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Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of U.S.-China Normalization

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Cover Photo: Arrival ceremony for the Vice Premier of China.
Left to Right: Madam Zhuo Lin, Rosalynn Carter, Deng Xiaoping, and Jimmy Carter
January 29, 1979 (Source: *The National Archives*)

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Reflections on the Evolution of U.S.-China Relations

Dr. Chi Wang

Seven decades ago, I left my family in Beijing and began to make my way to the United States. While the decision was made quickly, with the eagerness of youth, the journey itself was much more difficult and would change the course of my future in ways I had not expected. I began my trip in a country torn apart by civil war after having only just survived Japanese occupation. Cities were rapidly changing hands, travel routes were cut off, and the base of operations for the Republic of China (ROC) government, who ultimately issued my passport, had been relocated multiple times during the course of the fighting. It took me months to finally arrive in the United States.



Left: Chi Wang with his mother, Lo Shuyi, in the early 1930s; Right: Chi Wang maternal family photo, 1948. This was the last photo of Chi Wang with his mother (third from left), who was killed by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution.

Dr. Chi Wang spent nearly fifty years working at the Library of Congress, where he oversaw the development of the Library's Chinese collection. He served as the Assistant Head of the Chinese and Korean Section from 1966 to 1975, when he was appointed head of the Chinese and Korean Section. He served in this position until his retirement in 2004. Wang is the president of the U.S.-China Policy Foundation and has played an active role in the promotion of U.S.-China relations since the 1960s.

Chi Wang, PhD

My plan had been to study in the United States, like my older brothers had, and then return to China. At my father's urging I even chose to study agricultural science, the degree he saw as most beneficial for my home country, with its large population and limited arable land. Shortly after I arrived in the U.S., however, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded and everything changed. Between a passport belonging to a government that had been exiled to Taipei, a Cold War cutting off communication with my family who still lived in what was now Communist China, and a Cultural Revolution causing domestic turmoil on the mainland, circumstances made it impossible for me to return to China. While I had limited contact with my family, my father did send a letter to me after I graduated college, just as the Great Leap Forward was causing widespread famine. His message – don't return to China. I was left isolated from my family and without a recognizable home to go back to.



Chi Wang posing with other Chinese students in Chinatown
the day after arriving in America, September 14, 1949.

Although it had not been my plan, I adapted, and soon the U.S. became my adopted home. I will be forever grateful for the many Americans who made me feel welcome here as I tried to adjust to the new and

unexpected realities of my situation and build a life for myself from scratch. I ultimately became a U.S. citizen and, while I still loved the country of my birth, I was happy with my decision. China had changed a lot since I moved away, but the U.S. offered me a chance to pursue the American dream that had inspired me to come here in the first place.



Chi Wang standing in front of Manhattan College, September 1949.
He studied here for one year before transferring to the University of Maryland.

A lot has happened in the 70 years since I moved to the U.S. and the PRC was founded. That year marked both the pivotal turning point in my own life and in the history of China. In the decades since then, I have been fortunate enough to witness – and in some ways even contribute to – many other milestones as well. For instance, this year we remember the 40th anniversary of the U.S. and the PRC establishing official diplomatic relations. It is also 30 years since the Tiananmen Incident took place and a full 100 years after the May

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Fourth Movement.

Taken together, these anniversaries offer a telling timeline of China's history and help us better understand China and the U.S.-China relationship today. The May Fourth Movement, in its simplest terms, was a protest against the unfair distribution of post-war territory decided by the Treaty of Versailles. Its wider implications, however, were much greater. This nationalist, anti-imperialist, and political movement showcased a Chinese people turning away from their past Confucian ideals and trying to find a new identity. It was this hope for a new culture, separate from the shortcomings of Imperial China, that inspired the formation of political organizations such as the Chinese Communist Party.



Chi Wang with his first American car, Maryland, 1950

By 1949, the Chinese Communist Party had gained control of China and declared the founding of the People's Republic of China – the start of a New China. That New China, however, was still saddled with the aftermath of both a world war and a civil war. The global climate created by the ongoing Cold War left the country even more isolated. The people suffered famine and hunger due to the Great Leap Forward and failed reform efforts. The country devolved into further

chaos with the Cultural Revolution. China stagnated and floundered while the Western world recovered from WWII and continued to grow. This was not the strong, new country the protestors of the May Fourth Movement had envisioned.

I remember the propaganda and rhetoric that permeated the civil war period in China. Chiang's leadership was corrupt and crumbling. Mao's proletarian revolution called for a new system, a "New Democracy," that fit with the unique culture and circumstances found in China. While many people were excited and looking forward to the end of feudalism and the formation of a government that better served the people, I was hesitant.



Visiting his father's grave in 1972. Chi Wang's father, General Wang Shu-chang, passed away while he was in the United States.

As the civil war neared its end, I chose to leave for the U.S. instead of waiting to find out what a New China would bring. I'm glad I did. The exiled Republic of China government in Taiwan transformed into a

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democracy and experienced impressive economic growth. The New China on the mainland, however, remained as authoritarian as ever and suffered through poverty and domestic instability.

Then, relations between the U.S. and China began to thaw. President Nixon went to China in 1972. I soon followed, sent by the U.S. government to help establish educational exchanges. I saw firsthand the state China was in. I was shocked by the poverty I saw – this was not the China I remembered. It was clear that China needed to change and undergo economic reforms that would only be possible if they opened up to the West. The establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979 gave them the avenue to do just that. It is no surprise that Deng Xiaoping's economic reform and opening up campaign, which he officially launched in 1978, was so swiftly followed up with normalization.



Chi Wang's siblings meet him in Beijing during his first trip back to China, 1972

The perceived benefits of normalization, both economically and as strategic allies against the Soviet Union, encouraged the U.S. and China to overcome their differences and disagreements in order to pursue

stronger ties. This belief that the U.S. and China, and the world as a whole, were better off with a positive U.S.-China relationship persisted in the following decades. The U.S. followed an engagement policy and welcomed China to become a responsible member of the international system.

On June 4, 1989, the Chinese government violently and swiftly put an end to protests in Tiananmen Square. This bloody reaction shocked the international community and risked the previous progress made in the U.S.-China relationship. It caused many to question the long-standing belief that economic reform would lead to democratization, a belief most China watchers today have given up on. China has been under authoritarian rule for centuries, long before the Communist Party came to power. That's not likely to change anytime soon.



Left: Chi Wang shakes hands with then Vice President Xi Jinping, 2012
Right: Chi Wang with President Hu Jintao, 2006

The U.S.-China relationship ultimately found a way to survive. While there are several fundamental areas of conflict and discord that create hurdles to bilateral ties, the relationship persists. Our ability to move past conflict and find ways to cooperate despite major disagreements is a testament to the importance both sides place on the relationship.

Chi Wang, PhD

Today, the U.S.-China relationship is more strained than I've ever seen it – and I witnessed the aftermath of Tiananmen. China has reached a level of strength that allows it to challenge U.S. supremacy and the U.S., frustrated by the failure of engagement to Westernize China, have begun to shift their policies, demanding more reciprocity and accountability.



(L to R): Amb. Arthur Hummel, Jr., Amb. John Holdridge, Amb. Jim Sasser, Chi Wang

It is time to reevaluate the dynamics of the U.S.-China relationship and how we approach our differences. The idealism of past engagement was wrong. We need to be realistic in our expectations and view of China – we cannot expect them to act the same way we would or embrace American values. While we look forward, however, it is important to also look back and see how far China and the U.S.-China relationship has come.

China today is unrecognizable from the country of my youth, and even from the country of 15 years ago. It is impossible for the U.S. and China to go back to the days before normalization. Too much has happened since then to turn back the clock. Thanks to globalization, the U.S. and China are economically intertwined and shocks to one country affect the other, along with the entire globe. There are also an increasing number of global challenges that cannot be tackled by one

country alone. Where international support is needed, both the U.S. and China will have to play leading roles. With the stakes so high, we cannot afford to give up on the U.S.-China relationship now.

After the Trade War, a Real War with China?

Ambassador Chas W. Freeman, Jr.

*Adapted from remarks given in St. Petersburg, Florida
at the St. Petersburg Conference on World Affairs
February 12, 2019*

Five hundred years ago this month, Hernán Cortés began the European annihilation of the Mayan, Aztec, and other indigenous civilizations in the Western Hemisphere. Six months later, in August 1519, Magellan [Fernão de Magalhães] launched his circumnavigation of the globe. For five centuries thereafter, a series of Western powers – Portugal, Spain, Holland, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and, finally, the United States – overturned preexisting regional orders as they imposed their own on the world. That era has now come to an end.

In the final phases of the age of Western dominance, we Americans made and enforced the rules. We were empowered to do so in two phases. First, around 1880, the United States became the world's largest economy. Then, in 1945, having liberated Western Europe from Germany and overthrown Japanese hegemony in East Asia, Americans achieved primacy in both the Atlantic and Pacific. Almost immediately, the Soviet Union and its then-apparently-faithful Asian companion, Communist China, challenged our new sphere of influence. In response, we placed our defeated enemies (Germany,

Ambassador Freeman is a senior fellow at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. As a career diplomat, Freeman served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires in both Bangkok and Beijing. He acted as the main interpreter for Nixon's 1972 trip to China. He served as U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 1990-1992, during the Gulf War. He was Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs from 1993-1994.

Italy, Japan), our wartime allies, and most countries previously occupied by our enemies under American protection. With our help, these countries – which we called “allies” – soon returned to wealth and power but remained our protectorates. Now, other countries, like China and India, are rising to challenge our global supremacy.

President Trump has raised the very pertinent question: Should states with the formidable capabilities longstanding American “allies” now have still be partial wards of the U.S. taxpayer? In terms of our own security, are they assets or liabilities? Another way of putting this is to ask: Do our Cold War allies and their neighbors now face credible threats they cannot handle by themselves? Do these threats also menace vital U.S. interests? And do they therefore justify U.S. military presences and security guarantees that put American lives at risk? These are questions that discomfit our military-industrial complex and invite severe ankle-biting by what some have called “the Blob” – the partisans of the warfare state now entrenched in Washington. They are serious questions that deserve serious debate. We Americans are not considering them.

Instead, we have finessed debate by designating both Russia and China as adversaries that must be countered at every turn. This has many political and economic advantages. It is a cure for enemy deprivation syndrome – that queasy feeling our military-industrial complex gets when our enemies disorient us by irresponsibly defaulting on their contest with us and disappearing, as the Soviet Union did three decades ago. China and Russia are also technologically formidable foes that can justify American R&D and procurement of the expensive, high-tech weapons systems. Sadly, low intensity conflict with scruffy “terrorist” guerrillas can’t quite do this.

No one in the United States now seems prepared to defend either China or Russia against the charge that they, not we, are responsible for our current national dysfunction and malaise. After all, we’re the best, Russia’s a rogue, and China’s an unfair competitor. Our

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patriotism is admirable, theirs is malign.

It must have been the Russians who overcame our better judgment and made us vote against Hillary Clinton and for Donald Trump. Who other than China could have caused our companies to outsource work to places with cheap labor, instead of upgrading equipment and retraining their workers to meet foreign competition? A pox on all foreigners, not just Mexican rapists, European rip-off artists, Japanese free riders, Russian trolls, immigrants from “shithole” countries, and Chinese cyber burglars. Why worry about how to boost our own competitiveness when we can cripple the competitiveness of others?

Today our government is trying to break apart Sino-American interdependence, weaken China, and prevent it from overtaking us in wealth, competence, and influence. We have slapped tariffs on it, barred investment from it, charged it with pilfering intellectual property, arrested its corporate executives, blocked tech transfers to it, restricted what its students can study here, banned its cultural outreach to our universities, and threatened to bar its students from entering them. We are aggressively patrolling the waters and air spaces off its coasts and islands. Whether China deserves to be treated this way or not, we are leaving it little reason to want to cooperate with us.

Our sudden hostility to China reflects a consensus – at least within the Washington Beltway – that we need to wrestle China to the ground and pin it there. But what are the chances we can do that? What are the consequences of attempting it? Where are we now headed with China?

Realism is out of fashion in Washington even if it’s alive and well elsewhere in America. It should give us pause that our new enemy of choice is a very different, larger, and more dynamic country than any we have unbefriended before. China had a couple of bad centuries. But forty years ago, the Chinese Communist Party and government began

to evolve what turned out to be a successful model of economic development that blended state capitalism with free enterprise. This unleashed the entrepreneurial talents of the Chinese people. The results have been staggering. Per capita income in China today is twenty-five times what it was in 1978. Back then, well over 90 percent of Chinese lived in poverty, as defined by the World Bank. Today, less than two percent do. China's GDP is now sixty times bigger than it was forty years ago.

China is no longer isolated, poor, or irrelevant to affairs distant from it. It is a society with capabilities that rival and are beginning to overtake our own. China faces many challenges, but its people are resilient, resourceful, and optimistic that the lives of their descendants will be vastly better than their own – this at a time that we Americans are unprecedentedly pessimistic about our own country's present and future condition.

Despite increasingly problematic policies, the Chinese economy is still growing almost three times faster than ours. By some measures, it is already one-third larger. China's manufacturing sector accounts for over one fourth of global industrial production and is one-and-a-half times bigger than that of the United States. China's ability to defend itself and its periphery against foreign attack is now formidable despite its spending less than two percent of GDP on its military. If pressed to do so, China could spend as much on defense as we do – and that's a lot: almost \$1.2 trillion when you add up all the military spending that is hidden like Easter eggs all over non-Defense Department budgets.¹

China is slightly larger than the United States – 6.3 percent of the world's landmass vs. 6.1 percent for the U.S. But there are 1.4 billion

¹ See: Mandy Smithberger, "America's National Security Budget Nearing \$1.2 Trillion," *Project On Government Oversight*, February 13, 2018, <https://www.pogo.org/investigation/2018/02/americas-national-security-budget-nearing-12-trillion/>.

