news release titled, “Mysteries Surrounding an Accident in the Mining Area of Nandan, Guangxi.” This was the first piece of verified news about the disaster and was widely carried in various websites. The BBS “Strengthening the Nation Forum” reportedly witnessed a sharp increase in the number of posts about the mine disaster, daily posts numbered in the tens of thousands. On August 2, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, after reading the news release of People’s Daily Online, ordered a thorough investigation of the case. According to People’s Daily’s head journalist in Guangxi, the strategy in covering the case was to “combine print with internet media and give priority to the internet.” Thus throughout the two-month investigation, they published more than 20 articles in the print editions of People’s Daily and over 150 articles in People’s Daily Online.

The so-called “Niu Niu Incident” illustrates the “internet-to-media” pattern of diffusion. Niu Niu is the daughter of a deputy party secretary of the city of Shenzhen and the producer and protagonist in an autobiographical film about her life as a student abroad. In 2004, when the film premiered in Shenzhen, the educational and cultural departments of the Shenzhen municipal government requested schools in the city to encourage their students to attend the film screenings at their own cost because of the film’s
alleged educational value. Then an anonymous letter, posted in two of China’s largest online communities, Tianyaclub.com and cat898.com, revealed that Niu Niu was the daughter of a party secretary in charge of those government departments that had called on students to attend the movie. This information provoked intense responses in BBS forums, popular websites, and the traditional mass media. A report published on the website of People’s Daily Online met with 428 reader responses in just two days. Investigative reports appeared on CCTV, in *Southern Metropolitan Daily News*, *China Youth Daily*, and other national and regional newspapers. Under public pressure, the deputy party secretary of Shenzhen agreed to an interview with *China Youth Daily* on November 6, 2004 and made public apologies for using his personal influence to promote his daughter’s film.

Two last examples illustrate the interactions between online and offline protest activities. One of the earliest cases involved protests surrounding the murder of a Beijing University student in May 2000. When the university authorities tried to cover up the news, they found their plan thwarted by messages posted to the university’s BBS. These postings triggered a week-long protest on the internet as well as demonstrations on the university campus. A major factor in the wide diffusion of the online protest was the variety of connections and interactions. Connections among various bulletin boards, overseas as well as domestic, helped to spread the news widely. Interactions between online actors and those offline helped to organize offline protest activities and then to broadcast them *live* back to the internet, thus providing new material and discourse to sustain the online protest. Some online messages were printed and posted on the walls in some campus areas, while campus demonstrations were reported online.

These online-offline interactions were repeated on a larger scale in the anti-Japanese protests of April and May 2005. During this period, street demonstrations took place in a number of major Chinese cities to protest ultra-rightist activities in Japan (including the Japanese history textbook issue and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s repeated visits to the Yasukuni shrine) and Japan’s bid to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Information and pictures of the street demonstrations filled many websites. At the same time, websites (and cell phones) were used to organize petitions and demonstrations. An open letter calling on the Chinese to boycott Japanese goods circulated widely on the internet. Information about the major demonstration in Beijing on April 9 appeared in many BBS forums well in advance, with details about the time and place of the
demonstration. It is likely that the Chinese government’s initial acquiescence partly explains the scope of the protest activities both online and offline, but there is no doubt that the wide-spread use of the internet greatly facilitated the organization and the diffusion of protests. They demonstrated yet again a typical pattern of internet activism, the interactions between online and offline activities.

**Conclusion: The Rise of an Informational Politics?**

I have suggested that three structural factors have helped to sustain internet activism under conditions of mounting control. The network structure of the internet provides the necessary internal and external linkages for the diffusion of ideas and contention. An expressive internet culture builds a social and cultural basis for internet contention. The broader landscape of popular contention provides both ammunition and, to some extent, a base in civil society for internet activism. To understand why internet activism has persisted, therefore, it is crucial to see that there is not just the politics of the internet, but also an underlying culture and society. Of course, there is also an internet economy, which drives much of the internet culture. Ultimately, the factors of culture, society, and economy that are intrinsic to the internet are also part of its politics. In short, internet politics is part of the internet galaxy. A narrow conception of the political at the expense of the other components of the puzzle is inadequate for understanding the Chinese internet.

This is not to underestimate the power of the Chinese state. Indeed, even the most contentious cases of internet protests, as examined above, may have been significantly shaped by the state. Cases involving corruption and basic human rights are morally compelling: they can easily attract wide public support; they are prevalent; and faced with undeniable facts, the state sometimes can be forced to tolerate or even accede to popular demands for justice. Furthermore, as political scientist Kathleen Hartford has shown, some municipal governments are taking proactive measures to encourage citizen input via the internet. The “Mayor’s Mailbox” in Hangzhou and Nanjing indicate a change in the assumptions about the government’s relationship with citizens, a growing awareness that people should be treated as citizens, not subjects.\(^{18}\)

What I have tried to show, therefore, is not the demise of internet activism or the retreat of internet control, but their parallel and paradoxical
growth. In this process, we see the appearance of new forms of resistance as well as control. Indeed, between internet control and contention there has arisen a new politics in Chinese life. In this new politics, information has become a decisive political weapon. Information and communication technologies, not surprisingly, have become the central means, valuable stakes, and key arenas of politics.

What are the main features of this new politics of the internet? On the part of the party-state, we see the formation of a regulatory regime consisting of government agencies, administrative and technical personnel, rules and laws, and a cyber police force. This regime combines traditional forms of repressive methods with newer, more subtle means of control and governing. The state must rely increasingly on technological means of control and surveillance to create a sense among internet users that they are always being watched. At the same time, however, aware of the complexity and scope of control, the regulatory regime must take a selective approach to the exercise of control. Hence the selective targeting of cyber-dissidents, blocking of foreign websites, and closing of domestic sites. Thus the state must place different priorities on different issues, some of which are controlled more closely than others, or more closely at some times than other times.

In recent years, there have appeared in Chinese public discourse more and more demands for information access, information disclosure, right to know, and communication rights. The appearance of this new discourse is tied to citizens’ use of new information and communication technologies. Using these new information tools reflects their frustrations as well as an understanding of their importance. In a sense, the Chinese quest for a more open society and democratic society has entered a new era.

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8 Retrieved from [http://christ_chen.home.chinaren.com/homepage.com](http://christ_chen.home.chinaren.com/homepage.com), February 25, 2001. All quotations were originally published in Chinese. In this article, they are quoted in English translations of my own rendering.

9 Yu Lei, “Xinshidai, wo'men zai wangshang xiezuo.” (New times: we’re writing on the internet) *Xiandai jiaooji* (modern communication), n. 6 (2003), p.18.


14 [http://www.tianyaclub.com/new/Publicforum/Content.asp?idWriter=0&Key=0&strItem=no04&idArticle=220666&flag=1](http://www.tianyaclub.com/new/Publicforum/Content.asp?idWriter=0&Key=0&strItem=no04&idArticle=220666&flag=1)

15 Song Yuan, “Guangxi Nandan kuangnan zhounian ji; Dangshi jizhe zaijie manbao tiemu” (On the anniversary of mine disaster in Nandan, Guangxi, involved journalists further reveal iron curtain of covering up) *Xinmin zhouban* (Xinmin weekly), August 5, 2002.


18 For a detailed analysis of this case, see Guobin Yang, "The Internet and Civil Society in China: A Preliminary Assessment." *Journal of Contemporary China*. v. 12, n. 36 (August 2003), pp.453 – 475.

China and the Implications of the War in Iraq*

Melinda Liu

The war in Iraq has significant impact for China, not so much for China’s bilateral relations with Iraq, but more for China’s relationship with the United States and for China’s role in the world. In short, the war in Iraq is important because it has implications about China and America; it informs about China and energy resources, about China and Islam, and about China and empire. As for the meaning of empire, the Iraq war tells us much about the dynamics of the rise and fall of great powers in general. In many ways, this is a story of energy resources: who has them, who does not, and how one can get access and guarantees access to them.

Going back to 1990 when the United States and coalition powers were getting ready to liberate Kuwait, many things were different about China back then. During the Iran/Iraq conflict of the 1980s, China did not have close ties with Saddam Hussein. At that time, China had close ties with Iran, not just in energy cooperation, but also in military hardware, nuclear and missile cooperation, and a growing geopolitical relationship. Showing how things can change, at that time, China was a net exporter of oil.

In 1991, China abstained in the U.N. Security Council vote rather than use its veto to deny legitimacy to the American-led coalition effort to liberate Kuwait. Beijing wanted to make a come back and stay in step with the international powers after the Tiananmen events in 1989, especially with regard to the Middle East region and powers such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and others. The 1991 war was also a wake up call for the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). For the first time, the army witnessed the effects of smart bombs and smart warfare. The American operations were the first display of real “shock and awe”. Chinese planners were stunned by the

* Ms. Liu gave a presentation at Johns Hopkins SAIS on February 23, 2006. The above is a summary of her comments. Ed.
effectiveness of U.S. weapons. The Chinese army of 2.5 million was really not a modern force and had not had war experience since the border event with Viet Nam in 1979. Before that time, when the military wanted to communicate with other units, it actually sent runners to make the contact.

Looking forward to 2001, when many changes had occurred, China and the United States were enjoying a kind of honeymoon period. China was quick to join the war on terrorism and was rewarded by being designated as one of the U.S. partners in this war on terror. China was able to use this as an excuse to crack down on its own Muslim minority within China, especially the Uighurs in Western China where there has been a separatist movement simmering for many decades. So this is also a story about China and Islam. China’s borders are inhabited by minorities, Tibetans and Muslims; the Tibetans are not such a problem, but the Muslims are more prominent as a problem in the Chinese consciousness.

Regarding energy, China in now the world’s second largest consumer of energy, just a decade or so after first becoming a net importer of oil in 1993. It has gone past Japan and is second only to the U.S. in terms of its energy demand. China has accounted for 40% in the growth of global oil demand since the year 2000. That is largely in response to the growth in its GDP which hit a 9.8 growth rate last year. China’s oil imports are now one third of its crude oil consumption. In 2004, there were energy shortages across the country with brown outs, people living by candle light, widespread hoarding, and factories buying generator to keep production going. Certainly, this consumption by China helps to keep international oil prices at their high level.

So energy security is a key element in Chinese foreign policy. Beijing leaders are globe trotting everywhere, from Angola to Australia, from Sudan to Sumatra. They are trying to win friends and influence people and to sign all kinds of deals for oil, gas, and other natural resources. Looking at Chinese strategy around the Indian Ocean, it is an approach which some call a “string of pearls” strategy, which is meant to lock in relationships and transport facilities in places like Pakistan, Burma, Thailand, and others. It is intended to protect the routes from the Middle East through the Malacca Straits through which the vast bulk of China’s oil must pass.
The situation in Iraq, with violence between the Sunni and Shia, has greatly affected the relationship between Iraq and Iran, and given Iran power beyond its wildest dreams. Most Iraqis are Shia, as the Iranians are, and the explosion of Shiite power in Iraq is one of the most important geopolitical events in decades. Now Iran is poised to wield huge political and religious power in the region through its links to the Shiite majority in Iraq. Shiite politicians and militia are coming to power in Iraq not only through democratic elections and legal means, but also through extra-legal means and by death squads and Islamic courts. Paradoxically, the U.S. insistence in bringing democracy to Iraq is part of what allowed this to happen. What was unexpected in this was how radical and influenced by Iran the Shia in power would be.

So China is in an intimate relationship at this point with a key regional player, Iran. China voted in favor of referring the recent Iranian crisis to the United Nations Security Council, in contrast to that 1991 vote on Iraq. In a post-1911 world, China has increasingly allied with countries like Russia or France to leverage and enhance its national influence. Much is at stake for Beijing. China is adamantly opposed to military intervention in Iran by anyone, whether by the U.S. or Israel or anyone else. Regarding Iran, China does not want sanctions, but only diplomacy, even though the chances of diplomacy being successful are not promising. Its need for energy makes China look to Tehran as part of its answer. Iran is China’s second largest foreign oil supplier, accounting for 13% of its total imports. In 2004, the Chinese firm, SINOPEC, signed an agreement worth US$70 billion to develop Iranian oil. In 2005, they agreed to buy US$20 billion of Iran’s liquefied natural gas over the next 25 years. So the imposition of economic sanctions could have a real impact on these ambitious plans.

China’s interests in the Middle East also encompass the Arab countries as well. In January, the Saudi king visited China, the first time that a Saudi head of state visited China since diplomatic relations were normalized in 1990. Saudi Arabia is already China’s top supplier of crude oil and top trading partner in the Middle East. The Saudis are helping to build an oil storage depot on China’s Hainan Island capable of holding up to 200 million tons of oil. Arab nations are among the top nations where China’s “going global” policy is playing out. This policy is followed by China all over the world, but China finds the Middle East to be a very receptive target.
The question is whether China is willing to subordinate its narrow interests for the greater global good, specifically in what many see as its mercantilist policies in trade and in pursuit of energy resources. In places like Burma and Zimbabwe, China is described as a “responsible stakeholder,” a U.S. coined term in September 2005. But questions are raised by China’s ties to repressive regimes or ongoing instability. For example, in troubled Sudan, a Chinese oil firm is already producing 150,000 barrels of oil a day.

This brings us to the implications of empire. China was interested in Iraq as an oil supplier and had bid to help develop an oil field there, as well as a PLA sponsored fiber optics project for Baghdad city. Saddam also owed China millions of dollars in debt. China sacrificed a lot of those interests so that it could stay in an even relationship with the United States. But now the Sino/U.S. honeymoon period is over. The conflict in Iraq raised questions about China’s relationship with the U.S. and the world. Iraq works to China’s advantage by deflecting the notion that China is the next big threat. Does China’s rise necessarily come at the U.S. expense? Can it be, as Chinese put it, a win-win situation or is the rise and fall of great powers inevitably a zero-sum game?

When covering the situation in Iraq prior to the second war, the senior Chinese diplomat, fluent in English and Arabic, told me to leave before the war started. He opined that if cornered, Saddam was unpredictable and would use whatever he had to survive. Iraqi society was deeply divided and the latent divisions between the Shia and Sunnis would surface and not everyone would welcome the Americans. He predicted chaos and looting. I was urged to leave with his convoy (he was extending the offered to ethnic Chinese), but I remained behind, living at the Palestine Hotel.

What this means is that even while Chinese diplomats are in the background and low key, they are very interested in the Middle East. The March 2003 invasion redrew the map of the Middle East, but it happened when China was revamping its own approach to the world. The more the U.S. expends its energy and resources in Iraq, the more China feels that it can pursue its peaceful rise and development, especially in Asia. China is making pro-active efforts to box in Taiwan President Chen Shui-bien. China is hosting Six Party Talks in hopes of defusing the North Korean nuclear problem; it has established the Shanghai Cooperative Organization (SCO) comprised of China, Russia, and five Central Asian post-Soviet countries.
(the Stans). These are countering U.S. moves in Central Asia; some included countries already have U.S. bases and are located on the border of China.