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Chinese, with only one-third the arable land and one-fourth the water we Americans have. If we had the same ratio of population to agricultural resources the Chinese do, there would be almost 4 billion Americans – about 600 million of them over sixty-five – most of them probably planning to retire in Florida.

I suspect that, if there were that many people crammed into the United States, Americans would have a much lower tolerance for social disorder and a different attitude toward family planning than we now do. We'd also be more worried about the prospects for individual security and survival. Sixty years ago, perhaps 30 million Chinese died in a man-made famine known as the "Great Leap Forward." Chinese are acutely aware that they have narrow margins for error. This makes them naturally risk averse and, in most respects, a more predictable actor in foreign affairs than we now are.

Until we suddenly launched a trade war last year, China was our fastest growing export market. It is, after all, the largest consumer of a vast array of commodities and products. China consumes 59 percent of the world's cement, 47 percent of its aluminum, 56 percent of its nickel, 50 percent of its coal, 50 percent of its copper and steel, 27 percent of its gold, 14 percent of its oil, 31 percent of its rice, 47 percent of its pork, 23 percent of its corn, and 33 percent of its cotton. It consumes about one-fourth of the world's energy. It provides one-third of the global market for semiconductors. Its companies' demand for these has been growing around 16 percent annually. Microchips have become China's largest single import – around \$110 billion this year. China has been the main market for U.S. chips, one of the few products of industry we Americans still monopolize.

By slapping tariffs, quotas, and export bans on China, the United States is throwing these markets away as well as raising prices and reducing choices for American consumers. Food security has been an obsession for every Chinese state over the course of the last 2,500

years. No responsible leader in China is again going to commit his or her country to long-term dependence on the U.S. for its feed-grain, wheat, corn, cotton, pork, or fresh fruit supply. Erratic behavior in business makes one the supplier of last resort. Whatever the short-term outcome of the trade war we launched against it, in future China is going to look elsewhere for critical imports.

No “wall” is in prospect on the U.S.-Mexican border, but the United States is surrounding itself with a moat full of protectionist measures aimed at denying China not just sales in the U.S. market, but opportunities to invest its rising wealth in U.S. industry, agriculture, and services. This is in part a response to a real but far from unprecedented problem. In the 19th century, encouraged by Alexander Hamilton and others, Americans pioneered the art of technology theft from Britain and other more advanced manufacturing economies. As the 20th century began and we became a net exporter of innovation ourselves, we renounced intellectual property crime. Japan and Taiwan then took over our role. When Japan got rich, it too retired. Taiwan moved its pirate industries across the Strait to the China mainland.

China took up the by-now, well-established practice of upgrading its industrial base by lifting technology from wherever it could. But, like the U.S. and Japan in earlier days, China is now itself becoming an exporter not just of capital but advanced, innovative technology. With a lot of competition among its own enterprises and an increasing share of the world’s intellectual property, Chinese companies have become very concerned with securing their innovations from pilferage. This has made them responsive to our pressure on them to clean up their act. In their own interest, they are almost certain to do so whether we make a deal with them or not. Like the proverbial generals, we may be fighting the last war, not the one to come.

The end of the 21st century’s second decade is a remarkably inauspicious moment for us to be severing ties with scientists,

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technologists, engineers, and mathematicians – so-called STEM workers – in China. Technology advances through collaboration, not the sequestration of knowledge. In the United States, we graduate about 650,000 scientists and engineers annually, over one third of whom are foreigners. (In some disciplines, like engineering and computer science, foreign students account for about half of new U.S. degrees.) Almost one third of all foreign students here are from China. On its own, China now graduates 1.8 million scientists, engineers, and mathematicians annually. It is about to overtake us in the number of doctorates it confers in these fields.

Already about one-fourth of the world's STEM workers are Chinese. This Chinese intellectual workforce is eight times larger than ours and growing six times as fast. By 2025, China is expected to have more technologically skilled workers than all members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) combined. (The OECD is not a trivial grouping. It consists of the world's most advanced economies: the United States, Canada and Mexico, all non-Russian-speaking Europe, Australia, Israel, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and Turkey.) By severing ties with the Chinese, we Americans are isolating ourselves from the largest population of scientists, engineers, and mathematicians in the world.

The United States has always been a major importer of foreign brainpower. Since 2000, 39 percent of our Nobel Prize winners have been immigrants. A great many of our technology companies were started by immigrants or are now managed by them. Asian immigrants, mainly from China (including Taiwan), India, and Korea, make up about 17 percent of our current STEM workforce. In large part as a result of the less welcoming atmosphere in our country today, less than half of Chinese graduates from our universities now join the U.S. workforce. Most are going home to work or start companies in China rather than here. China is now home to 36 percent of the world's "unicorns" – start-up companies valued at more than \$1

billion.

Some estimates show that the United States is already one million short of the STEM workforce our economy requires to sustain our competitiveness. Tightening restrictions on foreign students and workers as we are now doing undercuts our ability to fill this gap. We are reducing our openness to foreign science and technology at precisely the moment other countries – not just China but nations like India and Korea – are pulling even with us, Europe, and Japan, or charging ahead. China has begun to outspend us on research and development, especially in the basic sciences, where breakthroughs in human knowledge that lead to new technologies occur.

Our strategy is not aimed at upping our own performance but at hamstringing China's. This is more likely to induce intellectual constipation here than in China. The Chinese are not going to oblige us by ceasing to educate their young people, halting their progress, or severing their science and technology relationships with other countries. Nor will most other countries join us in shunning them. We Americans, not the Chinese, are the most likely to be weakened and impoverished by our growing xenophobia and nativism. Others, not Americans, will leverage China's advancing prosperity and brainpower to their advantage.

At root, of course, our concern about China's increasing technological prowess is about the balance of military power between us. Since World War II, Americans have become accustomed to being the privileged custodians of the global commons, setting the rules and calling the shots in all the world's oceans, including the Western Pacific. We gained our primacy there nearly seventy-five years ago when we defeated Japan and filled the resulting power vacuum in its former imperial domain.

But Japan is back as a major power even if it has preferred to pretend otherwise. South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, and others in East Asia

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have become powerful, independent states that bow to no foreign power. There is no vacuum in Asia for either the United States or China to fill.

No country in Asia can ignore the power that China's huge and growing economy confers on it. None could achieve a decisive victory in a war with China. But none is prepared to enlist in our campaign against China or China's backlash against the United States. None wants to choose between us. As uneasy as China's neighbors may be in the face of its economic and military ascendancy, they all know they must accommodate it.

For over half of the last millennium, all or part of China fell prey to a remarkable range of foreign invaders – Qiang, Jurchens, Mongols, Manchus, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, British, French, Russians, Austro-Hungarians, Germans, Americans, and Japanese. Often, China was ruled by foreigners or dominated by them. The most recent set of invasions was from the South and East China Seas. It should surprise no one the Chinese are determined to defend the approaches to their coasts or that, to this end, they are developing what the Pentagon calls “anti-access, area denial” or A2/AD capabilities.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army's (PLA) rapidly strengthening capabilities have become a formidable impediment to anyone planning to mount an attack on China or on shipping approaching or leaving Chinese ports. The United States has repeatedly declared that we see China's new ability to control its periphery as a threat to us. The Chinese take this, our plan to “pivot” much of our military to their frontiers, and our aggressive patrols of their defenses as *ipso facto* evidence of U.S. preparation for war with them. The United States and China are caught in a classic “security dilemma,” in which each side's defensive moves are seen as threats by the other.

The contest between our determination to defend our continuing military primacy in the Indo-Pacific and China's imperative of keeping

potentially hostile armed forces like ours at bay is clearest in the South China Sea. Though long claimed by both China and Vietnam and fished in by the Philippines, this was traditionally a no-man's land – part of the regional commons where fishermen from all the littoral countries felt free to ply their trade. But, in the late 1970s and early '80s, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam seized most of the land features in the Spratly Islands in an effort to secure its seabed resources for themselves. A decade later, China took the few rocks and reefs that were left. It has since turned these into islands with secure harbors, garrisoned them, and built airfields on them.

The U.S. and PLA Navies are now engaged in escalating games of chicken around these artificial islands as well as along the coasts of the China mainland. Both navies are highly professional. The danger of an accident is therefore low, but the risk of miscalculation is high. Should actual combat between our armed forces occur, it could rapidly widen.

In the East China Sea, the United States has pledged to back Japan's claims to the Senkaku (or Diaoyu) islands. These are barren rocks about one hundred miles east-north-east of Taiwan and two hundred and fifty miles west of Okinawa. Chinese in both Taiwan and the mainland claim them as part of Taiwan. Armed Japanese and Chinese coast guards began patrolling them a decade ago. At least for now, both seem determined to manage their differences prudently. Neither wants a war. Still, there is a decided risk that we Americans might be dragged into a bloody encounter between Chinese and Japanese nationalism.

But the greatest danger of a Sino-American war is Taiwan. Taiwan is a former Chinese province that was recovered from its Japanese occupiers by Nationalist China at the end of World War II. In 1949, having been defeated everywhere else in China, Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist forces retreated to it.

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The universal expectation at the time was that the People's Liberation Army would cross the Taiwan Strait and unify China by finishing off Chiang and the Nationalists. But, when the Korean War broke out, the United States intervened to prevent its widening through a PLA invasion of Taiwan or a Nationalist attempt to retake the China mainland. We Americans thus suspended but did not end the Chinese civil war. To this day, we remain committed to preventing war in the Taiwan Strait. To this end, we continue to sell weapons to the island. China sees this as hostile interference in a quarrel among Chinese in which foreigners should not involve themselves.

Behind its U.S. shield, over the course of seventy years, Taiwan emerged as a prosperous democratic Chinese society with decidedly mixed feelings about whether it should be part of China. The island is now ruled by a political party that is deterred from declaring independence from China only by its realization that this would trigger a violent resumption of the Chinese civil war that would almost certainly destroy Taiwan and its democracy.

Chinese on the mainland see their country's continued division as an artifact of U.S. policy. While they have pledged to try to resolve their differences with Taiwan peacefully, they remain determined to erase the humiliation that the continued foreign-supported separation of Taiwan from the rest of China represents. War is not imminent, but it is an ever-present danger, with the potential to produce a nuclear exchange between China and the United States.

Taiwan illustrates the dangers of managing disputes by relying exclusively on deterrence to the exclusion of diplomacy. Deterrence can inhibit the outbreak of war, but it does nothing to resolve its underlying causes. In the case of Taiwan, the United States lacks a diplomatic strategy to encourage the parties to the dispute to address and resolve their differences. In default of a strategy, we are now doubling down on our politico-military support of Taiwan. But if Beijing loses confidence in the possibility of a peaceful reconciliation

with the Taiwan authorities, it will be increasingly tempted to use force. This is precisely the trend at present. We have no plan to deal with that trend other than to prepare ourselves for combat.

China enjoys widening military superiority over Taiwan. Many judge that it could already defeat an effort by us to defend Taiwan. The PLA need not invade Taiwan to devastate it. Taiwan would be the main loser in any conflict, whether the U.S. supported it or not.

A Sino-American war over Taiwan could quickly escalate to the nuclear level. China has a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons but it could deliver a devastating counterstrike on the U.S. homeland if we attacked it. There is very little substantive contact between the U.S. and Chinese militaries, and there are no mechanisms for escalation control in place. It is not clear how either side could fend off domestic pressures for escalation if we come to blows, as we may. Instead of exploring means of establishing and managing a strategic balance with China, we are withdrawing from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty,² in part to enable us to deploy nuclear weapons closer to China.

For better or ill, the admirably liberal Chinese society on Taiwan cannot assure its security or prosperity without reaching some sort of accommodation with the much larger, authoritarian Chinese society on the other side of the Strait. Sooner or later, Taiwan will have to negotiate a durable modus vivendi with the mainland. Current U.S. policies help Taiwan avoid hard choices even as the balance of power shifts against it. We are inadvertently helping Taiwan set itself up for a Chinese offer it will be unable to refuse. Meanwhile, U.S.-China relations are increasingly hostile politically, economically, and

² The Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was signed between the USSR and the United States on June 1, 1988. It restricted the land-based missiles of the two countries but did not apply to air- or sea-launched missiles. The treaty was in effect until February 1, 2019, when President Trump accused Russia of non-compliance. Both Russia and the U.S. therefore suspended the treaty.

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militarily.

What we face with China is not a new Cold War but a contest unlike any we have ever experienced in our 230 years as a constitutional democracy. China is fully integrated into the global economy. George Kennan's³ grand strategy of containment was based on the correct judgment that, if isolated for long enough, the defects in the autarkic Soviet system would cause it to fail. China cannot be isolated, and its economy is currently outperforming ours.

The Soviet Union was an overly militarized state that collapsed under the burden of excessive defense spending. China has kept the proportion of its GDP devoted to its military at or below the level of our European "allies," whom we accuse of spending too little on their defense. The Soviet Union controlled satellite countries and sought to impose its ideology on others, including us. The Chinese have no satellites and are notorious for not caring at all how foreigners govern themselves.

Our competition with China is primarily economic. It will not be decided by who has the more appealing ideology, the most aircraft carriers, or the greatest stash of nuclear weapons, but by who delivers the best economic performance and by which country's statecraft is soundest.

Are we ready for such a contest? Let's look at the bright side. Maybe it will challenge us to get our act together. Let's hope so.

It doesn't seem to matter which political party controls the House or Senate. Congress still can't pass a budget or otherwise set national priorities. When it's not shut down, our government runs on credit rollovers. Our debt is out of control. So far this century, we've committed almost \$6 trillion to wars we don't know how to

³ George Kennan was an American diplomat and historian whose writings inspired the Truman Doctrine and the U.S. containment policy towards the Soviet Union.

end. Meanwhile, we've deferred about \$4 trillion in maintenance of our rapidly deteriorating physical infrastructure. We are disinvesting in our human endowment, cutting funding for our universities and scientific research. Our government is bleeding talent. This is not our finest hour.