So China is actually using multi-lateral relations to promote its foreign policy interests. It gives them a bit of diplomatic cover. There is the East Asian Summit which had its inaugural session in December at which 16 Asia/Pacific countries attended, including ASEAN nations, China, Japan, countries from India to Australia, but not the United States. There is also the Sino-Arab Cooperation Forum started last year and the Sino-Arab Entrepreneurs Forum.

The Iraq conflict is not just viewed by Beijing in terms of the narrow bilateral relationship, but what it means as China seeks a new role in the world, its relationship with America, its energy imperative, even its perceptions of empire—these are all playing out in the streets of Baghdad. Americans should not see the violence and chaos in Iraq as being only an American arena and having implications only for the United States. Rather, Iraq has implications for other players in the world as well, China being one of them.
The time has come to think outside the box about ways to deal with Africa’s health care crisis. China has a long and generally distinguished record of providing relatively low cost and often more culturally appropriate health care to Africans. The United States (and other western countries) has devoted significant amounts of its African foreign assistance budget to disease prevention and health care. Most recently, the emphasis has been on HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Is there not a way to combine Chinese experience and low cost care with American (and western) capital to improve a sometimes desperate and deteriorating African health care system? If the answer is affirmative, it would seem to be a win-win situation for all concerned, but especially for Africans. It is also a way to underscore the positive side of the U.S.-China relationship.

The Health Care Crisis in Africa

That Africa faces a growing health care crisis is indisputable. Maternal mortality in Africa is twice the rate for developing countries. Most Africans die well before the age of sixty. Although Africa’s population accounts for about 11% of the world’s total, its share of global deaths is about 19%. Africans comprise about 60% of the world’s population living with HIV/AIDS. Some 90% of deaths due to malaria occur in Africa. In 2002 Africa contributed more than 50% of the world’s deaths due to infectious and parasitic diseases. By contrast, Europe, with 14% of the global population, accounted for less than two percent of deaths caused by infectious and parasitic diseases. Disease that has been largely eliminated in most other countries remains a problem in Africa. In 2004, Africa accounted for 94% of the cases and 99% of the deaths due to cholera. Thirty-one African countries reported cholera outbreaks. Polio and meningitis also remain a problem.1

Although the differences are great among the African countries, the situation concerning the health care system is equally dismal. South Africa

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and the countries of North Africa generally have much stronger systems than the rest of the continent. Africa faces a critical shortage of medical personnel at nearly all levels. On average Sub-Saharan Africa has about one physician per 40,000 people. Malawi, which brings up the bottom of the list, has an estimated one physician per 100,000 persons. More than 30 African countries have less than one doctor per 10,000. The situation for nurses and midwives is better but still woefully short of needs. In addition to the inability to train new medical personnel to meet the rapidly expanding population in Africa, the brain drain siphons many African doctors and nurses to Europe, North America, Australia, and even the Middle East. Because of low income levels, Africa remains a small market for pharmaceutical companies. Most Africans can not afford drugs at any cost, but certainly not those protected by intellectual property laws. Weak law enforcement and quality control systems have led to an influx of cheap, fake medicines.²

**Background of Chinese of Medical Assistance to Africa**

Algeria was the first African country to benefit from a Chinese medical team. Arriving in 1963, this began a cooperative effort that quickly spread to other African countries and continues in Algeria to the present day. The Algerian prime minister commented during the April 2003 visit of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao that the excellent work of Chinese doctors over the years has demonstrated the spirit of unity, mutual help, and friendly cooperation between Algeria and China.³ Even accounts of Chinese medical assistance to Africa written by persons not associated with the Chinese government during the Cold War are generally positive.⁴

If statistics from the Chinese ministry of health are to be believed, the more than 15,000 medical personnel sent to forty-seven African countries since 1963 have treated a whopping 180 million patients.⁵ That translates into a great deal of good will. On a worldwide basis, the ministry of health said as of late 2004 that it had sent about 18,000 medical workers to sixty-

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³ Xinhua, 16 April 2003.
⁵ Xinhua, 16 December 2004.
five countries, treating 240 million patients.\textsuperscript{6} As of early 2006 more than 900 Chinese medical staff was assigned to 94 hospitals and clinics in 34 African countries.\textsuperscript{7} By way of example, China’s Gansu Province has sent fourteen medical aid teams to Madagascar since 1975, reportedly treating 12.7 million patients in Madagascar and nearby countries. The replacement team sent to Madagascar in 2004 numbered thirty personnel.\textsuperscript{8} By contrast, some 1,550 Chinese doctors have worked in Tanzania since 1964 and reportedly treated 3.3 million people. Over the past four decades, the teams in Tanzania averaged annually 50,000 out-patients and 30,000 in-patients. They conducted more than 130,000 operations, averaging 3,100 annually.\textsuperscript{9} It is not clear why there is such a difference in the number of persons treated by the teams in Madagascar as compared to those treated by the larger and longer medical program in Tanzania. Even if the Africa-wide numbers are inflated, however, they are impressive.

China only began to send doctors from the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region to the Comoro Islands in 1996. The U.S. does not even have an embassy in the Comoros. An eleven-member Chinese team divided its staff among the three islands that constitute the Comoros. In 2005 the team reportedly treated more than 17,000 patients, conducted almost 3,000 operations, provided emergency treatment to another 400, and trained fifty-nine local doctors and nurses.\textsuperscript{10} The total population of the Comoros is less than 700,000! During a visit to Guangxi in 2003, the president of the Comoros said the region is known throughout the Comoros because of the respect their doctors have earned and the fact than many Comoro students have come to Guangxi to learn traditional Chinese medicine.\textsuperscript{11} Some 300 Chinese medical practitioners have worked in hospitals in Cameroon since 1975. According to hospital reports on Chinese aid, the teams have treated more than two million persons.\textsuperscript{12}

Chinese teams offer an array of medical specialties in addition to traditional medicine. The most recent team of 27 to arrive in Mauritania included specialists in scanning, orthopedics, epidemiology, gynecology, surgery, ophthalmology, water chemistry, bacteriology, and virology. In

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 2 November 2004.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 20 January 2006.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 2 November 2004.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 20 January 2006.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 21 May 2006.
\textsuperscript{11} BBC Monitoring, 21 June 2003.
\textsuperscript{12} Cameroon Tribune, 25 September 2003.
addition, it is not unusual that they serve in rural areas, something that many African doctors do with great reluctance.\textsuperscript{13} China received praise in Liberia for its medical teams because they prioritize the transfer of knowledge and technology. They send specialists and general practitioners who upgrade and build the professional skills of local health workers. In the case of war-torn Liberia this is a critical medical need.\textsuperscript{14}

Members of Chinese medical teams normally spend about two years in a country. Many doctors have served on more than one medical team. The health bureaus of individual Chinese provinces coordinate the medical cooperation with designated countries. This permits a closer personal connection between the African country and a particular region in China. For example, in addition to the linkages noted earlier, Shandong Province is responsible for Tanzania and the Seychelles while Hubei Province coordinates medical cooperation with Algeria and Lesotho. Shaanxi Province does Mauritania, Guinea, and Sudan. African support for the program remains strong. All but the poorest of the African countries pay the medical team’s expenses, such as international airfare, staff stipends, and even the cost of some medicine and equipment that is brought in by the team. China covers the costs of the team’s travel and the equipment and medicine that it brings. China permits the hospitals where they work to sell the drugs to help cover the cost of hosting the medical teams.\textsuperscript{15}

Another part of China’s medical cooperation with Africa over the years has been the construction of hospitals and clinics. Although once primarily assistance projects, they appear increasingly to be commercial ventures. China did provide a grant of $2.5 million to Sudan in 2002 for the rehabilitation of the Radiotherapy Hospital.\textsuperscript{16} It is not clear if a $6 million hospital built by a Chinese company in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, in 2004 was a grant or commercial activity.\textsuperscript{17}

Donations of medicine and occasionally medical equipment have become a more important part of China’s medical cooperation program. Recent examples of donations include almost $1 million of a Chinese anti-tuberculosis drug and $50,000 worth of Cotecxin anti-malaria medication to

\textsuperscript{13} Panafrican News Agency, 30 December 2005.
\textsuperscript{14} The Analyst, 3 August 2005.
\textsuperscript{16} BBC Monitoring, 22 September 2002.
\textsuperscript{17} Panafrican News Agency, 4 August 2004.
Kenya\textsuperscript{18} China gave $100,000 worth of medicine to fight malaria, cholera, and meningitis to Togo and $60,000 worth of various drugs to Burundi.\textsuperscript{19} This is also a clever and low cost way to introduce Chinese-made medications to the African market. Four Chinese companies produce anti-retroviral medication well below the cost of similar drugs manufactured in the West; one of them has obtained import approval from thirteen African countries.\textsuperscript{20} Another Chinese company planned to flood Nigeria with its anti-malaria drug, Artemedine.\textsuperscript{21}

As the Chinese improve their reputation for the manufacture of medicine, Africans have expressed more interest in joint production efforts on the continent. Although still well behind India and Italy, China has increased to more than 20 the number of active ingredient manufacturers that meet U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval. Chinese joint ventures with western companies created the ability to transfer manufacturing technology, which has accounted for much of this improvement.\textsuperscript{22} The government of China has a 40% share of an Ethiopian company that produces anti-retroviral drugs free of charge for HIV patients.\textsuperscript{23} China is cooperating with Tanzania in the production of anti-malaria drugs by using herbal extracts.\textsuperscript{24}

One of China’s biggest pharmaceutical companies, Beijing Holley-Cotec, opened just before the visit to Kenya of President Hu Jintao in April 2006 a drug distribution center in Nairobi to serve East and Central Africa. The company entered the African market in 1993 and also has offices in Tanzania, Nigeria, and Uganda.\textsuperscript{25} The company subsequently began marketing its newest anti-malaria drug, Duo-Cotecxin, in Uganda.\textsuperscript{26} China invested $180 million in biotechnology between 1996 and 2000 and another $600 million in the following five years. Although small amounts compared to the U.S. investment, most Chinese biomedicines are generic and may be well priced for the African market.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{18} Xinhua, 8 November 2002 and 19 September 2003.  
\textsuperscript{20} Agence France Presse, 25 May 2004.  
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Daily Trust}, 7 October 2003.  
\textsuperscript{22} C. James Attridge and Alexander S. Parker, Improving Access to Medicines in Developing Countries, March 2005, pp. 14-15, found at \url{www.femeba.org.ar/fundacion}.  
\textsuperscript{23} Ethiopian News Agency, 19 April 2004.  
\textsuperscript{24} Xinhua, 18 April 2005.  
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{East African Standard}, 2 May 2006.  
\textsuperscript{26} Xinhua, 15 June 2006.  
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Financial Times}, 3 February 2004.
China’s medical cooperation extends to a variety of other activities. The Nigerian minister of health signed in 2001 an agreement that covers cooperation in immunization, vaccine production and development, malaria control, traditional and alternative medicine development, drug policy control and manufacturing, primary health care and health system reform.\(^{28}\) During his visit to Nigeria in April 2006, President Hu Jintao signed an agreement to provide a training course for comprehensive malaria prevention and control and another for training medical staff in Nigeria.\(^{29}\) As a follow-up to the China-Africa Cooperation ministerial conference, China hosted a workshop on malaria control and treatment in Nairobi during 2003. Participants from China and 14 African countries attended.\(^{30}\)

China has become an increasingly important contributor to UN peacekeeping missions in Africa; medical teams have become part of that contribution. China initially sent 43 medical personnel, including thirteen female doctors and nurses, to the UN peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It continues to provide medical staff for the mission.\(^{31}\) Thirty-five Chinese medical staff joined the UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia.\(^{32}\) China announced plans to send a 60 member medical team to the UN peacekeeping mission in Sudan.\(^{33}\)

**Chinese Traditional Medicine**

A special comment is in order concerning Chinese traditional medicine. It is estimated that 80% of Africans use or depend on herbal medicine. Traditional medicine is popular in Africa because traditional healers are accessible, live within the community they serve, and are inexpensive. University trained personnel are virtually non-existent in much of rural Africa. The ratio of the traditional healer to the population in Sub-Saharan Africa is about one to five hundred. In the case of trained medical doctors, it is one to 40,000. Even in South Africa, which has the most advanced medical system in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that 33 million of South Africa’s 47 million people consult and seek treatment from

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\(^{29}\) Nigeria First, 27 April 2006.  
\(^{30}\) Xinhua, 19 September 2003.  
\(^{31}\) BBC Monitoring, 1 April 2003; Xinhua, 22 August 2004.  
\(^{32}\) Agence France Presse, 18 March 2004.  
\(^{33}\) Agence France Presse, 18 March 2004.
traditional healers. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Chinese traditional medicine is highly popular on the continent.\(^{34}\)

An excellent case study on Chinese traditional medicine in Tanzania argues that it is the patients’ perception of Chinese medicine as having “rapid effects” that brings them into Chinese clinics. Tanzanian patients believe it is rapidly effective because of the way the Chinese provide the care, the manner in which Chinese drugs are marketed and consumed, and the therapeutic effects of skillfully administered treatment that combines Chinese and western medicine. Small-scale Chinese entrepreneurs supported by African laboratory technicians provide the care in Tanzania. Patients do not have to wait in long lines as they do at government health clinics. They appreciate the brevity of the visits and their low costs.\(^{35}\)

China has held discussions with a number of African countries concerning cooperation in the field of traditional medicine. South Africa and China agreed to work jointly to develop herbal medicine for AIDS related illnesses and regulating traditional medicine.\(^{36}\) Tanzania has also expressed a desire to cooperate with China in ways to use Chinese traditional medicine to treat HIV/AIDS.\(^{37}\) Ethiopia and China signed a memorandum of understanding whereby both parties would exchange specialists and administrative personnel as well as organize seminars and a symposium on traditional medicine and joint research for medicinal use.\(^{38}\) Chinese clinics have become a popular alternative to western medicine in Kenya. Kenyans have discovered that techniques like acupuncture can be highly effective.\(^{39}\) China underscored the importance it attaches to traditional medicine at a seminar on the export of traditional Chinese medical products and technologies to Africa. China exports $600 million annually of traditional medicine to more than 130 countries. Although Africa accounts for only $10 million of this total, China believes the export potential is high.\(^{40}\)

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\(^{36}\) *Financial Times*, 23 May 2002.

\(^{37}\) Xinhua, 16 February 2003.

\(^{38}\) BBC Monitoring, 22 December 2003.

\(^{39}\) *The Nation*, 1 November 2005.