And, if allies are assets rather than liabilities, the willingness of our security partners abroad to follow us is more uncertain than at any point since we became an active world power seven decades ago. We are withdrawing from international agreements and institutions, not seeking to shape them to our advantage or crafting new ones. Instead of asking our allies to do more to defend themselves, we are asking them to pay us to defend them. Our Senate can no longer bring itself to consider, let alone ratify, treaties – even those we ourselves originally proposed. In short, we are not leading the world as we once did. We're not part of the solution to transnational problems like global warming or arms control. Instead, we are becoming active obstructionists of solutions to pressing global problems.

The social mobility that once made equality of opportunity a reality in our country has ebbed away. Our wealthy are getting richer; those less fortunate are not. We have the highest percentage of our population imprisoned of any country in the world. That superlative aside, on many other measures of international excellence, we have complacently fallen to levels of mediocrity. Our students are 38th in math proficiency and 24th in science. We rank 42nd in life expectancy, 45th in press freedoms, 19th in respect for the rule of law, and 17th in quality of life. Need I go on?

There's a lot to fix at home before we can be sure we have what it takes to go abroad in search of dragons to destroy. There is a real danger that we have taken on more than we can handle. China is guilty of malpractice in several aspects of its trade policies. We are right to demand that it correct these. Experience strongly suggests that, if we work with others of like mind in organizations like the

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World Trade Organization to persuade China to do so, we can move China in desirable directions. An across-the-board assault on China of the sort we have just mounted is not only likely to fail, it entails risks we have not adequately considered. These risks include armed combat with a nuclear power. And China is getting relatively stronger, not weaker, even as our inept handling of foreign affairs increasingly marginalizes the United States in areas of human endeavor we have traditionally dominated.

We have given inadequate thought to how to leverage China's rise to our advantage. Trying to tear China down will not succeed. Neither will it cure our self-induced debilitation as a nation.

We have launched a comprehensive competition with China for which we are not ready. We cannot afford to learn this the hard way. Whatever we do about China, we have to get our act together and do it now.

Economic Tensions: Origins and Implications

Dr. Yukon Huang

*Adapted from remarks given in Washington, DC at the
U.S.-China Policy Foundation Panel: U.S.-China Relations at 40
March 14, 2019*

Sino-U.S. relations have existed for 40 years. Why is it that tensions have emerged in just the last 20 years? Can we actually show why it emerged and how it is largely due to economics?

Figure 1 below shows a diagram responding to the question: who is the world's leading economic power? Pew and Gallup ask the American public this question every year.⁴ If you go back 20 years, the overwhelming majority would say that obviously America is the world's leading economic power, but that changes over time. By the time you get to the global financial crisis, it switches over. The

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⁴ Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan organization that conducts social science research into current global affairs, attitudes, and trends through such methods as polling and media content analysis. Gallup, Inc. is a DC-based analytics and advisory company known for its worldwide opinion polls. Pew and Gallup conducted this survey on public perception of leading economic powers in 2014.

majority of the American public now says that China is the global leading economic power.

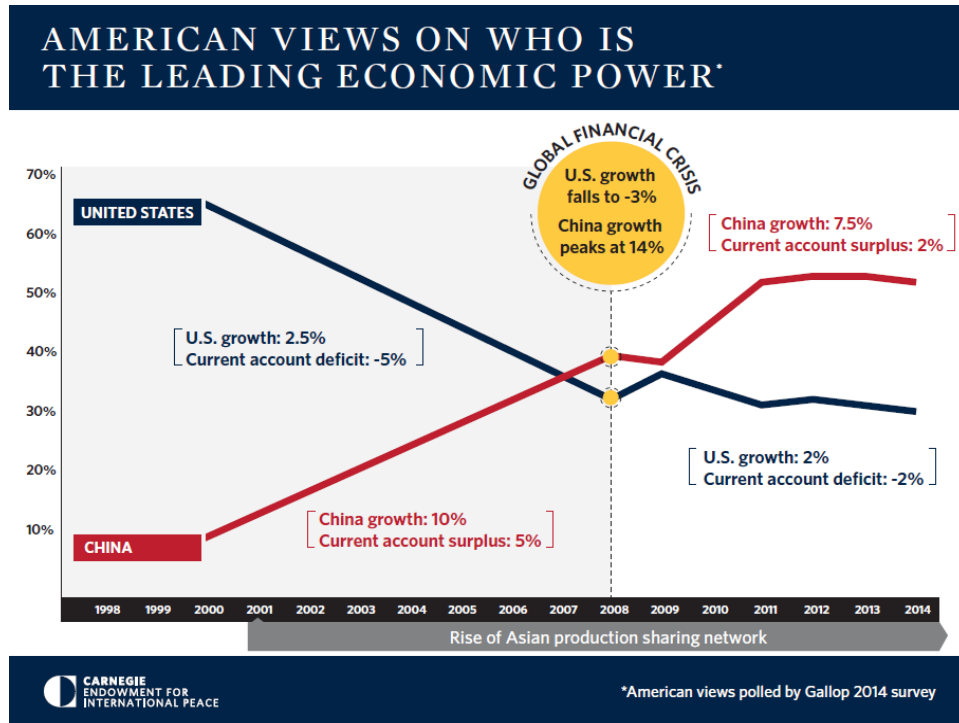


Figure 1

If you ask Chinese public the same question – who is the world’s leading economic power – how do they respond? The answer is overwhelming: it’s America. So, why is it that the Chinese get it right but the Americans get it wrong?⁵ This is a major factor underpinning current tensions, but it’s on the wrong premise.

Let’s change the question: are you favorably or unfavorably disposed toward China? Do you like or dislike China? It’s a more personal

⁵ The U.S. has been the world’s largest economy since 1871. In 2017, the U.S. reached a nominal size of \$19.39 trillion, making it an economic superpower. Its economy constitutes nearly a quarter of the global economy. Source: Prableen Bajpai, “The World’s Top 20 Economies,” *Investopedia*, updated January 10, 2019, <https://www.investopedia.com/insights/worlds-top-economies/>.

question. Today, of course, dominant public opinion politically and in the general American population is quite negative.

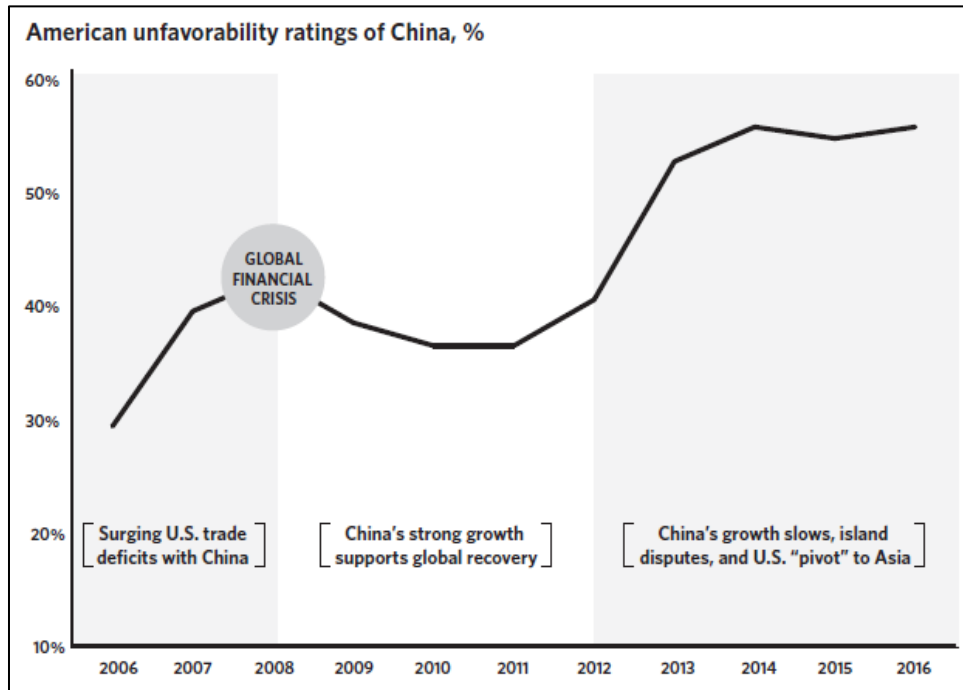


Figure 2

What's surprising is that this wasn't always the case. Figure 2 shows the survey results to the question: are you favorably or unfavorably disposed to China? If you go back 10 or 15 years, the majority of American public opinion is quite positive. Then, you see that it starts to increase toward becoming more unfavorable. This increase, however, is not a straight-line trajectory. It is actually cyclical. As recently as six or seven years ago, public opinion was very positive. Today, it's quite negative. In my book, I talk about how economic factors have shaped this opinion.⁶ However, this opinion is interesting because you could actually influence it with policies, both economic

⁶ Yukon Huang, *Cracking the China Conundrum: Why Conventional Economic Wisdom is Wrong* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

and foreign. It's not a straight-line trajectory, and very recently relationships were so much better.

So how do we begin answering the question: why do people think America is no longer the leading economic power? Why has public opinion toward China over the last twenty years become so negative? Let's start with the trade war, the trade relationship, and see what that means.

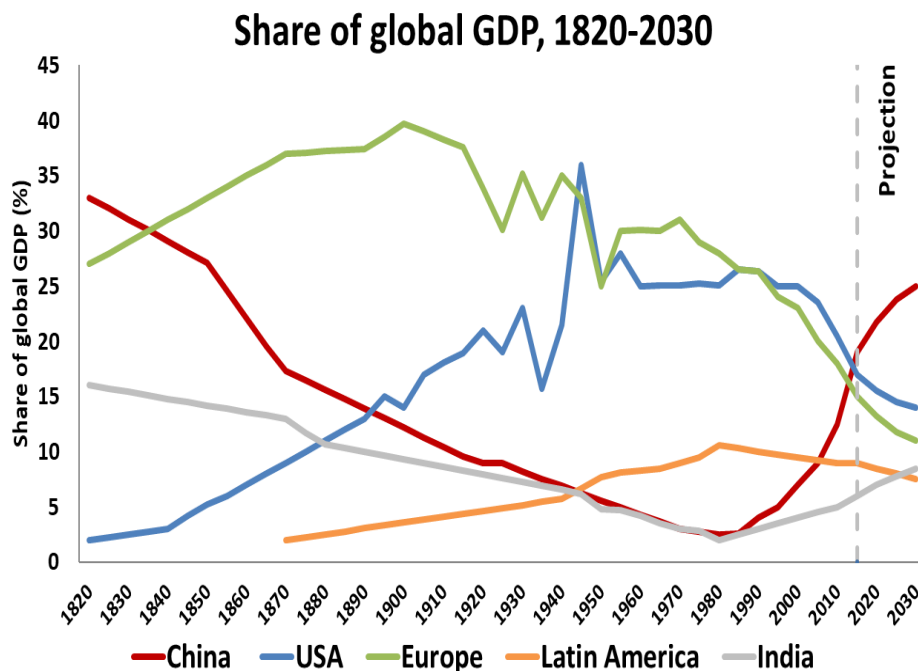


Figure 3

Let's begin with the concept of who was the dominant economic power 200 years ago. Let's not talk about the last 40 years. Two-hundred years ago, China accounted for 33 percent of global production. This number fell to two percent by 1980. In the last 40 years, China has gone from two percent to 18 percent, and here you have it today. This is the tension. The intersection of America, Europe, and China at exactly the same share of global production – no wonder

we feel the tension. See how the trend is going to continue: the decline of the rest and the rise of China. This leads people to ask: who is the dominant economic power?

Figure 3 shows a diagram that is extraordinary in several respects. First, if you look at it very carefully, it explains why this problem is so difficult to resolve. The rise of China is unusual because it's a returning global power; this means historical factors have a larger impact on discussions than they might normally. Second, China is the first global power to be a developing country. Third, the steepness of China's ascent is so sharp that institutions both in the United States and in China have not matured enough to deal with it. These three factors differentiate this rise in tension from the historical clashes we see in other countries.

Now, let us look at the trade balance illustrated in Figure 4. Starting from about 2000, China began generating huge trade surpluses with America. It generated similarly large surpluses with the EU (though not as large as those generated with America), and deficits with the rest of the world, particularly Asia. So, this is the background to the trade tensions. This is a geographically-differentiated pattern that does not fit any other country.

Here's the interesting aspect of this pattern: it won't change. It will not change for a generation. So, we're fighting a trade war to try to deal with these surpluses, but no matter what we do – whether we use tariffs or exchange rates – this pattern of large surpluses with America cannot change. No wonder the last report showed America's deficit with China is still increasing despite all the tariffs.⁷ This pattern is going to continue and there is nothing to be done about it for a variety of reasons, which people do not fully understand.

⁷ U.S. Commerce Department Report FT900, "U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services," release number CB 19-37, BEA 19-10, released March 27, 2019, https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/Press-Release/current_press_release/index.html.