Potential Obstacles for Expanded Chinese Medical Assistance to Africa

China’s capacity to send large numbers of medical personnel to Africa is limited. Provincial budgets, which have traditionally funded the program, are stretched by a shrinking tax base since rural tax reforms have been implemented. The health needs of many Chinese are also not being met and government doctors are increasingly called upon to deal with public health issues at home. As the Chinese medical system becomes more privatized, more doctors will be less inclined to accept a two-year posting in Africa. Medical bureaus in some wealthy provinces have reportedly been forced to recruit doctors from inland provinces in order to fulfill their overseas medical team obligations.41

Chinese Minister of Health Gao Qiang recently acknowledged that the ministry’s reforms had been generally unsuccessful, noting that four gaps had crippled the health industry. He said that China is not prepared to control the spread of major epidemics, commenting that China has about 4.5 million tuberculosis patients, the second largest number after India. He said that China’s health services are inadequate and lag behind the country’s economic development. The configuration of medical and health resources is unreasonable; the circulation and pricing of medicine and medical equipment are chaotic and too expensive. Finally, he criticized China’s health management system as poorly adapted to the country’s health needs. Management responsibility over health resources belongs to different governments, industries, and enterprises.42

There have been a number of other less important concerns. Nigeria, for example, accused a number of Chinese and Indian companies of selling counterfeit medicines. Nigeria said that all drugs imported from China must be subject to pre-shipment inspection and analysis and named an independent and reliable Chinese company to conduct the inspections.43 The UN’s top HIV/AIDS official warned that the quality of China’s anti-retroviral medication must be validated by international standards.44 Chinese traditional medicine has become so popular that it is occasionally abused. Some Cameroonians who have never had any training in Chinese

43 Agence France Presse, 2 December 2003.
Many Africans think that because traditional medicine is natural that it is safe. They do not realize that its uncontrolled practice can lead to strong and adverse side effects. There needs to be careful education of the patient and practitioner.

**United States-China Cooperation**

Although there are legitimate reasons why it may not be possible to expand significantly the use of Chinese medicine in Africa, especially because of Chinese capacity limitations, the idea merits discussion. During a national conference on relations with developing nations in 2004, China committed itself to send more medical teams in the coming years. China’s January 2006 Africa Policy statement said China is ready to enhance medical personnel and information exchange with Africa. It will continue to send medical teams and provide medicines and medical materials to African countries, and help them establish and improve medical facilities and train medical personnel. The statement added that China will increase its exchanges and cooperation with African countries in the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS and malaria, research and application of traditional medicine, and experience for dealing with public health emergencies.

One of the major constraints to sending more Chinese medical teams to Africa is funding due to a shortfall in provincial budgets. If existing U.S. and western foreign assistance programs covered the costs of those teams sent to the poorest African countries, the funding obstacle would be resolved. In view of the limited number of Chinese medical teams that can be made available, and the fact that some African countries would continue to pay for the teams with their own resources, the cost to the U.S. would be modest. The other concerns about Chinese medical cooperation expressed earlier are either not relevant to the funding of medical teams or are otherwise manageable. In fact, it is arguably in the interest of the global community to have a healthier Africa and especially a continent that is better prepared to deal with public health pandemics. An unsatisfactory health environment in Africa probably contributes to conflict and perhaps even the existence of extremism and terrorism. This kind of cooperation also

45 *Cameroon Tribune*, 5 October 2005.
47 Xinhua, 2 September 2004.
highlights the positive side of the U.S.-China relationship, which otherwise has its share of negative pressures. Should the U.S. government not find this idea attractive, it might be a good project for an American philanthropic organization like the Gates Foundation.
Balancing Japan and China in East Asia*

Robyn Lim

We are now seeing major changes in the international system as the logic of post Cold War power relationships work themselves out. America’s global strategic imperative, as I see it, is to regain the flexibility lost at the onset of the Cold War. In the wake of recent less than successful interventions, the United States must rethink the classic questions of security policy, where and when to expend its blood and treasure, and on whose behalf. These are never easy questions for a democracy to decide, and recent history has proved that optional wars are especially difficult. Thus the basic American interest in alliances, whether in Europe, the Middle East or East Asia, is to keep the US in the game as the global offshore balancer, the role the US inherited from Britain at the end of the Second World War.

The question in East Asia is whether America will continue to balance from Japan or from Guam. Indeed, some of the hardest choices for the US could be in East Asia, given the ambiguities of US relationships with both China and Japan, the two great powers of East Asia. In East Asia, the essential US interest is what it has been since 1898, the maintenance of a balance of power on the far shore of the Pacific Ocean. And there are two great powers in East Asia, China and Japan. Both are strong states, and they have never previously been strong at the same time. And while China has growing strategic ambition, Japan has growing strategic anxiety.

China, enjoying unprecedented strategic latitude as a consequence of the collapse of Soviet power, is showing plenty of evidence of strategic ambition. Thus in order for the US to play the role of global offshore balancer, America needs to maintain geostrategic pressure on China. The value or otherwise of all US alliances in East Asia will be seen in this light. Since 1951, America’s main means of maintaining the balance has been alliance with Japan. But that was not always so in the past, and may not always be so in future. The US Japan alliance The US-Japan alliance seems in fine shape if you look at it from viewpoint of missile defence, as well as

* This talk was given by Professor Lim at the Sigur Center, George Washington University on March 14, 2006.
Japan’s agreement to homeport a nuclear-powered replacement for the Yokosuka-based aircraft carrier. But with the end of March deadline approaching, the bases alignment issues are far from resolved. In addition, the United States has much wider strategic options now it is no longer tied down by countervailing Soviet power.

The Post Cold War Power Equations in East Asia

American and Japanese strategic interests, while still highly congruent, are not quite as congruent as they were during the Cold War, including in relation to China. Moreover, in contrast with Europe, in North Asia the liquidation of the Cold War did not see the amelioration of indigenous strategic tensions. Here the great power game continues, albeit on the basis of different configurations of strategic interest. The US/China nexus will be central. China’s version of the Monroe Doctrine is to try to push the US out of East Asia. Thus the key US interest, as previously noted, will be in sustaining geopolitical pressure on China. This differs importantly from Moscow during the Cold War in that the USSR stood for the victory of socialism over capitalism. But China accepts the victory of capitalism and wants to play it so as to reinforce the communist party’s grip on power. So there are both continuities and differences with China’s past, and US policy must take this into account. There are many differences and sources of friction between the US and China. Each wants maximum freedom of action. The collisions of interest between them, including over Taiwan, could lead to war by miscalculation. But there are also grounds for US/China policy harmonization. Neither wants war, because neither calculates that the benefits would outweigh the costs. The need to keep the oil flowing from the Middle East is another important interest shared by the US, China and Japan. So will the need to develop nuclear power as an alternative to reliance on Middle Eastern oil, as anarchy grows in the Middle East. And without intending it, Japan, Taiwan and the two Koreas all seem to be bent on driving the US and China closer together.

China’s long term intentions are still hard to discern. Nearly every aspiring great power in the past has sought to develop a powerful navy to protect its coastlines and maritime trade, and the US was no exception. We do know that China is studying the history of the rise of Germany, but what lessons will the Chinese draw? Bismarck, for example, did not seek to take on the British, but the Kaiser did. But in current strategic circumstances, a
US/China rapprochement could be much more painful to Japan. Koizumi, in continuing his unilateral approaches to North Korea in pursuit of domestic political advantage, seems unable to see the danger. Moreover, Koizumi has appointed a foreign minister, Taro Aso, intent on poking China in the eye while expecting the US to keep China on a leash. And Foreign Minister Aso, with his close links to Taiwan, seems to assume that Japan can forever use Taiwan as a form of blackmail against the United States.

The central dilemma for China is whether it can resolve the contradictions between capitalism and party control. China’s turn to capitalism, as well as the consequences of the end of the Cold War, have done much to corrode the US/South Korea alliance. For the United States, as noted, the strategic value of any ally is its willingness to apply strategic pressure on China. South Korea is clearly unwilling to play this role. Indeed, terrified of the North’s weapons, as well as the costs of reunification, now looks to China for protection against North Korea. China is thus the de facto ally of both Koreas. It should be obvious to all in Washington by now that the time has come to declare victory in South Korea and go home, to withdraw all remaining US forces and commitments from South Korea. But of course, China is now caught in a web of contradictions, notably in the Middle East. China’s thirst for energy, and its need for secure sea routes from the Gulf, gives it a vital interest in stability in the Middle East and all along the ‘arc of instability’. Yet not too long ago, China was one of the most enthusiastic proliferators of missile technology to Iran and elsewhere. Moreover, for reasons of history, the gun and the party have been more or less equals in China. In the absence of Deng Xiaoping, who wielded immense authority over the PLA as a veteran Long Marcher, can today’s leaders avoid doing some seriously stupid things, such as buying the long-range Backfire bombers that Russia is now so eager to sell China? It is hard to be optimistic on that score.

For Japan, the central dilemma is how to settle the issues of the Second World War on terms acceptable to its neighbors and to the United States. It has long been obvious that Japan emerged from the Cold War having, unlike Germany, proved unable to settle the issues of the Second World War on terms acceptable to its neighbors. There were many reasons for this. An important reason, often overlooked, was the differences in strategic geography between the two ends of Eurasia. In Europe, superpower confrontation was mostly continental, though dependent on maritime reinforcement. That meant that NATO was constructed to share
risks on the ground. Thus NATO fostered not only rapprochement between France and West Germany. It also provided a wider framework that fostered the rearmament of West Germany in politically safe ways after the Korean War.

In East Asia, superpower competition was maritime, except for Korea. That meant that the US alliances with Japan, the Philippines and Australia could not replicate NATO. Thus the United States was unable to foster the rearmament of Japan in politically safe ways. That enabled Japan to avoid entanglement in America’s wars, notably Vietnam. And it preserved consensus in Japan, including among the Japanese conservatives. But frustration grew in the United States at Japan’s near-free riding in security policy, and its mercantilist policies.

And it is slowly dawning on the United States that Yasukuni, the great shrine of the Manchurian Clique, is pointed as much at the United States as at China. It is a shrine to “Victor’s Justice” and the lie that Roosevelt tricked Japan into war and that Japan didn’t do anything really bad anyway. If Shinzo Abe, scion of the Manchurian Clique, becomes prime minister and goes to Yasukuni every 15th August, it is not hard to predict trouble for the US/Japan alliance. As well as big trouble with other key US allies such as Singapore and Australia. If China is skillful, it may not be hard for Beijing to take advantage of all this. Who can forget Jiang Zemin being permitted to lay a wreath at the Arizona Memorial in Honolulu?

Therefore, much will depend on whether Japan can resolve the issue of the Second World War, and whether China can resolve the contradictions of capitalism with party control. But Japan should remember that China and the United States sank their differences in 1972. They might do so again, and next time it would be far more painful for Japan. And Japan, for reasons of history, is not good at the realpolitik game.

Global context

In May 1940, with the British Expeditionary Force thrown out of Europe, and Britain at greatest risk of invasion since the days of Napoleon, its Prime Minister and its King put the best face on things. Churchill said that Britain had regained the strategic flexibility lost on the Marne in 1914. King George VI said he felt relieved that Britain no longer had to pander to allies. I suppose that is what is meant by stiff upper lip. Still, it was the
instinctive response of an island country that had for centuries been the dominant global maritime power.

Currently, the global strategic imperative of the United States must be to regain the flexibility lost at the time of the Korean War. The United States is a Whale, not an Elephant. The great strategic contests of last century, the two world wars and the Cold War, ended in Whales 3: Elephants 0. In the Middle East, the strategic imperative is to keep the oil flowing. Thus the United States, once it finally gets out of the bog in Iraq, must reduce its footprint and repair to its strategic redoubts and those of its reliable allies. The Iran nuclear issue presents tough choices, but removing the regime on the point of a bayonet is not among them.

Japan’s contribution to the current Iraq war was certainly much more than Japan had ever made before. But that is mostly because Japan had developed near-free riding to such a fine art form in the Cold War. And in military terms Japan’s contribution was worse than useless because Japanese forces required babysitting by other US allies, including Australia. As America’s alliance with Japan becomes more ‘normal’, the risks inherent within it to the United States are becoming more apparent, the classic opposite risks of defection and entanglement. At what point does Japan become an ally not worth having? As previously indicated, for the United States the toughest security policy choices may be in East Asia as America rethinks the global basis of its security policy, especially the issue of where and when to intervene.

The United States could put an end to Japan’s near-free riding if it were to move to Guam, and thus depend upon the flanking powers (Japan and India) to balance growing Chinese power. Then the United States could choose not to intervene until the various parties had kicked each other quite hard in the shins. The “Perfidious Albion” approach if you like. But that option would require the United States to leave its bases in Japan, with no prospect of ever returning. It would also mean accepting the rearmament of Japan, including with nuclear weapons. And it could result in a dangerous Sino-Japanese nuclear confrontation over which the United States had little influence. There is also the risk that if the US moved to Guam and sought to balance from there, Japan and China might gang up together against the US. True, the risk seems small. But before 1939, most observers dismissed out of hand the possibility that Germany and Russia would gang up together. But they did, and so ushered in the Second World War.
Thus for the United States, no course of action will be without potential costs and risks. Therefore, what the US needs in the Western Pacific is a highly flexible force posture, structured optimally to deal with the traditional geopolitical threats, as well as the requirements of the so-called War on Terror.

Historically, victory has tended to be the solvent of alliances. That has proved to be the case with the US alliance with South Korea. This may not prove to be the case with Japan, not least because of the maritime basis of security of both.
China Watching on the Hill

Richard Seldin

With the exceptions of the Iraq war and fight against terrorism China watching has become the major foreign affairs interest in the legislative branch of our government, both within long established agencies with broad missions, as well as those that were formed more recently for a China related purpose. Thus over the last decade, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) and Library of Congress’s Congressional Research Service (CRS) have churned out a plethora of reports for the Congress on U.S./China political and trade issues. Also, since they were established by Congress in 2000, the Congressional Executive Commission on China and the U.S./China Economic and Security Review Commission have both convened numerous hearings and provided annual reports to the Congress, respectively, on human rights in China and China’s development of the rule of law, and the national security implications of the U.S./China trade and economic relationship.

Aside from these legislative branch agencies, there also are five groups within the Congress itself that are involved in U.S./China related activities. In chronological order of formation they are the House U.S./China Inter parliamentary Exchange, established in 1999; the Senate U.S./China Inter parliamentary Exchange (2004); the Congressional China Caucus (mid June 2005); the U.S./China Congressional Working Group (late June of 2005); and finally, the U.S./China Senate Working Group (2006). All of these groups are bipartisan in their memberships.