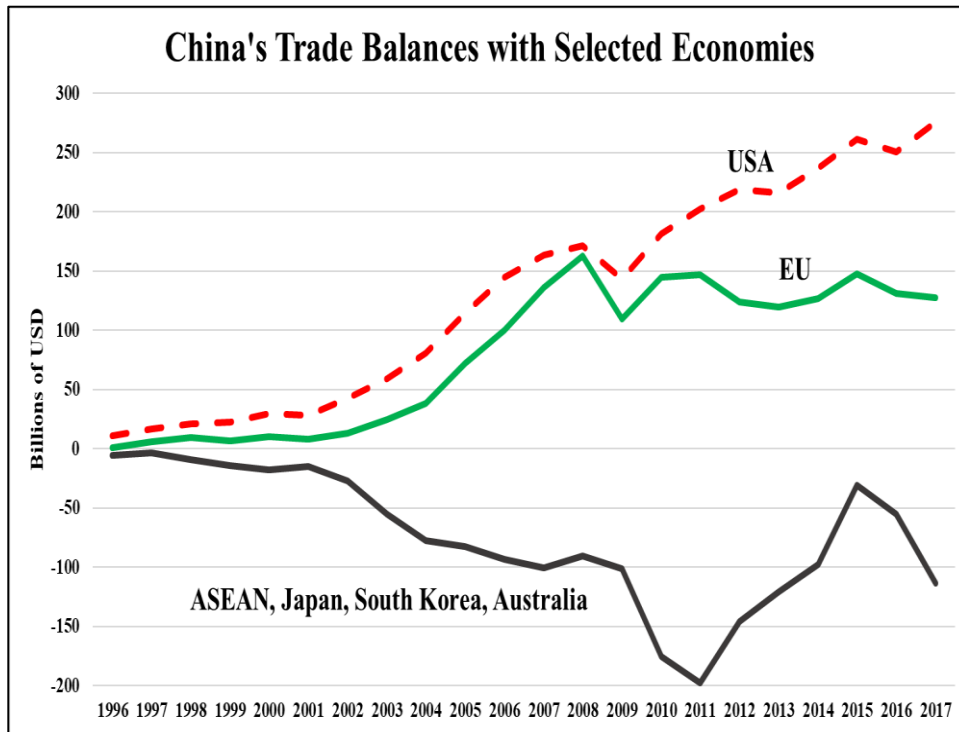


Figure 4

Let's ask the question: are U.S. and China trade balances linked in some way? We're fighting a trade war. The assumption is that America's deficits and China's surpluses are somehow linked. So, using tariffs and exchange rates, we can somehow solve the problem. Here's the irony: they're not linked at all, as evidenced in Figure 5.

It's very strange because if you look at two major powers, in many cases their trade relationships are linked in terms of trade balance. But these two major powers, their trade balances are *not* linked. They actually move in opposite directions. Going back to America, the U.S. generated huge deficits starting from the late 90s and trade problems began emerging. Is China responsible? Clearly, China is not responsible because it wasn't generating any surpluses at that time. So, how could China be causing America's trade problems when it

wasn't even generating any surpluses? Then, when America's trade deficits got better, China's surpluses actually got larger and moved in the opposite direction. Today, America's deficits are getting larger but China's surpluses are getting smaller.

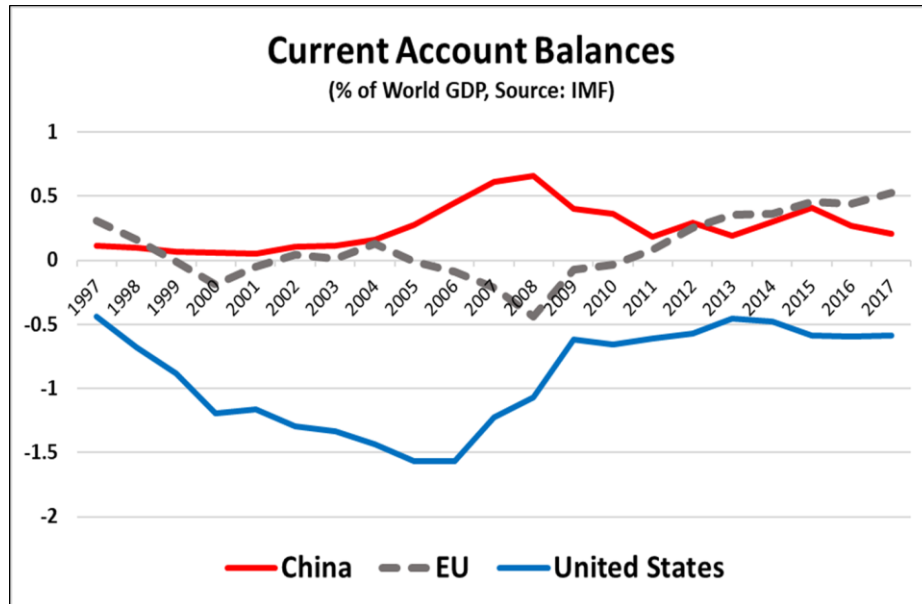


Figure 5

So, the very interesting question is: why is it that America's trade balances and China's trade balances are not linked at all and move in completely different directions? If we understood that fully, we would realize that the U.S.-China trade war is actually nonsensical because you actually cannot influence these balances, but everyone thinks you can.

As illustrated in Figure 6, America's views of China's trade policies are quite negative. In a ranking of five countries, China is seen as the most unfair. Now, how do we measure or indicate that Americans think China's policies are unfair?

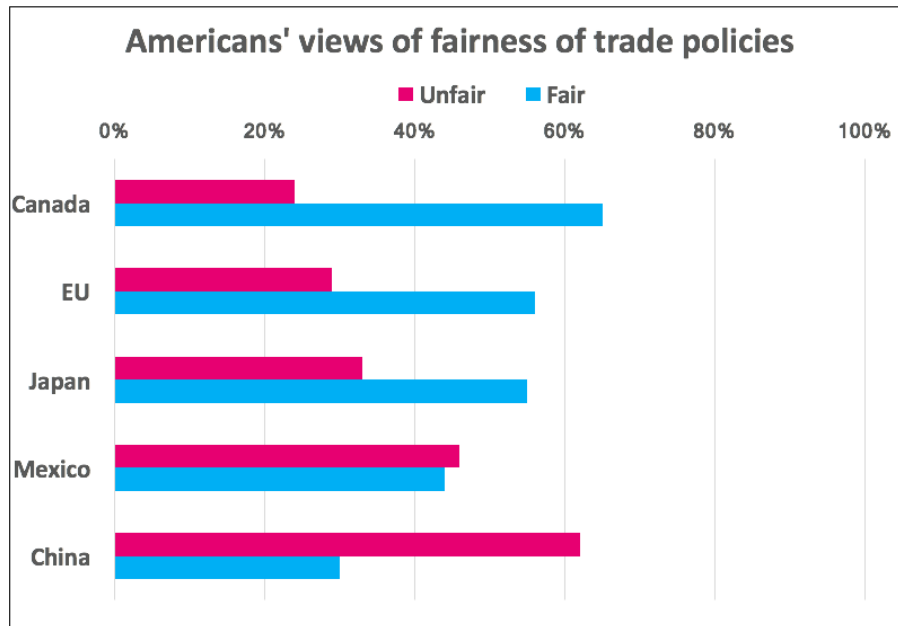


Figure 6

In the Section 301 Report of the Trade Act, every year America looks at 90 countries and certifies whether their trade policies are fair or unfair.⁸ Figure 7 shows a diagram of a dozen countries over the last 20 years and the fairness of their trade policies. China and India are depicted in red as having unfair trade policies. Australia, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea are also depicted on the diagram.

What is interesting is that, until these countries reached income levels of \$20-25,000, even their policies were seen as unfair. However, once they reached a certain income level, their policies are no longer seen as unfair. This tells us that all developing countries, which grow rapidly, have policies that are seen as unfair, but they all become fair once they reach a certain income level. There's a logic behind this that

⁸ Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 gives the President the power to take action against foreign governments that violate international trade agreements or engage in behavior that restricts U.S. commerce. Section 301 reports are conducted by the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

people don't understand – the logic tells us this is really a battle about technology transfer – the competition between great powers.



Figure 7

Figure 8 is a chart designed to show how hard a country is trying to become more innovative, to become more technologically advanced. I have graphed all the countries in the world against a per capita income. What it tells you is that the richer your country is, the harder you try to become more innovative. If you are above the line, you are trying harder than normal. If you are below the line, your efforts are below what would be expected for that income level. What makes China different? The vertical distance above the line tells us China is trying harder to become more innovative than any country we've seen in history for its income level. No wonder there is a source of tension. What I don't have is a chart which tells you whether or not China has succeeded – that chart is actually much more complicated than I can deal with.

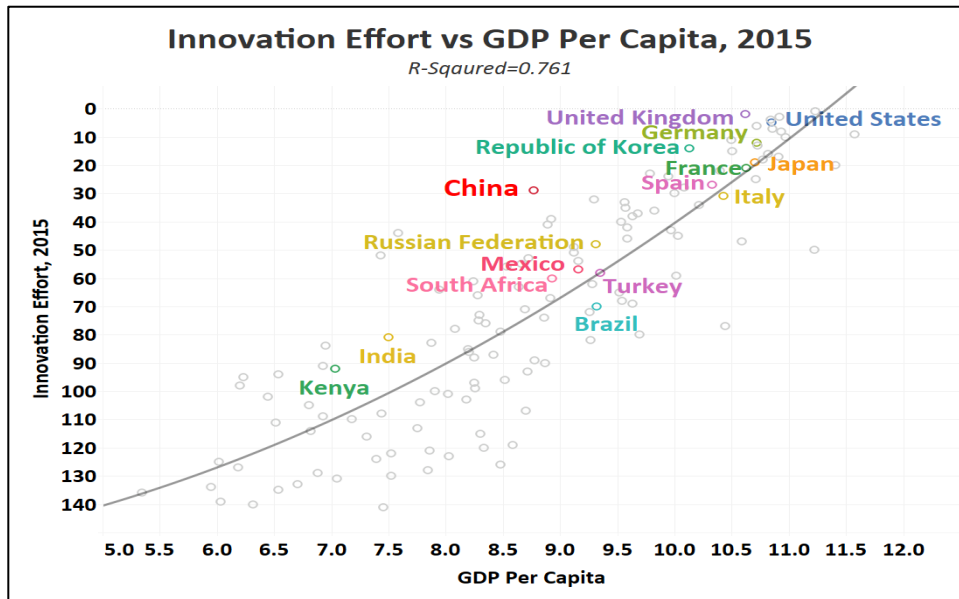


Figure 8

What is of particular concern to the world is that, while China is trying to become more innovative, they think the increase in innovation comes from the transfer of technology. It comes through trade or investment or increasingly, as people say, China steals it. China's ability to get technology from abroad is in a class by itself. China does it better than any country you've ever seen and this ability has shown up in the last 20 years. The key issue for the trade war is: how come? What is different about China?

There are just a few things that are quite different for China. And if we understand Figure 9, we are immediately able to ask the question: is China playing fairly? If not, what can we do about it? This is the heart of the trade war. It's not really about trade - it's about technology transfer.

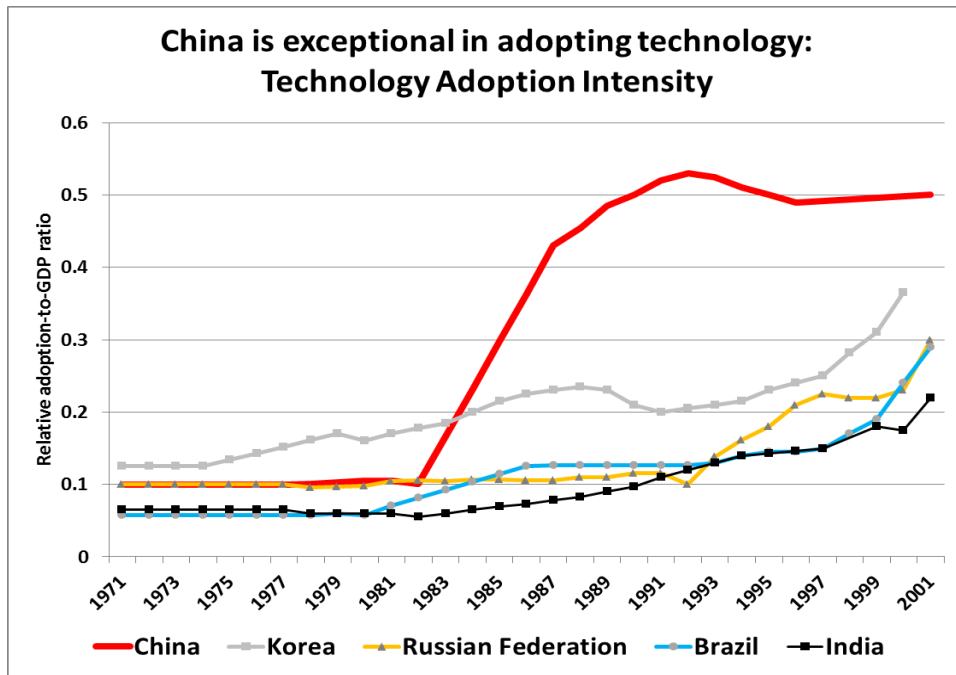


Figure 9

If I were asked to describe the conflict between China and America, I would describe the division of where China's economy should be going from a Western perspective and from a Chinese perspective. My description of the Chinese economy and how it functions is shown in Figure 10. A Chinese dining table, as you may know, is a round table. Now, suppose the top of the table is the GDP, or the economy. This economy is built on the party, the government, state-owned enterprises, and state banks. All of these entities are fused together – integrated, coordinated, operating in a concerted collective fashion – an extraordinarily efficient growth engine. This is China over the last 30-40 years.

However, this particular depiction of the economy is seen in the West as unstable. It cannot continue. China needs to move to a Western dining table with four legs: separation of the party, enterprises, banks, and government. GDP would become more stable on a four-legged

dining table. This trade war, in the minds of many people, is the debate between the current situation in terms of the economic and political systems of China and what we in the United States and Europe think China needs to move to. And since China has not done this and is instead stuck somewhere in the middle, there is a lot of tension between the U.S. and China.