For fear of overwhelming the reader with details about all seven entities, all I will say here about the GAO and CRS is that their activities have been described in great detail elsewhere. I also will not comment in depth on three of the five in house congressional groups. Thus, the House and Senate Inter-parliamentary Exchanges work with China’s National Peoples Congress to arrange meetings in the U.S. and China between members of the two congresses. The Exchanges do not meet often, involve relatively small numbers of House and Senate members, and do not, as groups, evaluate or take positions on U.S./China related issues. Although the Senate Working Group’s mission is broader, it is intended to serve as a
forum for discussing China’s political, economic, and military rise and how this affects U.S. national interests. As the Group was only recently formed, it does not really have a sufficient track record for evaluation, and it is too early to predict the direction it will take. This leaves us with the China Congressional Caucus and the U.S./China House Working Group, to date, the most active and probably best known of the five in-Congress entities. Both of these groups have relatively large and expanding memberships, at last count, 35 for the Caucus and 40 for the Working Group, with at least nine members belonging to both.

Congressmen Randy Forbes (R. VA) and Ike Skelton (D. MO) formed the China Caucus not long after they returned from a congressional trip that Forbes led to China in early 2005. Congressman Forbes was both greatly impressed and concerned by what he saw first hand of China’s rapid economic and military development. He was particularly concerned about China’s knowing far more about us than we know about them: its rapidly growing number of engineers, its intellectual property theft, its huge trade surplus with the United States, and its quickly expanding energy needs. Furthermore, when Forbes returned and looked into U.S. federal agency analysis of U.S./China relations issues he was displeased to find that neither the executive branch nor the Congress had mechanisms in place that allowed for comprehensive analysis of how the United States should deal with this supercharged China. In his view, U.S./China issues primarily were being resolved in a stovepiped, agency by agency manner, and the agency analyses that did exist were poorly done.

As a consequence Congressmen Forbes and Skelton established the China Caucus for the purpose of having a congressional body that could make comprehensive analyses of U.S./China relations issues. This includes evaluating the pluses and minuses of policy choices and stimulating a debate within the executive branch and the Congress about how to deal with China. The Caucus meets regularly, holds briefings with China experts both within and outside the U.S. government, and has discussions with Chinese embassy officials, though it has few direct contacts with Chinese ministries. Caucus members tend to break up into groups consistent with their areas of expertise. For example, Congressman Frank Wolf focuses on human rights issues.

Perhaps in response to media assertions that the Caucus is only security oriented, Congressman Forbes stressed that the Caucus looks at all
areas of U.S./China relations including trade, health care, environmental cooperation, human rights, the one child policy, and even differences in psychology between the two countries. Nevertheless, the Caucus also does weigh in heavily on security concerns. Among them, Forbes has identified China’s military modernization, including its increased military expenditures; its high tech shipbuilding capabilities which would allow it to quickly repair military ships in the event of a conflict; military theft; and industrial espionage. Forbes also emphasized that the Caucus is neither pro nor anti China.

Although the House U.S./China Working Group was formed soon after the China Caucus Congressmen Mark Kirk (R IL) and Rick Larsen (D WA), founders and current co-chairs, both denied that the Working Group was intended to operate as a counterpoise to the Caucus. Rather the Working Group was established primarily for educating congressional members about U.S./China relations issues and for promoting in depth discussions of these issues away from the floor of the House. Kirk emphasized that this process would help members develop better nuanced, more sophisticated views about how U.S./China relations problems can be resolved. The Working Group does not have any particular litmus test for membership in the Group and includes pro-China and anti-China members. Furthermore, the Group itself does not take positions on the major U.S. China issues of the day.

Like the Caucus, the Working Group convenes regularly, though not pursuant to a formal meeting schedule, and meets often with executive branch officials, China experts, business reps, and the Chinese Embassy in Washington. The Working Group has also formed academic and business advisory groups through which academic and business experts provide advice on issues of interest to the Group. Examples of Working Group activities over the past year include a classified briefing with Department of Defense (DOD) Secretary Rumsfeld, several meetings with Chinese Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong, and a meeting with Secretary of Commerce Gutierrez. Although the group does not have formal contacts with Chinese officials not located in Washington D.C., when the opportunity presents itself group members do meet with Chinese officials either in Washington or in Beijing. For example, both Congressmen Kirk and Larsen were among six members of Congress including Congressman Forbes who met privately with President Hu Jintao on his recent summit visit.
Congressmen Kirk and Larsen informed me that the Working Group evaluates a broad spectrum of U.S./China political economic military and cultural issues. Nevertheless the Group tends to focus on issues where there are possibilities for immediate resolution in contrast to larger long term problems such as Taiwan and alleged currency manipulation, which are more difficult to resolve and attract more public attention. For example, the Working Group currently is interested in promoting greater U.S./China cooperation in space, including joint rescue missions; development of common third generation wireless standards; and independent audits of fully licensed software used by the Chinese government and state owned enterprises as a way of lessening piracy of U.S. software products. In the security area, the Working Group supports establishing a U.S./China military-to-military phone line, a kind of insurance check that the United States has with more than 20 countries, and increasing military-to-military exchanges of senior, junior, and mid-level officers in order to increase transparency and allay inter-military suspicions and distrust.

Indeed, on security issues Congressman Larsen believed that he and Congressman Forbes had shared concerns, notably about China’s military intentions and the lack of transparency about those intentions. In this regard, Larsen told me he has been skeptical of answers given him by Chinese officials with whom he has discussed security issues. This common concern predictably will be heightened by observations in the Department of Defense’s recent report to the Congress “Military Power of the People’s Republic of China” about the lack of transparency in China’s military buildup.

Although both the Caucus and Working Group address a broad range of issues, they do differ in their approach to making legislative recommendations. The Caucus is currently putting together legislation, a “National Strategic Staffing Proposal,” which will be based, to some extent, on a recommendation in this year’s Quadrennial Defense Review calling for DOD to establish National Security Planning Guidance that would replace DOD-centric with interagency approaches for resolving security challenges. This China based legislation will establish a new entity, not a new agency, in the executive branch that would allow federal agencies to comprehensively deal with U.S./China problems. To facilitate retention of employees with expertise on evaluating these problems, this entity is intended to be composed of staff members who will be provided with strong career
opportunities. The legislation is still being drafted and Congressman Forbes could not estimate when he would introduce it.

In contrast, Congressman Larsen told me that at least for the present, the Working Group does not plan to make legislative proposals as a group, though members might introduce bills in their individual capacity. As an example, Larsen mentioned H.R. 5199, the “United States/China Engagement Act of 2006,” which both he and Congressman Kirk recently introduced. The bill calls for enhancing the United States role in Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group, strengthening the United States diplomatic presence in China and increasing Chinese language and cultural studies in U.S. elementary and secondary schools.

Congressman Forbes and Congressmen Kirk and Larsen all emphasized in interviews with me that their groups are neutral about China, yet there are notable differences in their perceptions of China. In testimony before the U.S./China Economic and Security Review Commission provided soon after he formed the Congressional Caucus Congressman, Forbes analogized China’s quick emergence on the world stage to the giant shark in the movie “Jaws” suddenly leaping from the water to grab bait the local sheriff had casually tossed from his boat. Moreover, as an example of the poor coordination Forbes believes exists among U.S. agencies that deal with China problems, in this case State DOD and the FBI, Forbes cited the espionage potential raised by large numbers of Chinese students coming to the United States for study. According to Forbes, some of these students remain behind, infiltrate defense contractor firms, steal their industrial secrets, and provide them to China.

Also, last year Forbes spearheaded the congressional charge that led to passage of a House Resolution criticizing the China National Offshore Oil Company’s (CNOOC) proposed purchase of the U.S. oil company, Unocal. This congressional opposition to the deal was a major factor in CNOOC’s decision to abandon its offer. Aside from Forbes, 30 of the other 35 members of the Congressional Caucus voted for the resolution with only one member of the Caucus voting against.

Congressman Forbes’s unflattering comparison of China with a killer shark raising the old bugaboo of espionage, and perhaps, overreacting to energy security concerns, does raise questions about both his and the Caucus’ objectivity about China. Also Forbes’s real interest in China only
began in January 2005 during the first trip, a relatively short visit, that he ever took there. While a fresh look at a problem can be quite valuable, it may be imprudent to put too much faith in someone without an earned track record on U.S./China issues. In this regard, Forbes’s point about the executive branch not always coordinating its policies on how to deal with China seems substantially overstated. Aside from the U.S. Trade Representative-led Trade Policy Subcommittee, which includes numerous federal agencies that regularly meet to discuss U.S./China trade issues, the National Security Counsel, State Department, DOD, and the intelligence agencies do coordinate on U.S./China political and military issues as they arise.

As for the Working Group and its leaders, Congressmen Kirk and Larsen have been criticized for being cheerleaders for China, to a great extent due to their both having companies in their districts, respectively Boeing and Motorola, which are on the A list of businesses that have done very well in the China market. Also Congressman Larsen’s comment to me, “shouldn’t we be doing everything possible not to have a conflict with China rather than only prepare for a conflict,” sounds a bit heavy on the deference side. Though even China hawks would probably disagree that only preparing for a conflict with China is sound policy, I would think that avoiding any behavior that China might view as confrontational would also not be in our best national interests.

Nevertheless, Kirk and Larsen’s emphasis on a small step, careful, (touch the stones as you cross the river) long term approach to resolving problems with China seems like the most reasonable approach. Given a choice between this approach and the more fear driven in your face stance, I certainly would go with the former. Indeed Kirk and Larsen were only two of 15 Congressmen who voted against the House Resolution criticizing CNOOC’s proposed purchase of Unocal. Kirk suggested that a number of House members voting for the resolution were shooting from the hip in condemning the deal and were not familiar with the facts. For example, they mistakenly believed that Unocal operated many gas stations in the United States. Also while Kirk and Larsen may not have been certified China hands before they formed the Working Group, they both do have backgrounds that offered some preparation for leading a group focusing on relations with China. Prior to being elected to the Congress, Kirk had substantial experience in international affairs at the World Bank and the State
Department, and Larsen hails from a state that has had both an important and continuing relationship with China, and, in Scoop Jackson and Warren Magnuson, former senators with formidable records on U.S./China relations issues.

As for the recent summit between President’s Bush and Hu Jintao, Congressmen Forbes and Larsen agreed that the meeting was valuable in providing the two leaders some face time together despite the lack of concrete deliverables. While Forbes, Kirk and Larsen were all part of the six member congressional group that met privately with Hu, at least media accounts suggested that only Forbes confronted Hu. Both at that meeting and later in a publicly announced formal request, Forbes asked the Chinese President whether he would permit him “to lead a congressional delegation to China that would have unfettered and unrestricted access to Christian groups in China.” Kirk and Larsen seemed to take a more low key approach.

Only time will tell whether the proliferation of China groups in the Congress will help or impede analyses of U.S./China relations issues. There is no question that deepening interest in and expertise about China can be of great value, and some of the legislative proposals that the China Caucus and Working Group members promote could have beneficial consequences. Thus Congressman Forbes’s Staffing Proposal, despite my doubts, could well improve interagency coordination of China issues, and Congressmen Kirk and Larsen’s support for greater Chinese instruction in U.S. schools is definitely a step in the right direction.

Nevertheless part of the congressional rush to form so many China based groups could well reflect oversensitivity to a perceived threat from China. Of course, this has happened before. Congressional fear mongering about Japanese economic power in the 1970s and 1980s, and executive branch over exaggeration of the threats posed by Iraq, are just two familiar examples. The problem our country has had in rushing to judgment in the area of foreign relations, counsels well for the slow, step by step, reasoned approach suggested by Congressmen Larsen. This is particularly true when dealing with a country like China who’s economic, social, and even some political development over the past 27 years, generally, has been positive.
On the Scene

Participating, as an observer, in the Great Information Revolution of China*

E. Griggers-Smith

Adventures, intrigue, frustration, exhaustion: the foreign correspondent headed for China can count on plenty of all those when taking on what is, and in some ways, always has been, one of the world’s biggest stories. China is a fast-moving target, changing rapidly as Beijing readies for the Olympics and Shanghai pushes ahead with its quest to regain its status as Asia’s most glamorous city. The countryside heaves with activity: massive construction projects, the constant migration of millions ever searching for a better life, or at least a better paying job.

Preparing to cope with thousands of outside journalists headed for the 2008 Olympic Games, the government is promising more press conferences and more openness than ever before. At the same time, the authorities are doing everything they can to prevent critics of government policies and victims of arbitrary local officials of voicing their opinions in public, or even on the Web. The days of totalitarianism are long gone, but civil liberties remain a far distant goal for most. “We’ve come a long, long way,” says one Shanghai native. “But there’s still a long way to go, a long, long way.”

Of all the changes that have transformed China in the past 25 years, economic, social, cultural, and to a much lesser extent, political, the information industry has been so thoroughly transformed by technology as to be barely recognizable. The handful of foreign correspondents who have worked in and around China for most of that time have seen communications go from telexes and typewritten manuscripts and a handful of morning and evening newspapers, to today’s real-time wireless and broadband communications.

Those technological changes, though seen worldwide, have had a doubly profound impact on the access to information inside China. Apart

* The editor wishes to thank Peg Christoff for making this article available to the journal.
from their own personal sources, until not long ago foreign journalists as well as Chinese citizens once were obliged to get their daily news from a few limited sources: The People’s Daily, China Central Television’s daily 7 p.m. evening news, The China People’s Radio Network and other Communist Party mainstays, and perhaps Voice of America and BBC by shortwave. Now, news of the country and the world comes through web-based communications, short message service (SMS) messaging and blogging. Meanwhile, as newspaper and magazine empires consolidated into huge media conglomerates in the West, China’s own print media exploded with a profusion that has left sidewalk kiosks buried in magazines of all sorts, from fashion to military hardware, home décor to business how-tos. Deprived of state support and required to make money or shut down, newspapers, magazines and many radio stations compete for business with exposes, serial romance stories, photos of sexy women, whatever sells. Chinese families have access to dozens of cable television networks, though not to foreign news channels. And of course, the xiaodao xiaoxi or “alleyway grapevine,” remains as ever the most enticing but ever unreliable source of information. Simply put, the state’s monopoly on public information is over, forever.

This Great Information Revolution has ensured that any journalist working in China today, foreign or local, has more access to information than ever before. E-mail and mobile phones make contacting both foreign and Chinese sources infinitely easier; Internet access to databases makes research far faster and more thorough. Corporate disclosure regulations ensure that Chinese companies are increasingly forthright about at least some of their business activities and finances. But while China’s mass media and business world appear increasingly, like those in the West, that appearance of familiarity can be misleading.