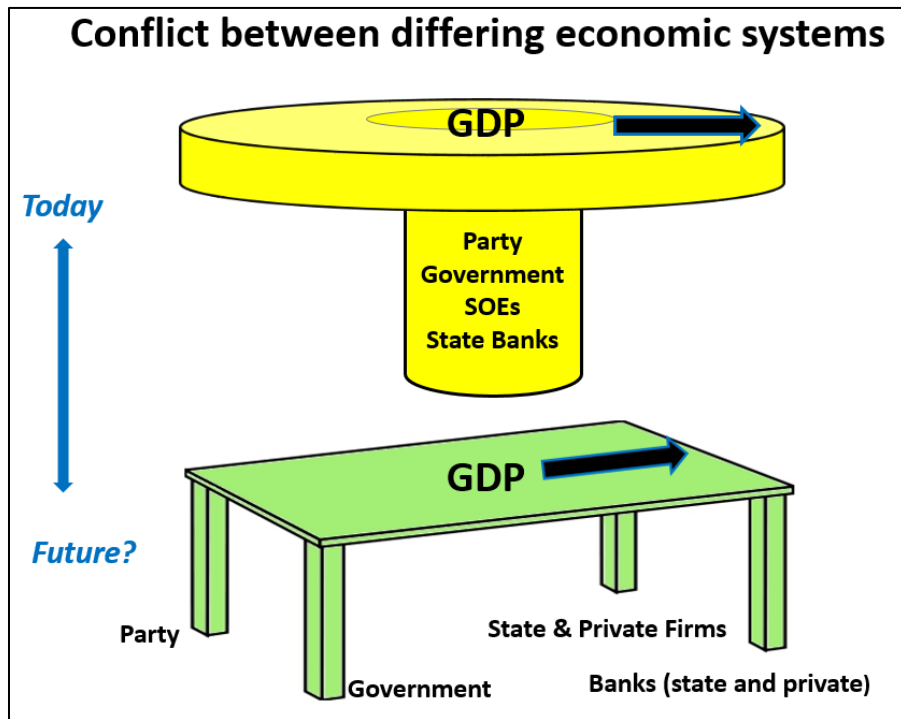


Figure 10

Here is the major fundamental question: is the rise of China good or bad for America? Figure 11 shows us a chart of China's growth rate over the last 30-40 years. The chart also depicts the growth rates for America, Europe, Japan, and emerging market economies. Looking at this chart, one sees a clear relationship: the growth of China has led to a huge increase in the growth rate of emerging market economies due to China's demand for raw materials, which has uplifted these commodities. This is clearly positive. The impact on the U.S., Europe,

and Japan, however, is ambiguous. Is the decline of the West due to China or is it a result of the global financial crisis in these locations? Now, if we understood this particular relationship, we'd have a far better understanding of the question: is China's growth in the future going to be good or bad for the world, for the West, and how do you deal with this?

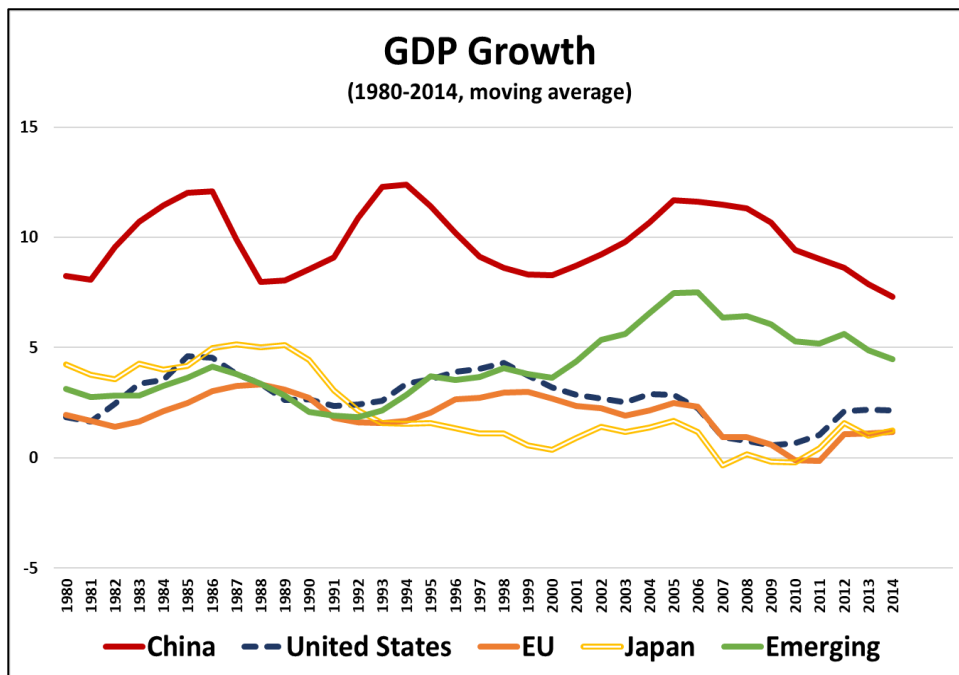


Figure 11

Lastly, I want to ask the question: how should the West respond to this trade and technology war and the current tensions with China? The answer is this: if China cheats, there are legal remedies. Cheating should not be tolerated, and you should address this. If China plays unfairly in investment or trade policies, you need to work on a bilateral investment treaty. You need to strengthen the WTO. You need to coordinate between Europe and the United States. That's not currently the strategy. Finally, if China is a tough competitor, we have no choice in America – we need to improve our game.

Looking Back on Over 40 Years of U.S.-China Normalization

Ambassador J. Stapleton Roy

*Adapted from remarks given in Washington, DC at the
U.S.-China Policy Foundation Panel: U.S.-China Relations at 40
March 14, 2019*

I was involved in the normalization process, and I can say with great confidence that when we established diplomatic relations with China, we had absolutely no conception of where China would be 40 years later. We had a much shorter perspective.

I think it's also fair to say that if the people involved in the normalization process were to see the United States today, they would find it a very familiar place. But if they saw China today, they would think it was a different country. Which it is, because the incredible pace of development in China over the last 40 years, as everybody says, is the most rapid growth in history. That couldn't have taken place with the same degree of speed and success if the United States

Ambassador J. Stapleton Roy is a Distinguished Scholar and Founding Director Emeritus of the Kissinger Institute on China and the United States at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. Stape Roy was born in China and spent much of his youth there during the upheavals of World War II and the communist revolution, where he watched the battle for Shanghai from the roof of the Shanghai American School. He joined the U.S. Foreign Service immediately after graduating from Princeton in 1956, retiring 45 years later with the rank of Career Ambassador, the highest in the service. In 1978, he participated in the secret negotiations that led to the establishment of US-PRC diplomatic relations. During a career focused on East Asia and the Soviet Union, Roy's ambassadorial assignments included Singapore, China, and Indonesia. His final post with the State Department was as Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research. On retirement he joined Kissinger Associates, Inc., a strategic consulting firm, before joining the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in September 2008 to head the newly created Kissinger Institute. In 2001, he received Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson Award for Distinguished Public Service.

and China had not established diplomatic relations.

Here, I have to pay credit to President Carter, because we all knew the big stumbling block in establishing diplomatic relations was going to be Taiwan. We not only had formal diplomatic relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan, but we also had a mutual defense treaty and had some troops stationed there (mostly just an advisory group, this was not a military base). It became clear that we were going to have to meet three conditions in order to establish official relations with the PRC: break diplomatic relations with a friendly government and the security treaty with a friendly government and remove our forces from Taiwan. Now, try to picture a president in the period from Jimmy Carter to now who would have had the political courage to make those sorts of decisions.

I continue to reflect on the question: what if we had not been able to break the deadlock with Deng Xiaoping under Carter? And if President Reagan had come in, would we have been able to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China under those circumstances? I'm frankly not sure we would have been able to. If you look back over the period, going back to the Nixon period, I think it's fair to say we only really had two presidents who were completely comfortable with foreign policy. The first was Nixon and the second was George Herbert Walker Bush.

But President Carter is an underrated president because he was only in for four years, but in the first two years of his administration he established diplomatic relations with China, he got the SALT II Agreement⁹ with the Soviet Union, and he got the Camp David

⁹ The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) were bilateral conferences and international treaties involving the U.S. and the Soviet Union aimed at arms control. There were two rounds of these talks, SALT I and SALT II. President Carter and Leonid Brezhnev signed the SALT II treaty on June 18, 1979.

Accord.¹⁰ We have lots of presidents who were president for eight years and didn't have accomplishments as significant as those three events, and he accomplished this in two years.

Now, during most of this period, even when the presidents didn't know very much about foreign policy, they had the advantage of highly-experienced staff who could make up for the fact that they themselves didn't have a deep knowledge of foreign policy issues. That's one of the things that makes the current situation in the United States so different – we not only have a president who does not know anything about foreign policy, but he is also unable to draw on the most experienced people in the Republican Party because they opposed him during his election campaign and therefore were not eligible to be in the presidency.

We have a situation where we don't have a president who understands foreign policy and he does not have the best minds in the Republican Party making up for whatever deficiencies we may have through this lack of understanding. We're trying to deal with a U.S.-China relationship that is encountering the normal types of problems you would expect to emerge when a big major power moves from a position of poverty to a position of genuine wealth and power. We don't have a China policy now – because a policy tells you what you can do and what you can't do, and a strategy tells you how you have to behave in order to get somewhere you want to go. And we have a president who does not like to be told he can't do something.

In the Korea case, to his credit, he did something that everybody told him he shouldn't do and got us out of a total dead end. We couldn't talk to North Korea because they had taken denuclearization off the

¹⁰ The Camp David Accord produced two framework agreements between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin on September 17, 1978. The signing of these agreements was witnessed by President Carter and the second of the agreements, *A Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel*, resulted in a peace treaty in 1979.

table, and the military options were simply not good ones, so if we couldn't talk to North Korea and we couldn't bomb them into rubble – how do you deal with them? Well, he created a diplomatic path. Now, whether he's handled the diplomatic path well is a separate question, but my point is that's illustrative of the policy problem we have now, which is that we don't have a policy. We don't have an assistant secretary for East Asia and the Pacific – two years after the administration has been in office. And we don't have a policy process.

So, when we ask, what should the administration be doing? If we came up with a brilliant idea, we wouldn't have anyone to talk to in the administration to sell these ideas to. This was not the case when we established diplomatic relations with China. This fall, a new book produced by Winston Lord titled *Kissinger on Kissinger* will be launching, composed mostly of interviews with Dr. Kissinger and his reflections on the events he was involved in as a National Security Advisor and Secretary of State, as well as the personalities and people he had to deal with.¹¹ The really amazing thing about the book is the quality of the thinking on foreign policy that was characteristic of our foreign policy leaders at that time and during most of the period I was a foreign service officer. You really had sophisticated thinking about foreign policy and I would argue that at the present time there is no sophisticated thinking about foreign policy. That poses a real problem when we try to understand how we should be dealing with China.

Let me illustrate this. Our approach to China had not been perfect over this period of time, but it was adequate to keep the relationship moving in the right direction. We were essentially able to overcome the differences between that hostile country, China, and the United States. We had fought each other in Korea, there'd been enormous casualties on each side – those are not easy problems to overcome. And we overcame them because of our mutual concern about the

¹¹ Winston Lord and Henry Kissinger, *Kissinger on Kissinger: Reflections on Diplomacy, Grand Strategy, and, Leadership* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2019).

Soviet threat. During the first ten years of the relationship, that helped us get over the hurdles of the many problems we had to deal with, beginning with the Taiwan Relations Act.¹² We had a big fuss with China right after we established diplomatic relations, because China was not happy we had passed domestic legislation necessary to carry out an official (though non-diplomatic) relationship with Taiwan. But the fact is, we continued to share concerns about the Soviet Union.

Then we had that three-year period from 1989 to 1992 during which the Soviet threat vanished and the instability in China at the time created such a negative reaction in the United States that the *will* to have a good relationship with China vanished.¹³ When I went to China as ambassador in 1991, my problem was that I couldn't find anybody in the U.S. government who was interested in improving relations with China. Most of the senior officials were afraid to go to China because of the domestic criticism they would take if they went there.

This included Secretary of State Jim Baker. Fortunately, he had the courage, and was the first cabinet-level official to come to China after 1989. It was one of the roughest visits I have encountered – and I had served in the Soviet Union and sat in on some pretty rough conversations there, so I was used to rough conversations. This one was particularly rough – because he needed results that could justify simply having gone to China, and therefore it was unacceptable to come back without some sort of agreement. The Chinese understood that and we were actually able to overcome that hurdle.

At the end of this three-year period, China got back on its feet again. At the 14th Party Congress, they reconfirmed the Reform and

¹² The Taiwan Relations Act, enacted April 10, 1979, defines the official but non-diplomatic relationship between the people of the U.S. and the people of Taiwan.

¹³ This period of instability was set off by the Tiananmen Square Massacre, also known as the June 4th Incident, in which the Chinese government declared martial law on a group of protesters, composed mostly of students, that had gathered in Beijing to call for democracy. Although it is difficult to determine an official death toll, the U.S. government file estimates that 10,454 people died and 40,000 were injured.

Openness policies,¹⁴ and our business community in the United States instantly saw what was going on. In 1993, every day I was seeing CEOs of major American companies who were coming to China because they saw the exciting economic development that was beginning to move forward very rapidly.

The U.S. government at the time took no notice of what was happening in China. We were faithfully reporting to Washington what was going on in China, and the media was putting out negative stories about China. When I would complain to the American reporters, they said, “if we write nice things about China, it doesn’t get published or it’s put on page 24. If we write nasty things about China, it goes on the front page, and we like having front page stories.” So, a free press was covering China in 1993 the way the Soviet-controlled press covered the United States during the period I served in our embassy in Moscow. It was totally unprofessional behavior and totally understandable, because reporters are human beings and they like to have their stories get prominent coverage. But it was badly distorting our view of China.

So, this next decade, the 1990s, was a period where we didn’t know how to deal with China. President Clinton tried to do it using human rights as the measure, and that didn’t work. Then he finally figured out in his second term that China actually was an emerging major power, and therefore we had to start dealing with them on that basis. Then we had the exchange of senior leaders that should have taken place in the first four years of the Clinton administration,¹⁵ but he got

¹⁴ The 14th National Congress, which took place October 12-18, 1992, was characterized by Deng Xiaoping urging the Chinese people to, “emancipate the mind more, be bolder and develop faster than before in conducting reform and opening to the outside.” Source: “The 14th National Congress,” GlobalSecurity.org, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/ccp-congress-14.htm>.

¹⁵ Bill Clinton became president on January 20, 1993. It wasn’t until November 25, 1996 that he agreed with Jiang Zemin to exchange state visits over the next two years of his presidency. Source: Todd S. Purdum, “Clinton and Chinese President Agree to Exchange State Visits,” *The New York Times*, November 25, 1996, www.nytimes.com.

caught up in domestic scandal and, as in the case of Nixon, that essentially limited his ability to go much further in the relationship.

Then we had the next decade, and George W. Bush, who did not like to take advice from his father who knew a lot about China, but who, I correctly estimated, due to his family and occasional visits to China, had picked up minor details about foreign policy in China – that China was a country his father believed the United States could get along with. And as you know, George Bush Sr. was head of our liaison office back from 1974 to 1975, which was a very difficult time in China. Yet he emerged from that Cultural Revolution period in China with a sense that the United States and China could find ways to get along with each other. I thought George W. Bush would have inherited that attitude, and I was right. He kept U.S.-China relations on a fairly stable keel, and that was important because this was the period when the democratic transition in Taiwan had produced a president from the Democratic Progressive Party that favored independence for Taiwan. So, there were genuine strains in the cross-strait relationship, and George W. Bush kept the relationship steady. That was the decade when we began to realize we had to deal with China as an emerging major power. That attitude was sort of carried over into the Obama administration, which was transitional.

But when we come up to the current period, we have suddenly discovered that China has developed, is prosperous enough, and militarily developed enough to pose a strategic threat to the United States. The emerging sentiment in the United States is that China is going to be the big strategic problem for the United States and the big strategic threat. What's completely missing is the attitude George Herbert Walker Bush had when he was dealing with a much worse China back in the 1970s. Nobody seems to have the sense that we can get along with a strong, prosperous China.

I consider this total nonsense. Why is it that the United States, with our prosperity and our strength, is defensive in thinking we can

maintain a decent relationship with China? You see articles talking about war with China, but what are the war-fighting issues between the U.S. and China? I've met a lot of Chinese leaders and I haven't met a single one of them who said, "You know, Mr. Ambassador, our plan is to get prosperous and strong and then throw it all away in a conflict with the most powerful country in the world." Does anybody really think Chinese leaders think that way? That they want to destroy all the benefits of economic development by getting into a conflict with the United States?

So, why is it the United States seems to think conflict with China is unavoidable? Now, Taiwan is a special case. But people talk as though we might get into a war with China over rocks and shoals that are uninhabitable in the South China Sea unless you build structures on top of the rocks and shoals, which I find totally bizarre. Countries don't go to war over rocks and shoals that are going to be underwater anyway in 30 years because of global warming. And yet, people are actually seriously talking about dealing with China this way.

So, I think one of the things that ought to emerge from thinking about the U.S.-China relationship over the last 40 years is the understanding that it's high time we got serious in our thinking about China. We do not, basically, have war-fighting issues with China. We have strategic rivalry issues with China, and we are as well-positioned as anyone in the world to deal with strategic rivals, because we are strong and have a strong economy.

The Trump Administration and China Policy

Robert Sutter, PhD

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I have points to make about the hardening of the U.S. government approach to China that we've seen over the past two years. It is an evolving issue. I take the change seriously. I think this is an important matter – we have to pay attention to this. We can't just say, "oh, there are stupid people" and dismiss it. We have to understand this better. Currently, I don't think there's a definitive assessment that can be made. I think we're dealing with a lot of events, a lot of circumstances, and a lot of it we don't understand – the motives of people we don't understand.

I find that the only way I can write about this is with situation reports: here it is, this is what's happening, they're moving in this direction, where is it going, what's driving it, and so on. This allows you to explain to a certain degree, but you still can't be definitive, I don't think, in any particular way. So, with those caveats, I'm going to offer these points to you and give my perspective on it, with the notion that I will look forward and give some sense of what we should look for in the next few months, in the next year, rather than, say, this broad

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trend where it's going, I just can't predict that at this point.

I will start with the national security strategy. This was released at the end of 2017.¹⁶ I've watched this over the years and I haven't seen language like this about China from the executive branch in 50 years. The language in the national security strategy labels China as "the main opponent," "the main competitor," "predatory," etc. This kind of language about China wasn't there before. Even after Tiananmen, this was not being done by the executive branch. Congress was saying all sorts of things about China, but the executive branch didn't do this. So, you have to ask: what's going on here? Why is this happening now – this change in discourse regarding China?

I have tried to understand the origins of this. If you go back, you see a lot of Republican dissatisfaction with the Obama government and their dealings with China. Indeed, Obama looked weak in dealing with China. The Chinese were making advances that were offensive to a lot of Americans concerned about the South China Sea and other issues. It seemed that Mr. Obama was being taken advantage of and the U.S.-China relationship was being mishandled. If you are interested in this, look at the GOP platform ahead of the 2016 election.¹⁷ The Republicans lay out their view of China and it is very negative. It is also remarkably positive about Taiwan.

Now, you could say, "Well, what does this mean?" Maybe not much – I don't know yet where this came from within the administration. But, I think if you start from a mindset where the United States has been weak and the Chinese have been taking advantage of us, and then you start investigating the situation, you'll find all sorts of evidence where,

¹⁶ The National Security Strategy, released on December 18, 2017, can be found at the following website: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

¹⁷ The 2016 Republican Party Platform, adopted by delegates to the Republican National Convention, can be read at the following website: [https://prod-cdn-static.gop.com/media/documents/DRAFT_12_FINAL\[1\]-ben_1468872234.pdf](https://prod-cdn-static.gop.com/media/documents/DRAFT_12_FINAL[1]-ben_1468872234.pdf).

indeed, the Chinese are taking advantage of you. And all sorts of instances where it looks very bad from the American perspective on what the Chinese are doing. This kind of thinking, in my view, is very much behind the evolution toward a hardening China policy that's been going on over the past year. We now have a whole-of-government pushback against the challenges China poses. Not against China per se, but against the practices of the Chinese government.

Now, this GOP platform didn't go very far. China wasn't a big issue in the 2016 presidential campaign, it was a very secondary issue. Donald Trump overshadowed all of this. But it seems to have evolved to a point where you have, by late 2017 and early 2018, the emergence of this argument that China is the main danger to the United States. What happened here is that you find certain people in the administration – not Donald Trump, but senior officials like the director of the FBI, Christopher Wray as well as the USTR, Mr. Robert Lighthizer, and a number of others – endorsing this idea. Take Lighthizer, who said in March of 2018 that China's economic practices are an existential threat to the economy to the United States.¹⁸ It's a very strong statement. And Christopher Wray repeatedly warned America needs a "whole of society" approach to push back against China.¹⁹ All of this was in early 2018.

In any event, whatever the reasoning behind the rhetoric in the administration, Congress has picked up on this. The Congress didn't devote much attention to China in 2017 – they were busy with the tax

¹⁸ On July 10, 2018, Lighthizer released a statement regarding action under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, wherein he referred to China's practices as an existential threat to the U.S. economy. The entirety of the statement can be accessed at the following website: <https://ustr.gov/about-us/policy-offices/press-office/press-releases/2018/july/statement-us-trade-representative>.

¹⁹ In 2018, Wray stated: "One of the things we're trying to do is view the China threat as not just a whole-of-government threat, but a whole-of-society threat on their end. And I think it's going to take a whole-of-society response by us." Source: Michal Kranz, "The director of the FBI says the whole of Chinese society is a threat to the US – and that Americans must step up to defend themselves," *Business Insider*, February 13, 2018, www.businessinsider.com.

cut and health care and so on – but in 2018, they came in and they took an interest in China, and we had this remarkable convergence of Democratic members and Republican members supporting a tougher policy toward China, just like what was called for in the national security strategy of the Trump administration. So, they seem to all agree. Now, that doesn't mean all Members of Congress agreed with this and it certainly doesn't mean all the administration people agreed with it, but you had very prominent Democrats and Republicans advocating for very strong positions on a whole range of issues dealing with China. That meshed well with the positions of Christopher Wray and Lighthizer and many others in dealing with China.

So, what's significant about this? I think what's significant to me about this is that there was a sense of urgency about China. This is reflected in their language and discourse. The same old issues are there, but there is also the new issue of technology competition, which is a very big issue that surprised a lot of people, it seems. In any event, the Members of Congress – Republicans and Democrats – and not just the usual China bashers – are voicing their concerns. My senator is Mark Warner (D-VA). He is very strong on this issue, on technology dealing with China. And I always say, in the back of my head, he's the Vice Chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee. He probably knows something and he's a very smart guy about technology because that's how he made his money. But he's a centrist. So, you find those folks teaming up with others in Congress who are often quite critical of China for a whole range of long-standing reasons. The result is that you have this sense of urgency and a growing sense that economics is actually security. And this is articulated in the national security strategy.

And what's going on in the high-tech area? China is seeking to advance to the point that it is not vulnerable to the United States on the technology side. In this business, the only way you can really be

secure is to dominate. If you don't dominate, the other might dominate you. China seeks not to be dominated by the United States. If that happens, then – the argument is – they will be in a position to dominate the high-technology industries so important for the future of the American economy and the actual defensive capabilities of the United States. You're not going to have a fight in the South China Sea. Instead, this is the battleground, if you will, from some perspectives.

Clearly, not everybody thinks this way, but this is a line of argument you're seeing in the discourse on Capitol Hill and other places as well. As a result, you have harder policies advocated by many people in Congress during this period of 2018. The Trump government, too, started to get hard towards China. But they were very ambivalent, very divided, about economic issues. But by the late spring, they were not divided anymore. Gary Cohn left,²⁰ maybe that was the reason why, but they began following a much tougher policy using tariffs as a way to punish the Chinese in dealing with economic issues.

The result is that you have an overall hardening in a whole-of-government approach articulated in the National Defense Authorization Act of August of 2018.²¹ It has a whole series of provisions dealing with China. It enjoyed very bipartisan support and the President signed it. Although it was a must-pass foreign policy bill, what we've seen is the Congress and the Trump administration continuing to act in line with this approach. For example, Vice President Pence gave a speech at the Hudson Institute,²² and Jeff Sessions and the Justice Department had a very big event in

²⁰ Gary Cohn served as President Trump's chief economic advisor from 2017 to 2018. He resigned from his post on April 2, 2018 following Trump's proposal to impose import tariffs on steel and aluminum – tariffs that Cohn was reportedly hoping to dissuade Trump from implementing. He was replaced by Larry Kudlow.

²¹ The National Defense Authorization Act of August of 2018 can be found at the following website: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr5515/details>.

²² Vice President Pence's speech can be accessed at the following website: <https://www.hudson.org/events/1610-vice-president-mike-pence-s-remarks-on-the-administration-s-policy-towards-china102018>.

November,²³ both laying out their efforts to deal with China.

You find this throughout DC, although it's calmed down on the executive branch side in the past few months – I assume because of the sensitive trade negotiations. On Capitol Hill, you see hearing after hearing²⁴ where sensitive issues are raised concerning China, highlighting this tough approach. You have the government moving in this direction and now the mainstream media. They were previously focused on the antics of President Trump and ignored the fundamental competition between the U.S. and China that was laid out later in the year. They've changed. They now look at this issue much more seriously and highlight the negatives in the relationship with China. This is a significant change.

And then there's public opinion. I follow lots of polling, but the one I really like is the annual poll by Gallup,²⁵ which comes out every February, and it asks: did the American public approve or disapprove of the government of China? And this past year, the result has gotten worse by five percent. In other words, the uptick of people who are unfavorable towards China is around the high 50s now and in the past it was below 50. The same thing with the favorable rate, it is now down in the low 40s. So, I think the public is being impacted by this as well. As it should be, in the sense that you have a lot of publicity now with the Justice Department²⁶ and with other agencies showing the negatives about the relationship with China.

²³ Jeff Sessions and the Department of Justice released a China Initiative Fact Sheet on November 1, 2018, which can be read at the following website:
<https://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/file/1107256/download>.

²⁴ For example, the week of March 11-17, 2019, China was the subject of two major hearings on Capitol Hill, targeting China's unfair trade practices. Source: Cathaline Adams, "China Cheating Under the Microscope During Capitol Hill Hearings," *Alliance for American Manufacturing*, March 13, 2019.

²⁵ The Gallup World Affairs Poll, conducted in early February, gives the U.S. perception of China. The latest poll results can be viewed at the following website:
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/167498/americans-view-china-mostly-unfavorably.aspx>.

²⁶ Please refer to footnote seven for an example of such publicity regarding the negative aspects about the U.S.-China relationship.

The new U.S. government hardline toward China has momentum and wide support in Congress. The media is more attuned to these harder policies than it was last year and public opinion is changing. How much? Not too much yet, but it's changing. Those who criticize the hardline Trump policy, who worked for engagement and an accommodation of China in the past – for the sake of a stable relationship and the benefits of engagement – remain on the defensive. It's very hard for them to get a lot of traction. The atrophy of U.S. engagement with China also means the interagency process no longer has all these people who have a strong interest in sustaining programs that are very positive in U.S.-China relations. It's a much tougher atmosphere there. Beijing is Xi Jinping – it's not going to compromise. So, we have a real impasse and that's pretty serious. The situation remains very uncertain.

Donald Trump. Where does he come down? He never uses the language of his strategy and he vacillates. Where he's going to come down could make a big difference and we just don't know at this point. A second point that makes you hesitant to say this harsh line can continue to go forward is that the cost of Chinese retaliation could be very high. The cost of this across-the-board hardening of U.S. policy is very expensive. The Defense Department, the FBI, internal security and so forth all has to be brought into account. Our Asian partners and allies have concerns about the status of trade and other issues. They're not in full agreement that we need this hardline approach toward China. Then there is the possibility China could use force in some incidences, cause an episode that would be very hard to manage if we don't have a decent relationship with China. So, it's dangerous. This is a very serious matter. Therefore, I don't have a clear projection at all. I do see momentum, it's still growing in my judgment, and I think it's going to continue to grow in the next several months.