The same applies to life in the big cities, where all the foreign correspondents are based. Living and working can be relatively comfortable and in many respects like living elsewhere as an expatriate now that the big cities of Beijing and Shanghai have Western-style supermarkets, schools, hospitals and housing. But the hard reality of the government effort to control information and public discourse is ever present. Severe pollution levels, crowding and huge workloads are just part of the down side of what is otherwise a thrilling and fascinating job.
One of the biggest hardships of working as a foreign journalist in China is the difficulty of reconciling the realities of what can be achieved with the expectations of editors who cannot grasp how intrusive and obstructionist the authorities can be. China is still a culture where information is viewed as power, and most Chinese are acutely aware that providing information to a foreign correspondent is risky, given the country’s broad and arbitrarily enforced state secrecy laws. The stakes can be high: police surveillance, harassment and possible arrest and imprisonment. Journalists have to consider those risks for local sources who dare to speak out anyway, often in a last, desperate bid to gain attention or support for a cause, be it missing wages, pollution, corruption or abuse by the authorities.

For the newly arrived correspondent in China, though many have already lived here as language students for a time, the “official welcoming” routine by policy and foreign affairs office, or waiban staff in charge of foreign correspondents is the first direct confrontation with that reality. For years after the 1989 Tiananmen pro-democracy protests, the No. 1 “taboo” was naturally the dissident community. From 1999 through the early 2000s, it was the banned spiritual group Falun Gong, deemed “an evil cult” by former President Jiang Zemin and other Communist Party leaders for having dared to surround the Zhongnanhai leadership compound in Beijing in a silent protest. For those working in Shanghai, the standard advice lecture until recently was to avoid reporting on real estate-related conflicts. Don’t listen to those people. “They won’t tell you the truth,” police officers would counsel when meeting with correspondents for visa renewals.

Lectures from Chinese officials often include a reminder that all foreign correspondents are required to abide by a set of rules laid out in a special handbook, rules that require official permission for nearly every type of reporting activity and that are ignored in most cases and arbitrarily enforced when a journalist happens onto a particularly sensitive topic. When trying to cover breaking news, such as a street protest or industrial accident, journalists routinely get detained by the police. For foreign reporters, the problem is lack of access to information. Local reporters may be able to get better access in some cases, but inevitably their reports are censored, and in many cases blocked entirely.

The contradictions abound. One memorably unpleasant Foreign Ministry official, after a long and threatening lecture about keeping to the
rules, insisted that the only way to understand China and the correctness of the communist Part was to “go out and talk to the people,” an activity that in most cases is technically a violation of those restrictions. Naturally, most journalists just do their best to get on with their own jobs of trying to puzzle out what is really going on in this vast country of 1.3 billion people. They do so aware of surveillance, by phone taps and other bugging devices, informants and police and state security agents. However nerve-wracking the situation might be, foreign correspondents know that in most cases the worst result might be expulsion from the country. For Chinese journalists lacking a foreign passport, including those with Hong Kong travel documents, the stakes are far higher: Ching Cheong, a China-born, Hong Kong journalist was working for Singapore’s Straits Times when he was seized in April by security agents. He is now facing charges of spying for Taiwan; conviction can result in a sentence ranging from decades in prison to the death penalty. Zhao Yan, a researcher for the New York Times, was arrested last year, accused of leaking state secrets after the newspaper reported that former President Jiang Zemin planned to give up his post as chairman of the party’s Central Military Commission.

On November 8, China’s “Journalists Day,” Xinhua ran a brief article that summed up the responsibilities journalists should bear in mind as they go about their work. Apart from promoting economic and social progress, they are to “maintain social stability through publicizing the ongoing process of building a harmonious society,” it cited Li Changchun, a member of the powerful Central Committee as saying. Although the article also mentioned the need for government to improve working and living conditions for media workers, journalists have the task of “improving public understanding of the fifth plenum of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party,” it said. Though foreign correspondents are hardly expected to toe the party line, such pronouncements delineate the huge gap between official expectations and realities.

Still, the movement is not all backwards. In the aftermath of the 2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, officials in Shanghai made a big point of emphasizing their desire to facilitate work by foreign correspondents. The city government does hold regular news conferences, keeps a website in both Chinese and English up-to-date, and has duty officers to hand requests for information. However, the progress toward greater openness is more in form than in content. Requests for information from local government agencies are routinely denied. Most
inquiries to the city government offices are met with the demand that the correspondent attend the biweekly news conference and pose the question to the city spokeswoman, who usually will sidestep it with the respond that hers is not the department in charge of that particular issue.

Media access dipped to a new low recently when the city government, declaring officials too busy to attend the usual briefing, held a virtual “news conference.” Journalists were asked to sign on to the city Web site and pose their questions online, giving the officials the opportunity to screen questions and choose which they would respond to. The tactic was timely, given a spate of rumors of a possible shakeup in the city government. Even the live news conferences are tightly controlled. Questions about controversial topics are usually sidestepped with a comment that the spokesperson is not the official in charge and can’t be expected to respond. The strictly local agenda, focusing on such topics as welfare programs for local farmers and city plans for placing statues around town, offer little of interest to the foreign reporter.

In Beijing, where reporting opportunities are more plentiful given its status as the political center, progress has been more evident. The State Council Information Office embarked on a campaign under former media chief Zhao Qizheng to increase the number of briefings by government officials, and such events occur nearly every week. Most are aired live on CCTV4, allowing journalists who cannot afford to leave their offices the chance to watch, or record them for later viewing. Although the emphasis has often seemed to be quantity rather than qualitative news value, the briefings do offer regular opportunities to quiz officials on a variety of topics. And amid the recent avian flu outbreak, the Agriculture Ministry and Ministry of Health have held several news conferences, responding to journalists questions about a range of topics, including avian flu, and local authorities recent attempts to cover up, though only briefly, a spill of toxic benzene in the Songhua River following a November 13 chemical plant explosion.

Foreign journalists with long experience in China have seen, meanwhile, a sharp cutback in opportunities to meet with and interview members of the National People’s Congress (NPC) during their March annual session. Until several years ago, the 10-day session of the NPC and its parallel advisory body, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, or CPPCC, offered a chance to meet face-to-face with a wide
variety of officials from throughout the country, including first-time lawmakers from Inner Mongolia and Gansu, bureaucrats from Guizhou, Beijing ministry cadres, and a wide variety of newly wealthy entrepreneurs. Those willing to trek to out-of-the-way hotels and endure confusing security arrangements were treated to lively CPPCC discussions about stock market scandals, public dissatisfaction with the education system and anger over unsafe food and drugs. The biggest constraint appeared to be time, both for lawmakers and advisors, and for the journalists. In the past two years applications for such interviews have been largely ignored. The NPC is reduced once again to its original, ceremonial function of approving laws set out by the Communist Party, with little opportunity to glimpse the behind-the-scenes debates that can bring China’s secretive political world to life, for only a few days a year.

The recent conflicts in Taishi, a city in southern China’s Guangdong province, illustrate some of the other challenges of reporting for both foreign correspondents and their sources. Taishi residents have been trying to oust Chen Jingshen, their mayor, whom they accused of embezzling US$12 million in public money from land leases. Stonewalled by Chen and other officials, they sought outside attention for the cause, hoping to attract support from higher-level authorities. But foreign journalists who attempted to report from the scene were threatened and roughed up by thugs. Abel Segretin, a French radio journalist, was beaten on the stomach and Leu Siewying, a correspondent for the South China Morning Post, was hit on the head by a gang of toughs who stopped their car when they tried to enter the village. Both were “detained” for a time by those unidentified, non-official supporters of the mayor.

That fracas was followed by the beating of a democracy activist who was accompanying a correspondent for the British newspaper, The Guardian, to the city. In the aftermath of the beating, Benjamin Joffe-Walt, The Guardian’s new correspondent in Shanghai, left the country, writing up a grisly account of the scene whose accuracy was questioned when the activist he thought and been beaten nearly to death, Lu Banglie, reappeared with seemingly minor injuries. Details of what really happened are nearly impossible to verify given a lack of firsthand information, but what is obvious is that those who feel threatened by public exposure feel free to threaten and even attack journalists. It was, in short, a sample of the risks that local journalists face every time they venture into a conflict: attacks on Chinese reporters are frequent and sometimes fatal. No use complaining to
the authorities: in response to protest over attacks in Taishi, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, Kong Quan, complained that the journalists “violated the relevant regulations repeatedly.” What he did not mention is that officials stonewalled all attempts to get comment or information.

The Taishi protests, though apparently quashed by the mayor and his hangers-on, are just the tip of the iceberg. In every city and every region of the country, protestors are a daily occurrence. According to the government, there were more than 70,000 demonstrations in 2004, and that is only the ones that were officially acknowledged. Most are never reported by the state-controlled media and are often small, peaceful gatherings that dissipate without police interference. But some have grown into violent clashes involving thousands of people incensed over pollution, nonpayment of pensions, salaries or living stipends and other local issues.

On the commercial side, recent trends also have been discouraging, especially for foreign television and newspaper publishers hoping to grab a share of China’s huge and growing media market. After wooing officials in Beijing for more than a decade, media mogul Rupert Murdoch declared he had hit a “brick wall” after the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television tightened regulations on tie-ups between foreign and local broadcasters. Efforts to expand distribution of News Corp.’s Star TV satellite channel were rebuffed and a joint venture with Qinghai Satellite TV shut down after a half-year trial. In August, the government announced it would stop granting licenses for foreign satellite channels and tighten controls over the 30-some already operating in the mainland.

According to a recent Financial Times article citing Shi Zongyuan, head of the General Administration of Press and Publications, China also has decided not to allow foreign newspapers to print inside the mainland, because of worries over the so-called “color revolutions” in Georgia, Ukraine and Kirghizstan. “The color revolutions were a reminder not to let saboteurs into the house and that the door must be closed, so we have closed it temporarily,” the Financial Times cited Shi as saying; “As long as the government continues to view foreign media as a conduit for sabotage of the Communist state, prospects for reaching 1.3 billion pairs of eyeballs will remain scant.”
The Reward: Working in China

Amid the good, bad and ugly of working in China as a journalist, there are plenty of personal rewards that make it all worthwhile. There’s the intellectual challenge of trying to put the pieces of an ever-changing puzzle into some kind of order that would appeal or matter to readers overseas: of capturing China in words, sounds and pictures: of mastering the languages: “Live to old age, study to old age, and there’s still plenty to learn,” the old saying goes.

There are the people, as fascinating as folk are anywhere, from the very old with their memories of Revolution and Cultural Revolution, to the young with their Sony Playstations and their middle class aspirations. The farm folk and the city sophisticates, the brazen capitalists roaders and the genteel intellectuals. There’s the food, in all its rich variety, from the vinegary spiciness of Shandong to the numbingly spicy Sichuanese, the red-hot Hunan fare, hearty northern dishes and the light, fresh flavors of Guangdong. The surprises of being served all sorts of mystery foods, from pig ear dumplings to duck lips and “hair moss.” There are the sights, from the monuments and antiquities of an ancient civilization to the wild beauty of the country’s rugged mountains and lush rice fields. Somehow all that, along with the sense that somehow getting the news out will help move things forwards, advancing the common good, maybe even helping to get a dissident out of jail, serves to make the pressures, the distances from extended family and home country, and the round-the-clock workload all worthwhile.
Open Space Policy Supports Shanghai’s Quality of Life

Marilyn Clemens

Over the last decade, the Western press has focused on Shanghai’s changing skyline, increasingly ornamented with skyscrapers of an infinite variety in form. On a weekend night, a carnival atmosphere emanates from the center city’s rooflines, peaks and facades ablaze with colorful neon. Much less has been published about the situation on the ground. With some wonderful exceptions, the street level of these new buildings is often monumental and cold, having little architectural detail to engage the pedestrian unless retail occupies the first floor. Marble steps, guarded glass foyers or alternatively, garish metal signs atop street front store windows line the sidewalks. City planning, in a struggle to balance the scale of growth, now requires wide new sidewalks, street trees and plantings around the new high rises, and public open space is increasingly provided with each major mixed use project. City policy seeks to increase the amount of vegetation and public open space to mitigate the impact of the intense construction activity underway since the early 1990’s. This policy is one of several laid out in “The Comprehensive Plan of Shanghai, 1999-2020” approved by the State Council in 2001.*

The overarching goal of the Plan is to build a new image of Shanghai and improve its environment. Together with a resurgent interest in the cultural value of historic buildings, the open space and environmental policies enunciated in the Shanghai Plan will help Shanghai retain its heritage as well as improve its quality of life.

The Huangpu River divides Shanghai’s urban core into the historic city center west of the river, Puxi, and Pudong, east of the river. Pudong is notorious for its transformation from a flat marshy terrain of vegetable plots, small houses and canals into a vertical city over the last 15 years. While

* The “Comprehensive Plan of Shanghai, 1999-2020” was developed by the Shanghai Urban Plan and Research Institute. It was published on May 11, 2001.
large boulevards and parks have been installed along with the high rises, it may be years before Pudong has the same visual richness at the pedestrian level as the old Puxi. Pudong is essentially a suburban setting, and its wide, high speed, arterial roadways encourage the use of motor vehicles and discourage pedestrian activity. The real challenge for Pudong will be to attain what Puxi risks loosing, i.e. the fine grained, diversified, visual texture characteristic of historic Shanghai’s old urban streets and public spaces.

Shanghai’s Comprehensive Plan is a classic master plan based on solid principles. It lays out the land uses and transportation corridors for the Central District, containing Puxi and Pudong, as well as the entire metro region, and describes the desired urban structure of cities and towns within that region. The towns and cities are to be inter-connected by a network of roadways and an ambitious mass transit system. The goal of the 2001 Plan is to simultaneously develop urban and suburban areas, spreading out the population, to have organized and coordinated development, and to create balanced settlements at many nodes. As with many western master plans, it contains internal contradictions. Shanghai aspires to compete globally as a major commercial center, spurring individual consumerism, and yet strives to attain a high level of sustainability and quality of life. This will require persistent strong management at all levels of the approval and implementation process.

The Plan contains many environmental goals and aims for sustainable development. While it is a critically important goal, the phrase “sustainable development” has become a “buzz word” in planning and environmental circles around the world. It has extensive ramifications but can be generally expressed as a level of development that is healthy and vital and which can be maintained and replenished with local resources. In the ideal situation, the resources would be renewable, the building materials recyclable, and the population clothed, fed, provided with employment, housing and all necessities within a defined locale. China’s increased consumption of energy and fossil fuels to heat and cool its buildings and run its automobiles runs counter to these very sustainability goals. However, as in the west, leaders strive to achieve balance.

The implementation of Shanghai’s open space and landscape policy is one element of this overarching ideal that can contribute to improving the urban environment. In the long range Plan, city planners propose adding green areas in the form of rings, wedges, corridors and parks in the Central
City and large scale forests in the suburbs to form a region wide system of greenery and provide ecological balance. The aim is to have 35% of city land vegetated by 2020, increasing the public green area per capita to 10 square meters. Priority is given to foresting wetlands and creating a 100 meter wide woodland along the ocean. Forest parks will be created west of the city in the areas of Sheshan and Dianshan Lake.

To mitigate the impact of roadways and water transport, wide bands of vegetation will be planted along both sides of major roads and waterways. A 500 meter wide greenbelt circling the city will be set up along side the Outer Ring Road. Space will be reserved and controlled for green lands 500 to 1000 meters in width along suburban ring roads, and greenbelts 50 to 100 meters in width are planned along expressways. Space will also be reserved and planted to create woodlands along water sources in the middle and upper reaches of the Huangpu River and around Dianshan Lake. According to the Plan, eight green wedges will be created between Shanghai’s Inner Ring Road and the Outer Ring Road, and 60-140 meters of vegetation will be planted along both sides of the Huangpu River in the Central City between the Nanpu Bridge on the south and the Yangpu Bridge on the north. Plantings will also be part of the integrated renovation of Suzhou Creek, which winds through the northern part of the central city. Some new green areas of at least 1 hectare will be created in the Central City, with a service radius of 500 meters for each. A large scale green space of over 20 hectares will be added to the core area. The policy has actually been taking form since the early 1990’s, and four of the most significant projects are described below.

The ideas behind Puxi’s open space policy were already being implemented by 1993. City planners and architecture faculty at Tongji University wanted to improve the western bank of the Huangpu River and had studied urban waterfront promenades throughout Europe as well as China. They came up with a design for the renovation of Shanghai’s famous Bund and its waterfront park. Old photographs of the Bund show a roadway and linear park lining the Huangpu River with multiple rows of aligned trees similar to Paris’s Cour la Reine along the River Seine. Many wooden piers projected out into the Huangpu to service passenger ships or freighters. Today’s Bund promenade is much less green, much wider and much higher. It not only solved a flooding problem, but it provides a great public plaza where many more people can enjoy not only the daily show of sunrise and sunset over the wide Huangpu, but the near 24 hour performance of
everyday citizens dancing, meeting, and exercising. It is also the prime vantage point to watch the nighttime carnival of lights playing over Pudong east of the river. And Pudong now has its own riverfront plaza where people enjoy the slightly more subdued lights on the historic 1930’s structures fronting the Bund. Brightly lit tour boats cut trails of light through the shimmering tower reflections on the water.

A major series of green spaces, Yanan Zhong Lu Park, was also underway before the final approval of the Comprehensive Plan. Located under the intersection of two elevated roadways, Yanan Zhong Lu and the North South Highway, the park represents the implementation of the principle that greenbelts be required along roadways. In this case, a web of roadways hovers several dozen meters above the park, and wide roads on the ground surround the park blocks. Twenty three hectares (57 acres) were cleared along the alignment of the roadways, and 4,837 families living in old low rise residences were relocated, according to the master plan in place in the 1980’s. It is important to note that, in general, the families were compensated and exchanged rundown facilities for modern accommodations. The northern portion of the park is located west of Renmin
Square and the Shanghai Art Museum, and the southern portions stretch westward for several blocks from the Shanghai Concert Hall. This urban greenbelt was termed the new “Green Lungs” of the City.

Yanan Zhonglu Park

Because the Yanan area spanned three districts, each with its own mayor and parks department, Han Zheng, Deputy Mayor of Shanghai at the time, took charge of the project and launched an international design competition for the park in 1999. Williams, Asselin, Ackaoui (WAA) landscape architects and urban planners from Montreal, won the competition. The landscape architects presented a unifying concept for the multi-block park based on the theme of Shanghai’s connection to the water. They also provided a specific character for each of seven gardens that compose the open space. The concept of a water story line was also pursued because of an ancient river than once traversed the site. The organizing elements of the concept were “the spring, the garden of the senses, the
rockery, the dry river, the meadow, the water garden, and the garden of dreams.” Whether or not the average citizen understands the underlying theme of each section of the park, the overall impression is one of an extremely lush and verdant oasis. The park is exceptionally well maintained, has commonly available plantings installed in dense masses, groves of evergreens, bamboo and deciduous trees, a great variety in flowering species, and many sheltered places to sit quietly or play in the open. It offers a dramatic respite and counterpoint to the elevated freeway nearby, which passes from the mind once in the park. The park’s water features are varied, including a lake, a babbling brook, rivers, waterfalls and rivulets, and the landscape plantings are well designed. Two areas of the expansive open space are still under construction, the “Spring or At the Beginning” on the western edge of the park, and its eastern edge around the Shanghai Concert Hall.

Parking garages were built under several of the park blocks, and one green space is atop a shopping mall, which means that some green spaces are elevated above the street. The only difficulty in walking the entire greenbelt, or comprehending the thematic connection between the spaces, is crossing the wide streets that separate the blocks on either side of the elevated freeway. Some older buildings were saved and renovated for new uses in the park. New stone stage like structures were designed for the park and visually link the spaces separated by the street crossings.
Yanan Zhong Lu Park was awarded China’s highest rating for a park, a “civilized” park, in 2001. Yanan was also the first of Shanghai’s parks to be free to the public. Previously there was a nominal admission fee to public parks that helped pay for maintenance. This free admission policy has recently been extended to all Shanghai parks, and many other Chinese cities are following suit.
WAA subsequently won another competition for an important site, a former industrial plant in the Xihui District, at the west end of the former French Concession. The park is walking distance from the Xujiahui subway station. In this case, the landscape architects worked with the Xihui District’s mayor and parks department.

The designers developed an allegory for the city of Shanghai and sought to connect the disparate parts of the city on the edges of the park via a network of elements representing different eras. They persuaded the officials to consider saving some historic buildings and symbolic remnants of the factory work that took place on site. Today, a tall chimney stands as a beacon landmark in the 60,000 square meter park. Its base memorializes the many workers who spent their lives on the site. An elevated pedestrian bridge provides an aerial view of the park, of the varied city skyline in all directions, as well as an alternate way to cross the park. The skyway also allows those interested to read the “map” of Shanghai. The “map” design superimposes on the park the layout of its waterway, its plantings and its path system.
Xujiahui Park and Waterway

The park is obviously enjoyed by local people and was greatly needed. However, to their regret WAA was not successful in persuading officials to save some key historic buildings. An Art Deco building of high quality and notable interior decoration was demolished, as was a cluster of 19th century housing, in the “Shikumen”, style at the west edge of the park. The designers had proposed turning the Shikumen complex into a bed and breakfast and small scale shops, something that has been enormously successful at the Xintiandi project further east near Shanghai’s old city, Nanshi. The project did, however, retain a colonial villa once also used by the French Pathe recording firm. The elegant villa became an upscale restaurant and bar with an outdoor terrace opening into the park.
Improving the water quality of Suzhou Creek and providing a greenway along its banks is another important open space goal being realized in Shanghai. Suzhou Creek has long been an active waterway transporting a variety of goods from farms, quarries and industries to the port of Shanghai. The creek is a vital link to the interior of the region. The agency charged with monitoring the renovation of Suzhou Creek put out an international call for proposals to design a major new park on the site of a former sugar factory just south of a great bend in the creek in the area of Zhongtan Road, west of the main Shanghai railroad station. The park is called Monqing Park, a “dream of clear water”, and is located at the heart of a large new neighborhood of high rise residences. Local residents line up to enter the park as soon as it opens in the morning. Music to accompany morning exercises is provided through speakers concealed in small rocks, and a bamboo grove, wetlands, and a zigzag path across water, requisites for most new parks in Shanghai, provide a variety of possible itineraries through the park. Representing the evolution in park planning, two art deco era
industrial buildings are being renovated as community activity centers. On weekends, the edges of the park are lit with green light and the rooflines of the old factory buildings are highlighted in neon, emphasizing the park and the creek as the focal point of the high rise neighborhood.

Following Suzhou Creek east past an old industrial site converted into an arts center, new housing sites are under construction, more plantings and walkways line the waterway as it nears the Garden Bridge. Crowds of people exercise along the waterway every morning. Only 10 years ago, Suzhou Creek was known for its strong odor, considered dangerously polluted, and was not a place to linger unless you had no choice. The Open Space goal of the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan is not distinctly different from those expressed in many American and European planning documents. What is dramatically different is the political power held by the mayor and other civic officials and their will to implement policy in a relatively short time frame.

In the United States, it often takes a special funding mechanism or private funds to get new public open space or needed renovations to public parks. The amount of public funds regularly allocated for public open space acquisition and maintenance is low, and well maintained urban parks reflect specific neighborhood pressure more than strong policy in most cases. Because of this attitude towards public spaces, the private sector is often required to provide and maintain a minimum of 20% of its net lot area as public spaces as part of a package of development incentives for urban mixed use projects. In Paris, the city government requires that all new public or private mixed use projects include a high percentage of public use space, and the public parks and squares are maintained at a much higher level than in the United States. The public expects a high level of care as a necessity and an expression of civic pride. Shanghai’s parks are also generally well maintained, given the extremely high level of use. They are gated at night where possible as they are in Paris. In the United States, policy used to dictate that public parks were to be open night and day, but more and more this practice is being relaxed to preserve and protect special urban parks from vandalism and occupation by the homeless.

What is common to Shanghai, Paris, New York, and San Francisco, is the small supply of land available for new urban parks apart from abandoned urban industrial sites. Over the last 20 years, all four cities have improved what is already in the public domain: the waterfronts and the rights of way.
of former railroad alignments. In addition, they are improving their roadways as shared open space for pedestrian bicyclists and motorists.

Shanghai has an administrative territory of 6,341 square kilometers (2,448 square miles) and a permanent population of 13.5 million residents. Providing a healthy, sustainable environment for a population of this size is a challenge no American or European city faces. In the past, Shanghai residents mainly used the sidewalks or the street for playing cards or ball, or for chatting with neighbors, and there were few neighborhood parks. Now Shanghai’s public parks, temple grounds, riverfront, and plazas are filled with scores of people. This display of energy may be considered part reflection of the city’s current health and vitality and part realization of a dynamic and well placed civic policy.
China Honors American Veterans

Bob Bergin

Groups of American veterans who served in China during World War II visited the country during August and September 2005 to join the Chinese in events commemorating the 60th anniversary of the war’s end. At a ceremony in Kunming on 19 August 2005, a sculpture called “Hump Soul”, created by renowned Chinese artist Yuan Xiaocen was presented to 14th Air Force Association officer Robert Lee. Lee served in China during the war and has made many friends there during visits in more recent years. He accepted the sculpture on behalf of all Americans who served in China during World War II. A decision on the site where the sculpture will be located in the U.S. has recently been finalized. It will reside at Vandenburg Air Force Base in California.

The life size bronze statue is composed of four human figures and a dog. It shows a rescued American aviator expressing his gratitude as he bids farewell to a woman of the Lisu tribe who sheltered him and nursed him back to health. A second American embraces the woman’s son, the Lisu youth who rescued the pilot. A dog moves toward the group, as if sensing the intimacy and emotion of the moment and wanting to share in it. The scene is based on one of the many instances in which local people rescued American airman whose aircraft went down in remote areas of Yunnan Province. The rescuers were often members of one of the 28 ethnic groups that live in Yunnan, of which the Lisu people are one. The sculpture represents the friendship between Americans and Chinese that grew during the war and has endured ever since.

The sculpture’s title, “Hump Soul”, memorializes the spirit of the “Hump” flights, the World War II air route over the Himalayan Mountains. The American pilots who flew the route called it the “Aluminum Trail” because of the wreckage of almost 1,000 airplanes scattered along the 280 miles from Dinjan in Assam, India to Kunming in China. It was China’s only link to the outside world after the Burma Road was closed by the Japanese in February 1942. It was some of the most dangerous flying of the
war, but brought to China all the material the country needed to fight the Japanese. The heroism and sacrifice of the American airmen who flew the Hump have never been forgotten by the Chinese, particularly in Yunnan.

Yunnan Province and its capital, Kunming was the center of U.S. activity during much of the war. It was the terminus of the Burma Road and the Hump flights and the Headquarters for Claire Lee Chennault, who early in the war commanded the famous American Volunteer Group (AVG) Flying Tigers, and later the China Air Task Force and the 14th Air force. The contributions of these Americans remains fresh in the minds of the Chinese who then lived in Yunnan, and who have passed on the history they witnessed to their children and grandchildren.

The sculptor, Yuan Xiaocen, was born in Yunnan Province in 1915. He spent the war years in Yunnan and experienced the Japanese bombing of Kunming. To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the War’s end, he chose the Hump flights as the theme for a sculpture that would capture his feelings of what American help during the war II meant to the Chinese people and of the friendship it inspired. Yuan Xiaocen has been a major figure in Chinese art for decades. He is renowned for traditional Chinese painting as well as for his sculpture, and has won many honors. His paintings and his sculptures are displayed in museums in China, and in Japan and Australia as well as in Europe and the United States.
Chinese made sculpture celebrating US/China cooperation in WWII
How Chairman Mao Sanitized Culture During the Cultural Revolution

Leo A. Orleans

Once again I found myself painfully browsing through some leftover files (“for the last time!”), excavating old memories, and assuring myself that since no one could possibly want my obsolete residuals, it was time to chuck the lot. It would have been so much easier if, after a lifetime of China-watching, I had done it years ago. This time, however, the activity took place one day after attending a magnificent performance at the Kennedy Center by a symphony orchestra from China. And what did I happen to have on my lap but an old, fat, and long forgotten file filled with materials relating to—of all things—the incredible abuses that were inflicted on literature, theater, and music during the tumultuous period of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). Although the contents of the clippings and papers were obviously familiar to me, it was especially jarring to re-read them after the previous night’s performance. Three decades are a long time, but I still marvel that China’s highly acclaimed musicians, actors, dancers rebounded to perform in front of large audiences around the world, and that the output of many Chinese authors is so popular among foreign readers and reading groups.

My own amazement made me want to jog the memories of older readers who experienced the Cultural Revolution from afar and inform the younger readers about at least one aspect of this sad period in China’s history. And both the old and the young might be surprised by the obvious: the primary target of the Cultural Revolution was indeed—CULTURE. It should be noted that this focus was not some sudden impulse on the part of Mao Zedong. As early as the mid-1930s (during his Yenan days) Mao expressed the conviction that the regeneration (“squashing,” if you will) of all types of artistic endeavors should be a priority in the process of converting China into a socialist society. And no doubt that is why, at the height of the upheaval he could proudly proclaim that “There is great disorder under heaven and the situation is excellent.”
As you will see, telling this story does not require any special talent. The quotations from a variety of scrupulously translated (when China was very Red) Chinese newspapers, journals, and radio broadcasts tell it like it was. And since this is not a research paper the quotations are not footnoted. Trust me, I did not make them up.

I will start with two extreme and premature examples by Mao’s overzealous followers that should have been an omen to things to come. In 1949, because the piano was deemed to represent “bourgeois individualism,” someone in the new leadership decided that it should be banned! Obviously, this directive was premature, extreme, and unrealizable. The piano survived and so did classical music until the Cultural Revolution.