What to watch for. The thing I watch for is this sense of urgency. I think that's the most important thing. How do we get people to calm

down about this? Some people say all you have to do is just deeply investigate what's been going on between the U.S. and China, but that may not work. Ambassador Roy was with me on one project we worked on with the National Bureau of Asian Research.²⁷ I was the principal investigator of this project over the course of two and a half years. I spent a lot of time looking at what Xi Jinping does with Putin. I came into that project saying everybody knows me, I'm ambivalent. I'm not really an ideologue in that sense, and I looked at the evidence and said, "holy moley." Look how close they work together. Look what they do. And this hasn't even been investigated. Nobody's talking about this. So, I'm sort of upset, we spent two and a half years, nobody's talking about it, we want people to talk about it, pay attention to it. The bottom line here is that when you investigate things, you find stuff that makes it really hard to say, "oh, we have to be nice to China." So, I take it seriously, where we are and where we're going.

I think the main thing that will make this change is the cost. Americans will recognize how much this is going to cost us. Is it really worth it? Do we really want this tough policy towards China which, believe me, it's going to cost me a lot of money, do I really want that? I would look at that as the counterforce. But the bottom line is: please watch it, I think it's evolving, I think it has momentum, this kind of movement. It's certainly not uniform in Congress, it's certainly not uniform in the administration, and there are lots of uncertainties, but I do take it seriously. I've never seen anything like it in 50 years. This is a very different situation than we've faced before.

²⁷ This report, the NBR Special Report no. 66: Russia-China Relations: Assessing Common Ground and Strategic Fault Lines, was released on July 10, 2017 and can be found at the following website: <https://www.nbr.org/publication/russia-china-relations-assessing-common-ground-and-strategic-fault-lines/>.

Xi Jinping's Foreign Policy and the Belt and Road Initiative

Douglas Paal

Adapted from remarks given in Washington, DC at the U.S.-China Policy Foundation Panel: U.S.-China Relations at 40 March 14, 2019

We tend, for the purposes of establishing a narrative, to try to personalize what's going on in a country. When you have a country that's as sizeable and as populous as China, with a difficult language and an opaque culture for most Americans, there is an even greater tendency to try to personalize it. Deng Xiaoping, people of a certain age will recall, was twice made the *Time Magazine* Man of the Year in the 1980s because he was seen as *the* person who had brought China out. And there was a great deal to be said for his personal role in all of that. Today, people tend to do the same thing – not giving the *Time* Man of the Year award to Xi Jinping,²⁸ but focusing immensely on Xi Jinping's personal rule. I think it's important to acknowledge that personalities make a big difference. I think in China's case, the first thing we ought to do is distinguish between continuity and change.

Many of the things for which Xi Jinping is becoming known – which

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²⁸ He was, however, a runner-up for *Time's* Person of the Year award in 2017.

includes a tough position on the South China Sea Islands, the fortification of these little rocks and shoals in the South China Sea, a tough posture toward Japan, a China that has a strong, authoritarian culture, the Belt and Road Initiative – are giving him an image of having been the man who created it all. I think it's important to remember that the first inroads into the South China Sea and the initial tensions with Japan over the Senkaku or Diaoyu Dao Islands were under his predecessor, not under Xi Jinping. The effort to take advantage of China's wealth and access the capacity to build new investments in transportation ports and railroads preceded his coming to office, even though he became the man who put a label on it. The continuity is important because Xi Jinping could disappear tomorrow and our expectations could shift in the direction of, "well, now all that's going to change, now let's see if we can't find a new China." But this is a China that's pursuing its issues – its purposes – in a long-range way, and Xi Jinping reflects that to a large extent rather than drives it.

The next point I want to make is, I don't think Xi Jinping is going to be remembered for his foreign policy initiatives or genius. It's true that he's traveling extensively, he's in good health, he's energetic, he's ambitious, and he, as a leader of China, is trying to show China now has wings that spread across the world. There's a lot to be said about China's new roles in financing new kinds of instruments. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as well as the Belt and Road Initiative show China's new capacities to involve itself. On the other hand, can you think of any world problem to which China has contributed an imaginative solution at this point? Do you think the Chinese side has handled the trade dispute effectively? You may not have an opinion on that, but I can tell you everybody I know in China has an opinion. And just about everybody in China thinks Xi Jinping's not handling it well; that he's having unnecessary friction with the United States; that China needs to grow out of its bad or its traditional habits and adapt to the modern economy; that China is unwise to try to export

authoritarianism.

The thing that maybe most of you will recognize is that in China in the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping talked about China having “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” In those days, the meaning of that phrase, “Chinese characteristics,” was to say we are going to have socialism but we’re going to sneak in a lot of capitalist behavior and call it “Chinese characteristics.” But the meaning of that phrase has transmogrified under Xi Jinping and now “with Chinese characteristics” means you’re going to be more like China. You’re going to be an authoritarian state with big policy banks and state-owned enterprises and a lot of the things we think of as hallmarks of the failed Soviet Union in another era.

The good news for us here in America, if we’re concerned about Chinese influence abroad, is that every time China tries to sell its policy initiatives as having “Chinese characteristics,” neighboring Nepalese and Russians and Indians and Vietnamese and Burmese and others all say, “but we’re not Chinese and we’re not interested in being part of something that’s Chinese characteristics.” So, whatever cleverness may be ascribed to Xi Jinping for using this phrase to try to market authoritarianism around the world, it actually has a negative impact on the listeners to whom he’s appealing, and therefore a self-limiting effect. Our own effort in the United States’ current administration to admonish countries not to engage in the Belt and Road Initiative or not to be taken in by the siren song of authoritarianism, is not half as effective as the Chinese’s own ineffectiveness of labeling these programs as being “of Chinese characteristics.”

I think Xi Jinping will be more remembered for trying to and quite successfully reasserting strong central control over the domestic political situation and eventually over the economy, rather than for his foreign policy, and the shifting of resources away from private-sector investment toward state-owned enterprises. There may be

some justifiable economic logic to this in certain areas, but the overwhelming drift is toward less productive investment every year that goes on. China is getting lower and lower rates of return on investments because they're putting it into state-owned enterprises that, unlike the private sector, have been unable to maintain high levels of productivity. The Chinese advertisement of self-satisfaction, that things have gone so well, that people should follow the Chinese, again sits badly on foreign audiences and is self-limiting.

I would like to take a moment to talk a little bit more about the Belt and Road Initiative. I think this has gotten a lot of attention because Xi Jinping went to Kazakhstan to announce it early in his time in office.²⁹ At the time, it was a good headline. It looked like he had ambitions to invest across Central Asia – a place where I would hope China and others *would* invest because you've got Muslim populations, largely they're underemployed, we've seen what happens to underemployed Muslim youth in other parts of the world, and so we would wish well for the Central Asians to be able to develop their economies and provide jobs for their people – and China seemed to be talking about that. But what needs to be mentioned is that when Xi Jinping laid this out, he laid out no bureaucratic plan, no scheme for what this would be. It was this one belt: it would be railroads and roads across the central part of Eurasia; and the other would be a series of ports through the waters of Southeast and South Asia off to the Middle East and Africa. One road and one belt. The program, I think, at that point, in the first couple of years, was essentially a vision. It was not a plan.

Because it was a vision and didn't have bureaucratic principles – an organization in Beijing that would duly weigh each investment and

²⁹ Xi Jinping's presidential term began on March 14, 2013. Just a few months later, on September 7, 2013, he travelled to Kazakhstan where he proposed building a Silk Road economic belt with central Asian countries. Source: "President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech and Proposes to Build a Silk Road Economic Belt with Central Asian Countries," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China*, September 7, 2013, www.fmprc.gov.cn.

then match it against standards for return on investment or transparency or absence of corruption – the Chinese fell into a pattern of adopting the lowest common denominator of the partner country they were investing in. So, you end up going to some of Africa’s most corrupt and difficult countries because they were ready to make the boss’s vision look good by signing on to it, but brought with them conditions which are now reflecting badly on the Belt and Road Initiative as a whole, which the U.S. administration today is trying to exploit by saying, “these are debt traps, these are going to take you down rat holes, don’t get involved.” We’re going to have a big Belt and Road conference in Beijing in a couple of weeks.³⁰ What we’re seeing as this conference approaches is that China is beginning to bureaucratize and is beginning to realize that some of these bets have been bad bets and that they now have to bring standards to bear.

Here’s where I think American policy would do a lot better: not to condemn the Belt and Road Initiative, but to get in there and lend a shoulder – whether bilaterally or through international organizations – to help this new source of investment for global infrastructure, which is widely needed, raise its own standards, bring in more transparency, higher-quality investment judgment about the value with return and the net benefit to the recipients of the assistance.

Again, on the question of continuity and change, I would point out that some of the worst examples cited by the opponents of the Belt and Road Initiative are examples of things that preceded the Belt and Road Initiative. There was a corrupt government in Sri Lanka that was hanging on to power and rewarding itself by borrowing from China and they ended up borrowing so much they couldn’t repay it. This was before the Belt and Road existed. Then the Chinese had to write off the loan and take a 99-year lease on a completely unproductive port on the south side of Sri Lanka. And this is now example one through 100

³⁰ The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) was May 14-15 in Beijing. See the official website for more details: www.beltandroad2019.com/english/.

of every journalistic article that appears about what's wrong with the Chinese Belt and Road. People need to distinguish: this was not the Belt and Road.

Look at that and draw a lesson we can bring to bear. We're not going to get into the business in the United States or in our European allies of building railroads and ports anymore; we're past that. We're into financial services, high-standard international assistance, and there are things that we can bring to bear that would help the Belt and Road do a better job. We've seen this in China's own Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank: the organization that took charge of the AIIB brought lessons from experience at the World Bank that included high standards and return on investment, but also some de-bureaucratization, reduction of political interference, making it a better program internally so it would encounter less resistance and produce better results. I think we have the chance to work with China to shape the Belt and Road Initiative better than Mr. Xi Jinping has done with it.

The final observation about Xi Jinping is that he's been fairly modest in his rhetoric in direct commentary. But when he has opportunities before audiences that are exclusively Asian or in Third World countries, Xi Jinping has been trying to portray China as successful and the West as in decline. I think this is a reflection of an overestimation that is widely shared in China of where China is today and I would urge people to reflect on this. Ambassador Roy³¹ said earlier and Yukon Huang³² showed in his slides that the U.S. is much stronger than we think we are and the Chinese are not as strong as *they* think they are, and there ought to be a meeting point somewhere in between that'll keep us out of trouble on trade frictions and able to work on problems that we encounter in common.

³¹ See "Looking Back on Over Forty Years of Normalized U.S.-China Relations" by Ambassador J. Stapleton Roy.

³² See "Economic Tensions: Origins and Implications" by Dr. Yukon Huang.

On Taiwan

Ambassador J. Stapleton Roy and Douglas Paal

*Adapted from remarks given in Washington, DC at the
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On the current state of cross-strait relations and the possibility of a Sino-U.S. conflict over a crisis in the Taiwan Strait:

Ambassador Roy: It's been 40 years since the U.S. established diplomatic relations with China. We had a framework for managing the Taiwan issue that was reflected in the Three Joint Communiqués.³³ Over those 40 years, Taiwan has been a remarkable success story. Its per capita GDP is now the equivalent of some European countries. During the 40 years, the cross-strait relationship opened up – there was trade and investment across the strait, the Three Links,³⁴ hundreds of weekly air flights between Taiwan and the mainland. The

³³ Three joint statements made by the U.S. and Chinese governments clarifying the relationship between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China. The first communiqué, created on February 28, 1972, was the first to mention the Taiwan issue, but it was in the second communiqué (January 1, 1979) where the U.S. agreed to end formal political relations with Taiwan. In the 1972 text, China wrote: "The Taiwan question is the crucial question obstructing the normalization of relations between China and the United States... the liberation of Taiwan is in China's internal affair in which no other country has the right to interfere... the Chinese Government firmly opposes any activities which aim at the creation of 'one China, one Taiwan.'" In the same text, the U.S. stated: "The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves."

³⁴ A proposal made by the PRC in 1979 and accepted by Taiwan in 2008, suggesting three links be opened between Taiwan and the Mainland: postal, trade, and transportation links.

threat to Taiwan was extremely low. When you visited Taiwan and heard people talk about their concern about being “gobbled up” by the mainland, it turns out the concern had to do with economic and social gobbling up, where they might lose their separate identity. It was not a military gobbling up.

Taiwan has not been a war-fighting issue between China and the United States because we established a framework in which peaceful unification was the fundamental policy of the mainland and it was also the fundamental consideration for the United States. Taiwan becomes a war-fighting issue if you move outside the framework, and especially if you move outside of a One-China framework.³⁵ There is no question that there are Americans who think you can fiddle with the framework and somehow improve things. The only analysis I have seen, however, has to do with how it would be so much nicer if we could conduct higher-level visits to Taiwan and cooperate with them militarily, etc. I don’t see much analysis as to what the consequences would be.

Beijing, rightly or wrongly, has said that any effort for independence by Taiwan is a war-fighting issue. So, if the United States, while pretending we’re not doing it, is in fact giving Taiwan encouragement to move in an independence direction, then we’re essentially creating conditions for a military confrontation between the United States and China. I don’t think that’s in Taiwan’s interests, I don’t think it’s in the United States’ interests, and it’s certainly not in the mainland’s interests.

Now, the mainland is not being helpful. They’ve had extensive contacts with Taiwan and have been unable to increase sentiment in Taiwan in favor of unification. At the same time, the military threat

³⁵ This refers to the “One-China policy” alleging there is only one China which includes Taiwan. This policy was first stated in the Shanghai Communiqué of 1972 (the first of the three communiqués) and was acknowledged by the United States. The U.S. preserves this stance today.

from the mainland is credible in Taiwan, even though in the United States people tend to think it's not all that credible. In Taiwan, if it's a choice between going for independence, going for unification, or maintaining the status quo, the majority favor the status quo.