Only a few years later, armed with Mao’s thoughts (a “powerful weapon for extinguishing the enemy”), other eager followers selected Peking operas as their target for “appropriate revisions.” Once again, the effort was precipitous and impulsive. It quickly became clear that the people were not ready for such a drastic attack on China’s cultural heritage. Influenced by unhappy actors and producers, as well as a shrinking audience, the Minister of Culture expressed an unusually strong reaction to this “cultural up-grade,” proclaiming that the “drama-reform business is a joke.” And so, the impulsive edict was retracted, and Peking opera resumed the production of traditional plays until 1966 and the full-blown onslaught on the arts under the guidance of Jiang Qing, Mao’s wife and unofficial “Empress of Culture.”

When the Cultural Revolution finally arrived in 1966 every form of writing became subject to criticism and revision. And it is not much easier now than it was then to fully understand and interpret Mao’s jargon for communicating his revolutionary doctrine. For example, in the process of converting socialist literature from “poisonous weeds” to “fragrant flowers,” it had to be “represented by episodes of conflicts and contradictions abstracted from actual life” of China’s workers, peasants, and soldiers. At the same time that novels, essays, poetry and drama had to attack “reasonableness,” “humane influence,” and “class union,” they also had to be made “more typical and more ideal than the ordinary actual life.” And most importantly, primary emphasis had to be placed on conflict rather than harmony.
Although it is difficult to imagine that the local party leaders were not perplexed by such seemingly abstract instructions, it did not take long for virtually every province to start publishing “Literature and Art” journals filled with the prescribed themes. Their task was made more difficult by the stipulation that, before established writers could be trusted to communicate the new doctrine they had to undergo a period of reeducation. The solution was to enlist workers, peasants, and soldiers with little if any experience in writing to work as members of writing committees under the guidance of Party personnel who, in most cases, were not much better equipped for the difficult task.

Nevertheless, the new authors managed to turn out hundreds (some say thousands!) of so-called “model plays” presenting cookie cutter themes of selfless activities of heroes set in the drab daily realities of Chinese life. Typically, they included class struggles between poor peasants and “representatives of the landlord capitalist class” or between the proletarian class and the “lackeys of imperialist Kuomintang reactionaries.” Without prior experience, the writers often took somewhat predictable shortcuts, frequently incorporating the required revolutionary elements into well-known plays and other forms of Chinese literature, compelling Mao himself to complain that there was too much rewriting of ancient themes with too many figures of old kings, generals, and ministers.

Since most of the early writings were not attributed to specific authors it was easy to conform to Mao’s dictate that literature should not be “for selfish gain and greed, nor for fame and position.” But by the early 1970s leadership cadres were complaining that as amateur writers gained experience, many of them were surprised to discover their hidden talents. It was reported that they started counting words and pages they had written and even “went so far as to refer to themselves as writers.”

While simple model plays were shown throughout the country and even filmed for showing in small towns and villages where it would have been difficult to stage them, urban populations were treated to extravagant but not much more sophisticated productions on the same themes. In the 1970s every foreign visitor to a major city was bound to be taken to a large theater or opera house to see spectacularly produced Revolutionary Model Beijing Operas such as the “Red Lantern,” “White Haired Woman,” or “The Red Detachment of Women.” (In 1973, in a packed house with a very
enthusiastic Chinese audience, the medical delegation with which I traveled was treated to the “Red Detachment of Women.”

On the assumption that hairstyles have a relevance to theater, an amusing diversion. In August of 1966, when the Red Guards were rampaging to display their revolutionary spirit, *Kwangchou Daily* published an article titled “Vigorously and Speedily Eradicate Bizarre Bourgeois Hair Styles,” listing ten “proposals” for the revolutionary hairdressing workers. They were instructed not only to forego “cowboy” hairstyles, but to “smash all shop signs tinged with feudal, capitalist and revisionist ideas” and “replace them with signs fraught with revolutionary significance.” The end result, of course, was the uniformity of hairstyle that matched the uniformity of wearing apparel which characterized the Chinese people for some three decades.

In hindsight, signs that the Cultural Revolution was waning might have been gleaned from the concerns in official publications about the direction Chinese writings had taken. An article in a 1973 issue of *The Red Flag*, specified that the emphasis in publishing must be as much on quality as on quantity and that popularization has nothing in common with crude creations by voiceless and faceless worker-peasant-soldier authors. It concluded that publishing some of these materials actually showed contempt for the amateur authors. On the same theme, in a 1975 issue of the *Shensi Literature and Art*, a critic noted that all novels are “more or less the same and lack new ideas,” that the contradictions are phony, characters are dull, and that they contained “many meaningless and trivial things of life at the whim of the author.” I am not aware of anyone who found the courage to suggest that the limits on originality was set by Mao’s prescribed topics.

On the whole, it can be safely concluded that the forced conversion of literature and theater from “poisonous weeds” to “fragrant flowers” did not produce the hoped for enthusiasm among the Chinese people.

Prescriptions for the “maoisation” of literature and plays during the Cultural Revolution were a snap compared to the more difficult convolutions necessary to transform music into an instrument for class struggle. And I doubt that anyone attempted to define “revisionist absolute music” which had to be condemned, or the necessary revisions for music to “serve the political line.”
How curious that so much of the wrath was directed at classical music and especially European compositions of the 18th and 19th century without titles. For example, Sonata No. 17 by Beethoven (“German capitalist musician”) and Symphony in B Minor by Schubert (“romantic Austrian capitalist”) were denounced for demonstrating “different and changing moods but without any social content” and for being “saturated with ideas and feelings characteristic of bourgeois society.” Some confusion with regard to the status of classical music in a Communist society persisted into the 1970s. Although at the turn of the decade several western symphony orchestras resumed playing to packed houses, a 1974 article in the People’s Daily still questioned the appropriateness of praises heaped on music that had no class content, assuring its readers that “worshiping capitalist classical music displays the mentality of a foreign slave.” The same article went on to declare that western music could not possibly be on par with “The Sun Rises,” a composition which “glorifies the red sun of Chairman Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Communist party in the hearts of the Chinese people.” On the other hand, I found no complaints about another musical composition of the period entitled “The Night Soil Collectors Are Descending the Mountain.”

Although classical “capitalist music” was eventually fully rehabilitated, the authorities found a more sympathetic (to my taste) musical target: “low and dirty” records and tapes smuggled from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Coincidentally, telling young people that Jazz was “against the normal psychological needs of man” and that love songs were “about deformed love in a colonial or semi-colonial society” harmonized nicely with China’s campaign for a one-child family.

It all points to the obvious: cultural transformations do not take place by decree. China’s march from the muddleheaded back yard furnaces and songs about night soil collectors to sending a man into space and becoming a major international player required time and major social, economic, and even political reforms. And it necessitated not isolation but joining the world community. It all works together or not at all.

As for Mao Zedong, the creator of the Cultural Revolution, one must second the frequently expressed sentiment that history would be judging Mao very differently if either his leadership or his life had ended by the mid-1950s.
The Critics


**Reviewed by Wayne Bert**

A consensus exists that a new China is emerging, but there is much disagreement over what kind of China it will be. The “peace and development” strategy inaugurated by the Chinese Communist Party in 1978 has produced spectacular economic results. But we still wait to see what the long-term political and cultural results will be. These writers explore the hypothesis that China is becoming the major power in Asia and that the regional system is again becoming Sinocentric as it was during the days of the Chinese empire. The participants conclude that in spite of major changes creating a much more powerful China, this is not yet the outcome.

The book is a collection of excellent essays by top analysts in the China field, dissecting the important aspects of China’s foreign relations in Asia. The two-day conference on which it is based was held at George Washington University in December of 2003.Introductory essays are followed by chapters on China’s role in regional economics, its politics and diplomacy toward Japan, the Korean peninsula, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, Central and South Asia, and Russia. Two essays on security issues, two on the implications for the United States, and two on implications for the Asian region conclude the volume.

Two representative US perspectives on China are an especially useful addition to the volume. The more optimistic perspective (David Lampton) suggests that globalization has given China options and increased the remunerative power that allows it to compete in a non zero-sum manner, and a “new-look” foreign policy that emphasizes resolution of potential conflicts. Taiwan is still the one exception presenting the greatest challenge to maintaining peace. But in a world where Chinese policy makers recognize what they gain by engaging in cooperative economic activity and avoiding military conflict, an incentive to maintain good relations exists. Adherence to multinational norms and organizations, regional multilateral
organizations, peacekeeping activity with the UN, and even cross-national military exercises suggest the changes in Chinese policy.

Admitting the changes, especially the increased interaction and uniformity engendered by globalization, the more pessimistic Robert Sutter worries about less sanguine possibilities. What will happen if, possibly in the context of a decline of US power, Beijing decides to exert more pressure against US interests, and security concerns trump economic issues? What if the current peace and development rhetoric and restraint are a calculated reaction to the more aggressive US policy following the 9/11 incident? What if the period of tactical restraint comes to be seen as no longer justified, and China reverts to its old ways? Nations learn slowly, and there is little evidence that China’s leaders have really learned a “more broadly cooperative approach to the United States in Asia.”

This volume contains only modest emphasis on what are called realist themes, and avoids sounding alarms about China’s continued growth and increasing power a la offensive realists like John Mearsheimer. This is not to say that the contributors are unconcerned about China’s growing power and how it will be wielded. Rather they are for the most part cautiously optimistic about future Chinese restraint, and acutely aware of the necessity to be aware of how China will interpret any attempts to restrain or hinder its development that may be reminiscent of earlier times.

Numerous events and utterances, Sutter reminds us, raise questions about the credibility of the peace and development rhetoric. These include China’s extremely harsh language toward the US during the 1999 bombing of the Belgrade Embassy, the continued deployment of military resources aimed at Taiwan, and contradictory comments welcoming the US presence in Asia, juxtaposed to harsh comments on the US, Taiwan, and Japan. These divergent perspectives and areas of emphasis are obvious in other chapters. Michael Swaine argues that China is in the process of acquiring new military capabilities and undertaking new force deployments that will “fundamentally alter security perceptions in the region and stimulate a more widespread military response among the major powers.” Bates Gill goes further and suggests that Chinese assumptions about peace and development and an easing of tension are “at greater risk of being disproved today” than at any time in the last ten years. Since the US led war on terror leads to a more aggressive US posture in many parts of the world, so the risk of conflict with China increases over contested spheres of influence. Perhaps
the best summary of this inconclusive mix is Pollack’s statement that there is “an inescapable paradox of vastly heightened interdependence [within Asia], and the parallel vulnerability of these societies to attack.” The intensity of the old competitive realist system in East Asia appears to have been tamed, but a new multilateral system to adequately structure the new interactions has not emerged.

This volume also provides a balanced overview of Chinese relations with specific countries in the region. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 increased China’s influence in Central Asia as numerous smaller Central Asian states emerged to replace Soviet influence and sought out diplomatic alternatives to close ties to Russia. But the environment was again transformed in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in the United States, as the US sought bases and increased its influence in the area while fighting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Increasing US influence diminished China’s own capability to maneuver in the area (John Garver).

Recent diplomatic developments on the east and south of China highlight both old and new themes. Mike Mochizuki gives a basically upbeat assessment of the continued Sino-Japanese sparring over economic, moral and historical issues, suggesting “emergence of a new equilibrium.” But, the severe restrictions in China on debate over the Sino-Japanese relationship, Jonathan Pollack counters, are an important impediment to development of the relationship. Richard Bush sees little grounds for PRC-Taiwan negotiations, unless the PRC agrees to explore arrangements that would allow Taiwan to retain its sovereignty. That possibility seems unlikely. If present trends continue in Sino-South Korean relations, Jo Ho Chung foresees the possibility of eventual strategic realignment, with China playing the current US role on the peninsula. But he admits that a “psychological and perceptual inertia” may limit such a development. China’s relations with Southeast Asia seem to be the best they have been in at least half a century. In some countries, “China fever” seems to be replacing “China fear” (Wang Gungwu).

This book lives up to the high expectations raised by the marketing blurbs on the cover. It is a skillfully edited and comprehensive compendium of some of the best writing on China and Asia. The chapters are mercifully concise, embodying skillful argument and relevant data, but not every last fact. It should be on the desk of every serious scholar of China in Asia.

Reviewed by Yu Maochun

No book on modern China in recent memory has evoked so many passionate reviews with diametrically opposite opinions than *Mao: the Unknown Story* by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday. For those who admire this book, it is a monumental, exhaustively researched tome exposing Mao as a ruthless and manipulative Communist dictator who cared nothing about human sufferings, and stopped at nothing to advance his clinging to power. His actions resulted in the deaths of well over 70 million people in peacetime, more than any other twentieth-century tyrant. Yet its many detractors, mostly in Western academic circles, deplore the book as sheer diatribe against the Great Helmsman, a deeply biased piece of research that does not live up to the standard of serious academic research. Even if Mao was indeed as bad as the book depicts, one historian suggested at a recent scholarly panel in San Francisco devoted to discussing this book, he was no worse than the U.S. president Andrew Jackson who killed American Indians in the early 19th century.

No matter how heated these reviews are--and they keep coming nonstop [an ordinary book on Amazon.com receives two or three customer reviews on average, Chang/Halliday’s book has 130 as of this writing], one fact remains unchanged: the book has been a runaway bestseller in the West. In fact, no other China-related book in recent decades has sold as many copies as *Mao: the Unknown Story*.

Putting aside for a moment the issue of the merits of the reviews on both sides, we face an even more interesting question: what explains the book’s unchecked popularity despite many devastating salvos aimed at it from its critics? Obviously, it is not merely because, as the clichés goes, there is no such thing as bad publicity. In reality, people do not spend a hefty amount to buy bad books. Indeed, there are many reasons why so many people are reading it.

First, unlike most other Mao biographies, the book provides a clear conceptual framework of moral clarity and historical culpability. There is
little doubt that the twentieth century was China’s bloodiest. The human suffering was enormous. Yet most Mao biographies are ambiguous as to who was responsible for various catastrophes under Mao’s rule. The devastating Cultural Revolution has been routinely interpreted as a result of the doings of Mao’s underlings such as Lin Biao and The Gang of Four. The murderous show trials and executions in the 1930s within the Communist camp, either during the Long March or in Yenan, have also been described by various western scholars as the deeds of other minor Communist functionaries such as Kang Sheng. The Chang/Halliday tome changes this paradigm of moral opacity. It places historical culpability for China’s sufferings under Mao’s rule on Mao himself. The beginning sentence of the 800-page book states, “Mao Tse-tung, who for decades held absolute power over the lives of one-quarter of the world’s population, was responsible for well over 70 million deaths in peacetime, more than any other twentieth century leader.” The rest of the book is an elaboration of this statement.

Secondly, precisely because of this conceptual framework, more historical events in the Chinese Communist movement and Maoist China become better connected and make more sense. Under this new frame, even old information known to the world gains new meanings: how Mao came to power, why he launched the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, and why and how Mao dealt with his subordinates such as Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao and Zhu De.

Thirdly, that the book has been such a success worldwide is also due to the meticulous research accomplished to support the major themes of the book. The famous book, Red Star over China, by the American journalist Edgar Snow, published some seven decades ago, has mostly shaped the myth of Mao’s life in the West. Yet Snow’s portrait of Mao was based upon one single oral source, Mao himself. The Chang/Halliday tome is based upon exhaustive primary and secondary sources. No writer of modern China, academic or popular, has displayed such unusual access to key figures around Mao, important documents by or about Mao, and revealing corroborative archival evidence from major countries having anything significant to do with Mao.

Fourthly and closely related to the above is that this book is one of the few published in the West that effectively combines the works of Chinese scholars, recollections and interviews of significant historical figures relevant to the topic, with western archival evidence. In this book, hand-
written testimonies from one of Mao’s four wives about Mao’s character, interviews or writings of Mao’s long-time Russian interpreter and intelligence aide Shi Zhe, his secretary Li Rui, his bodyguard Li Yinqiao, the CCP official historian Liao Gailong, China’s best investigative historians Yang Kuisong and Gao Hua, and many others in the intimate circles of Mao, provide authenticity and perspectives unknown to the West previously.

Despite its enormous popularity in bookstores, critics of Chang/Halliday’s book are many and unrelenting. While mostly ignoring the above virtues of this book and its essential message, almost all of the critics focus on the accuracy of about a dozen claims made by the book on specific historical events, such as whether Chiang Kai-shek made a Faustian bargain with Stalin by deliberately letting the Chinese Red Army escape the pursuit during the Long March in order to get his son back as hostage in Moscow; whether, as the book claims, the famous battle of Luding River Bridge (Sichuan) during the Long March was a fake made by the CCP propaganda apparatus; and whether there is sufficient evidence to prove Mao’s reckless youth would necessarily lead to a murderous adulthood when he reached the zenith of power in China. While some of the criticisms are valid, others, such as on the Luding Bridge incident, about which even the Chinese official historians and political leaders have openly admitted as fakery made up by Mao’s propagandists, show many critics’ ignorance of the latest developments in Chinese historical research.

But the vehemency of the critics also reflects some deeper lingering currents of the Western mind. First of all, prevalent in Western academe is the blurred line of intentionality and criminality when it comes to Mao study. There has never been any meaningful objection to treating Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin as intentionally evil and intentionally criminal. But to many, Mao has always been regarded as a great Chinese leader with good intentions who only made some policy mistakes, which, if this logic prevails, inadvertently killed some 70 million Chinese people. Therefore we rarely see a Hitler or Stalin T-shirt on any given American campus, but Mao T-shirts are frequently spotted and have not evoked strong moral repugnancy among us. Understandably, when Mao is revealed in the Chang/Halliday biography as a monster with intentions to destroy tens of millions of human lives to satiate his ego, outrage is ensured, because a comfortable icon has been smashed.
But how do we find this kind of Mao lore relevant to history? Chang and Halliday went to Moscow and found in the Soviet-era archives original inventories of China’s large volume exports of agricultural goods to the USSR during the late 1950s and early 1960s when some 35 million Chinese were starving to death. Their conclusion on this episode in the book is that Mao was a heartless dictator, callous to the suffering and deaths of millions of his own countrymen in pursuit of his political goals. And the book contains other discoveries and telling conclusions based upon archival research and historical analysis. The fact that the critics only focus on a very small number of these conclusions that may need more refined analysis and rephrasing demonstrates a lack of fairness and sense of proportionality.

However, a more serious charge by the critics against the book deals with the authors’ academic integrity. It has been suggested that the authors fail to reveal the complete sources for some of their claims and that their footnotes are often not complete. But again, this charge remains for the most part unfair. The intense debate about the sourcing for the battle of the Luding Bridge is a good example, despite multiple credible sources provided by the authors. In addition, this charge also fails to take into account the dangerous sourcing environment in China where publicly criticizing Mao, especially those who were in the inner circles of the CCP, is still a taboo and punishable by the law. In fact, the authors specifically state in the acknowledgements that “we feel sad that those [who had been directly contacted or interviewed by the authors] in Mainland China cannot be named, and hope that this situation will change one day.” Therefore we see that in some cases the sourcing in the book is thin even though the points supported by the sourcing in the text seem believable. But more importantly, for those Chinese open sources provided by dozens of eyewitnesses closest to Mao [his confidential secretaries, former body guards, doctors, underlings, high and low officials, etc.] all gave access to the authors, none has openly objected to the book.

This does not obviate the necessity for a thorough response to this charge. But we should also recognize that a fair and practical settlement to this charge can only be possible when the authors in the near future deposit their sources and evidence in an open venue for researchers to review, and when those who are the Chinese sources or insiders respond to the book in the future.
Finally, the critics of this book have failed to understand the unique investigative environment in China when it comes to doing historical research: you cannot demand hardcore archival evidence as in the West because important historical archives have never been open to the public. But if the book mostly relied upon oral evidence and memoirs or secondary research, void of first-hand primary archival sources, it would not be an important book. Therefore it is a relief to see the greatest contribution of the book: the meticulous and skillful use of voluminous Russian archives in understanding key elements of Mao and his policies throughout the decades. This new perspective coming from the Russian archives is unmatched by any other Mao biographies and is invaluable for future historians.

There is no doubt that the book is decidedly biased against Mao. It is equally unequivocal that it is not written in high English, with dry academic narratives. Instead it is emotionally charged, having a powerful polemical effect. Chang and Halliday’s Mao biography is a devastating indictment against a cruel and ruthless tyrant who went on a binge of destruction for several decades in China and caused catastrophes and holocausts that are unparalleled in human history. Hitler and Stalin have met their match. It was Mao.

Randall A. Dodgen. *Controlling the Dragon: Confucian Engineers and the Yellow River in Late Imperial China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001, $52.00 hb, $29.95 pb.

Reviewed by Robert Worden

This is a historical account. Had it been a book of fiction, it might have been only slightly more exciting and interesting. Randall Dodgen has woven an engrossing historical analysis of what could make a wonderful novel or motion picture. He has brought history alive with an exhaustive review of Ming-Qing period imperial documents and correspondence, local histories, and other materials contemporary to his time period, as well as a large amount of supporting secondary literature. Using the backdrop of a number of disastrous floods during the late Qing, he brings to the fore a description of the policies, procedures, technical developments and failures, and the personalities involved in the Yellow River and Grand Canal conservancy since the Yuan Dynasty. The Grand Canal had been constructed during the Yuan. Then, during the Ming, the decision was made to confine
the Yellow River to its southern course for the sake of inland grain transportation. There ensued, as Dodgen states, “the conditions for a complex interaction between the river, the state, and the bureaucracy—an interaction that changed all three.” By the late Qing, Confucian engineers “overcame supposedly enfeebled dynastic institutions to produce two decades of successful river control, a record equal to that of any of their predecessors working in more virtuous times.”

Dodgen does not accept the concept that nineteenth-century China was a state only in constant decline. He points out clearly and repeatedly that there were great successes in flood control and that, indeed, “[t]he thirty years of Daoguang’s rule was the most successful period of Yellow River control in a century and one of the most successful in post-Yuan dynastic history.” In spite of the fact that by 1855 the Yellow River was allowed to maintain its changed northerly course and that by 1861 the conservancy was abandoned altogether, it was not because of an absence of suitable technology (and technically proficient engineers) nor personal failure. As Dodgen points out, the last governors-general of the Jiangsu and Henan conservancies “were successors of a long line of men whose professional service combined Confucian ethical and moral concerns with practical engineering skills.” They succeeded in ameliorating the effects of most nineteenth-century floods with determination, skill, and innovation, and often against substantial natural and fiscal odds. Being aware that the failure of China’s hydraulic systems symbolized dynastic decline, the emperor and his ministers took keen interest in the Yellow River. Despite claims to the contrary, the emperor, within limits, personally encouraged technological innovation. The Qing state, however, simply could no longer afford to maintain the complex system. The Taiping Rebellion created chaos and tremendous fiscal strain while, at the same time, the Grand Canal was virtually abandoned in favor of coastal transportation.

In the course of his story, Dodgen gives blow-by-blow accounts of heroic struggles against the Yellow River in raging flood, replete with mobilizations of thousands of conservancy troops, displaced peasants, and threatened townspeople. Incompetence, corruption, and lack of courage by some was often more than offset by the determination, innovation, and heroics of others. Fiscal restraints were severe and so were the emperor’s punishments for failure. The careful use of resources was paramount in times of shortage and flux in China’s economic system. Accountability for failure was enforced in some instances where the state would pay for only 60
percent of the replacement costs and engineers and local officials were held personally liable for the balance.

The book also describes the “remarkably baroque engineering solutions that emerged out of the attempt to coordinate the sometimes conflicting demands of grain transport and river control.” The author provides detailed descriptions of written prescriptions for flood control—including a lengthy debate on using bricks versus sorghum stalks to reinforce dikes—and the reproduction of illustrations from period books plus the author’s own drawings. These and other illustrations put a face on the engineers and their accomplishments. The book has impressive documentation (sixty-one pages of endnotes), a character glossary, a very respectable bibliography, but a sparse index. Dodgen’s books fills an important niche in the understanding of the dynamics of late Qing politics and technological development.


*Reviewed by Robert Worden*

*Tracking the “Yellow Peril”* is much more than the title implies. It not only considers the immigrants themselves but also offers lots of information on the American-born spouses, children, and other relatives of Chinese immigrants. The book also is analytical in approach. It identifies Chinese families who, according the author’s preface, “employed one of seven specific strategies for dealing with Chinese exclusion—strategies here called autonomous, grounded, assimilated, intermediary, pluralistic, bicultural, and boundary spanning.” Using this analytical construct, the author examines the various categories of Chinese (women, children, laborers, students, professionals, and public charges) who entered and departed the United States during the exclusion period (1882–1943).

The book is divided into five major sections. The first addresses the impact of immigration- and exclusion-related regulations and various bureaucratic developments on families, women, and students, and professionals. This section also reviews the Immigration and Naturalization Service’s organizational behavior during the exclusion period as it related to
Chinese who were “likely become a public charge” for medical, criminal, economic, or other reasons. The section ends with a brief analysis of the post-exclusion INS uses of Chinese case files. Tracking the same categories, the second section presents a substantial amount of personal data derived from the actual case files used in researching the book. This section literally puts a face on Chinese immigration by reproducing vintage photographs of individuals, couples, and families from the INS case files.

The third section of the book briefly discusses the organizational arrangement of the INS files in the custody of the National Archives and analyzes the reliability of the data found in the files. A brief fourth section addresses the specific situations faced by Chinese women immigrants. It covers such topics as foot binding, marriage, residence in China, professional affiliations, and settlement patterns. The final section reproduces actual INS documents as examples of the various types of forms used. Many of the forms include photographs of the applicants. The book is made complete with a bibliography and a name index.

Although Tracking the “Yellow Peril” is a case study of what happened to Chinese immigrants in the Midwestern United States, its methodology could be applied to the east and west coastal regions as well. However, it is important that Peg Christoff concentrated her effort on this lesser-researched region and has given her readers some very useful information for further investigation into the lives of Chinese less frequently considered.


**Reviewed by Robert Worden**

The author of this collection of essays is a well-known expert on the overseas Chinese and director of the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore. The essays are the product of three lectures given at Harvard University in 1997 as part of the Edwin O. Reischauer Lecture Series. The three essays are entitled: “Seaward Sweep: The Chinese in Southeast Asia,” “The Sojourners’ Way,” and “The Multicultural Quest for Autonomy.” Each essay approaches a particular historical period and
discusses the evolution of both self-perception and official status of Chinese who left their homeland to work or live in other countries. Despite its small size, the book analyzes societal, cultural, and economic trends among Chinese peoples overseas from the third century B.C. to the present.

Throughout much of China’s early history, Wang points out, the Chinese people were “earthbound.” That is, they were focused on the traditions of the core of Chinese culture in the central plains. As these traditions push east and south, there was a continued looking into the central core for continuity and strength. Eventually Chinese culture reached the eastern and southern coasts and contacts established there as early as the third century B.C. became “intense and profitable” by the third century A.D. There were other forays into the south seas during Tang, Song, and Yuan but it was not until the Western powers took up a permanent presence and control in Asia that substantial numbers of Chinese left their homes to become sojourners or, less frequently, as permanent residents abroad. As time passed, the attitude of the Chinese state toward these expatriates changed from one which held them in disdain for having forsaken the motherland to one that encouraged their patriotism and political and financial support to the regime in power in China. This change in attitude helped justify staying overseas while, ideally, adhering to Chinese values and serving China from afar. Of course, reformers and revolutionaries also played this card with even greater success in the early twentieth century but with less emphasis on traditional values and more on political activism. Further evolution has led many local-born Chinese to become increasingly multicultural or least more identified with their land of birth rather than to their unfamiliar land of original heritage.

Throughout the book, Wang makes occasional and very useful comparisons between the China and the Mediterranean seafaring empires. The treatment of Chinese overseas in Western colonies also is discussed. The book ends with some very substantial and informative endnotes, which might lead users on to additional reading and research. The Chinese Overseas is a very useful analysis of an ethnic group estimated at upward of 30 million. Although the author focuses most of his attention on the Chinese in Southeast Asia, special attention is also given to the Chinese in North America and Australia.
In Memoriam

Thomas W. Robinson

The Washington Journal of Modern China lost a strong friend and supporter when Tom Robinson passed away on June 13, 2006 after a year-long bout with cancer. Tom served actively on the Advisory Council of this journal from its founding in the early 1990s to the present. He was a professor, author, and well known figure in Washington DC China policy circles. His scholarly interest was international affairs, broadly defined, including national security, international relations in the Asian Pacific region, Sino-Soviet relations, and Chinese foreign policy. He held teaching posts at Dartmouth College, the University of Washington at Seattle, Georgetown University, and the National War College, among others, and worked for several think tanks including the Rand Corporation and the American Enterprise Institute. His writings included Chinese Foreign Policy (1992), The Cultural Revolution in China (1971) and numerous articles, book chapters, and edited volumes. He was a founder of the Jiaozi Club, a broad-based group of China specialists that met in the DC area with speakers he invited over the course of almost 15 years.

Beyond his scholarly pursuits, his interests and hobbies ranged widely. He enjoyed gardening, classical music, amateur astronomy, classic movies, and maintaining his antique Jaguar car. He read widely and amassed a personal library of more than 12,000 volumes. He pursued an interest in many topics, including the intersection of science and religion and the early development of Christianity. He was an active member of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Arlington VA.

Tom was married with 3 children. He held a bachelor’s degree from Carleton College, with a master’s degree and doctorate in international affairs from Columbia University. His presence and thoughtful contributions will be sorely missed by many friends and colleagues.

By Madelyn Ross