The president of Taiwan³⁶ campaigned on maintaining the status quo. In fact, she's *not* maintaining the status quo because she won't refer to a One-China policy. The United States has supported more space for Taiwan internationally, but that was within a One-China context. If you begin talking about more space for Taiwan *outside* of a One-China framework, you're talking about moving toward independence, and then you get into problems.

I find the level of understanding in the U.S. of the sensitivity and potential risks involved in messing with the cross-strait framework absolutely atrocious. There's just no understanding of the consequences of tinkering with something – and that's dangerous. You have unanimous votes in Congress in favor of violating the One-China framework in dealing with China by encouraging high-level visits to Taiwan that, under every administration – Republican and Democratic – over the last 40 years, have been considered inconsistent with our One-China policy. Yet, Congress passes it as though there's no risk in doing so. This is a dangerous situation and the administration is doing nothing to help. They're totally passive. The State Department didn't lift a finger when Congress was passing the Taiwan Travel Act.³⁷

³⁶ The current president of Taiwan is Tsai Ing-wen, a member of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Tsai lost the 2012 election due to cross-Strait relations – as such, her stance in the 2016 election was to maintain the status quo and seek stability in cross-Strait relations. Source: “Taiwan’s 2016 Presidential Election,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, September 9, 2015, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2015/09/09/taiwan-s-2016-presidential-election-pub-61189>.

³⁷ The Taiwan Travel Act was passed by Congress on February 28, 2018 and signed into law by President Trump on March 16, 2018. The Taiwan Travel Act allows the exchange of visits of high level officials and specifies that these visits are official, though they are only considered sub-diplomatic.

I think the Taiwan issue is actually a very dangerous issue and it's becoming more dangerous. The reason it's becoming more dangerous is because there is very little understanding in Congress and in this administration of the danger of tinkering with the framework that has been so good for Taiwan, the mainland, and for the United States over the last 40 years.

The problem is, the mainland is now showing impatience about unification. If the mainland wants to get into a war situation, they should show impatience when they are unable to alter attitudes in Taiwan in favor of unification. For peaceful unification to take place, the mainland has to be able to persuade the people of Taiwan that it's in their interests to go in that direction. That's not a question the United States can alter – that's a question between the mainland and Taiwan – and they can engage directly now. In my judgment, there is absolutely no basis for impatience in dealing with this issue. What is called for is patience. That has been the mainland's approach in the past, but we're seeing signs this may change. That would be as dangerous as the potential changes in the United States' approach to Taiwan. So, this is not simply a question of the United States not understanding the issue. I'm not sure the mainland understands the sensitivity of this issue in terms of the attitudes in Taiwan.

Mr. Paal: I'd like to make two observations, mostly to my friends in Taiwan. The first observation is that, over the last 40 years, when U.S. and China relations have been reasonably composed and effective, Taiwan has profited. They entered the Asian Development Bank, the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), and gained other opportunities when the U.S. and China had more to gain from cooperation than confrontation. And Taiwan has suffered in those times when the U.S. and China didn't. So, when the Taiwanese leaders or politicians hear siren songs from the U.S. about doing this or making a bold break from the framework, they should bear in mind that most likely the cost will be borne by Taiwan, not the United

States.

Secondly, and this is a related observation, there's a big disconnect within the administration between people advocating large types of change. The most prominent example of that would be the National Security Advisor, John Bolton, who has been radical in his arguments on this issue,³⁸ and President Trump, who doesn't seem to have any interest in this subject at all. If you're an official or a politician from Taiwan and you're talking to American officials or politicians, bear in mind that the people you talk to who may be saying, "go out on a limb" or "walk off the plank" may not have the president behind them. You could be taking risks that don't really have the full faith and credit of the American executive behind them. Those are my two cautions.



March 14, 2019 Panel on U.S.-China Relations at 40. (L to R) Madelyn Ross, Ambassador J. Stapleton Roy, Dr. Yukon Huang, Mr. Douglas Paal, Dr. Sutter.

³⁸ On April 1, 2019, John Bolton stated that Beijing's behavior toward Taiwan would not "win any hearts and minds in Taiwan" and that the U.S.' commitment to the Taiwan Relations Act is "clear." Source: Keoni Everington, "Bolton says US commitments to Taiwan Relations Act 'are clear' after Chinese jet incursion," *Taiwan News*, April 2, 2019, www.taiwannews.com.tw. Bolton's stance on the Taiwan issue is not new – in early 2017, Bolton supported increasing U.S. military sales to Taiwan and stationing military personnel and assets there. Source: Jesse Johnson, "Top Trump adviser Bolton backs U.S. forces in Taiwan, says move could lessen Okinawa burden," *The Japan Times News*, January 18, 2017, www.japantimes.co.jp.

On the Anniversary of the May Fourth Movement

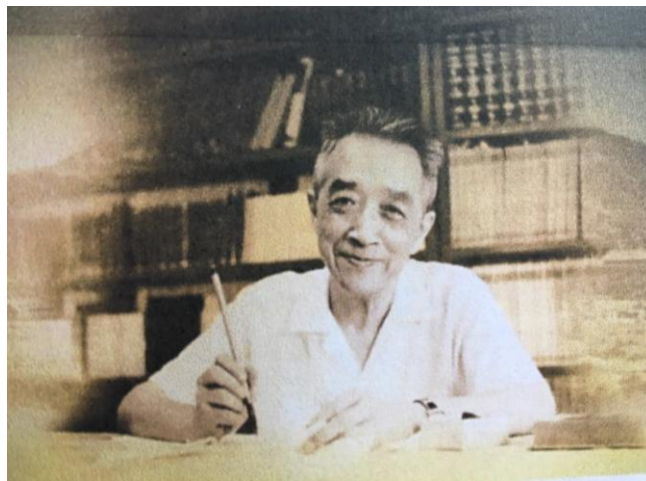
Rona Vaselaar

This year marks the 100-year anniversary of one of the most influential social movements of all time. A massive uprising of Chinese society against the fractured warlord government of the early 1900s, this definitive movement has been largely ignored in the Western world. The loss is ours, as the May Fourth Movement is not only fascinating, but also contains crucial insights into the nature of social movements as a whole. What makes them successful? What crushes them before they take root? How do they arise and why do they end? Studying the May Fourth Movement can help us parse out answers to these tough questions.

Without a doubt, the best book written on the subject is by historian and political science professor Chow Tse-tsung (1916-2007). His book, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, painstakingly detailed the events leading up to and following the student protests on May 4th, 1919. The importance of this book cannot be overstated – not only does it give a comprehensive history of the movement, but it also examines the various competing interpretations of the events and offers a critique of the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) own analysis of the movement. Although the book was first published in 1960, its research and analysis remain relevant today.

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Current discourse on the May Fourth Movement seems to focus on the movement's anti-imperialist, hyper-nationalist, pro-scientific, and pro-democratic ideological bent. Much attention is paid to the impact of the May Fourth Movement on the CCP, the narrative the CCP has constructed around the movement, and how the CCP currently seeks to control said narrative. Due to the wealth of articles and essays written on these issues, I would like to take this space to return to Chow's original work and look more closely at the events of the movement itself, focusing on a select few aspects of the movement that are often overlooked – especially in the Western world.



Dr. Hu Shih, at Bei Da (Beijing University) in the 1940s
(Photo courtesy of Chi Wang)

Studying the May Fourth Movement can help us not only understand China, but also better understand the relationship between China and the United States. If you ask the average American about the May Fourth Movement, you're likely to get a blank stare in return – it is simply not a part of most public schools' curricula, and those who do not go on to study China in-depth are unlikely to come across it. However, American influence played a key role in the May Fourth Movement, largely embodied in one of the movement's most prominent intellectuals, Hu Shih. China's complicated and often tense

relationship with America is in many ways tied to the May Fourth Movement, from America's intellectual impact to China's disillusionment with American ideals. When analyzing our relationship with China, it is important for Americans to understand how the May Fourth Movement set the tone for Sino-U.S. relations in the years to come.

A Brief Historical Overview

Before analyzing the importance of the movement, it is prudent to give a short description of the history of the May Fourth Movement. The history presented here is adapted from the first half of Chow's book – interested readers are encouraged to consult the first ten chapters of his volume if they would like to read a more comprehensive and detailed description of the events as they occurred.

The May Fourth Movement – or, as it is sometimes called, the May Fourth Incident – refers to a large student protest movement that arose in response to the Chinese government's attitude towards the Treaty of Versailles (1919). The Treaty of Versailles awarded Shandong Province to Japan in the wake of World War I, which was viewed as a great humiliation to many Chinese people. It came on the tail of Japan's Twenty-One Demands, in which Japan sought near-total control over China's domestic affairs. It is emblematic of China's Century of Humiliation, which refers to the wrongs China suffered at the hands of exploitative foreign powers. Japan had "humiliated" China already during the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). The Treaty of Versailles and accompanying Demands, however, elevated this humiliation to a new height.

The Chinese government, at the time, was not operating as a cohesive unit. Once Yuan Shikai's short-lived stint as a Chinese emperor ended in 1916, a series of warlords fought for control of the government, which was already heavily populated by a group of pro-Japanese

officials called the Anfu Club. As a result, the Chinese government was unable – and perhaps unwilling – to organize against the Japanese demands and resist Japanese imperialism. They did not expect that the decision to capitulate to a foreign power would incite such vehement protests from China’s students.



The Old Bei Da building where much of the May Fourth protests took place
(Photo courtesy of Chi Wang)

On May 4, 1919, a group of Chinese students marched in protest of the Treaty of Versailles and the Twenty-One Demands. Although the protests began peacefully, they quickly escalated, resulting in the burning of an official’s home and the beating of another official. The Beijing government moved swiftly to arrest the students, but were forced to release them after strong pushback from the rest of Chinese society. University officials, factory workers, and even merchants all came together to strike and demand the release of the students.

The May Fourth Movement didn’t end with the release of the students. Following continued weeks of protests and strikes that damaged the economy and resulted in numerous resignations by top officials, the Beijing government had no choice but to surrender to the demands of

the students. The government refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles, the pro-Japanese officials involved in the Paris Peace Conference who had failed to sufficiently fight on behalf of Chinese interests – Cao Rulin, Zhang Zhongxiang, and Lu Zongyu – were dismissed, and charges were dropped against the students.

Of course, these victories were a formality at best. Regardless of China's decision to refuse to sign the treaty, control of Shandong Province still went to Japan. However, the symbolic nature of the victory was still important, as was the message it sent: the students of China are a powerful force to be reckoned with when organized, and the students showed a *remarkable* aptitude for organization.



Beijing University students who participated in the May Fourth Movement. (Wikimedia Commons)

This is the basic series of events that constitutes the May Fourth Movement, but the movement as a whole is so much more than that. It

is embedded in the larger New Culture Movement, which was introduced in China by Western-educated intellectuals and, as Chow notes, informed the thinking of the student leaders of the May Fourth Movement, who would later go on to become politically active in organizations such as the CCP and the Nationalist Party (KMT). The ideals that were emblematic of the May Fourth Movement – especially the supremacy of science and democracy – were lifted right from Western intellectual institutions. The New Culture Movement also encouraged the use of the vernacular in literature, making literature of all sorts – including political and ideological essays – more accessible to students and the general public. The intellectuals of the New Culture Movement, primarily Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) and Hu Shih (1891-1962), would become major inspirations for the May Fourth Movement through their publications.



Hu Shih is welcomed by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in Taipei in the 1950s. Chiang had been inspired by the New Culture Movement and May Fourth Movement.

(Photo courtesy of Chi Wang)

The May Fourth Movement and the New Culture Movement together encompass a broad political, social, moral, and literary transformation in China. Although eventually the unity of the movement disintegrated

and China moved into a new political stage – one embodied by a growing Leftist movement that would eventually give birth to the CCP – the changes it brought to China were widespread and left a lasting impression beyond just the political realm. The value Chinese society places on students, the frequent uses of anti-Japanese nationalism by the CCP, and the emphasis on science over superstition all have deep roots in this movement and continue to inform and shape Chinese society today.

Emotion and Ideology

Having outlined the series of events that constitute the May Fourth Movement, I now turn to my analysis of the movement. Here, I seek to draw attention to aspects of the movement that are often overlooked but are important to understanding the nature of the movement as a whole.

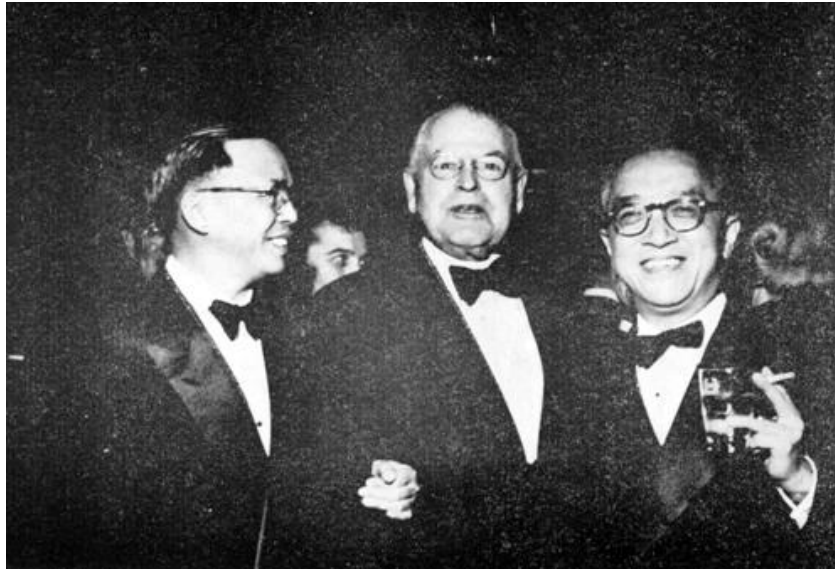
The first characteristic of the movement I'd like to draw attention to is its emphasis on emotion over ideology. As Chow notes, there wasn't a clear ideology in the May Fourth Movement. The movement consisted of conservatives, liberals, and members of all walks of societies with varying interests and priorities. While buzzwords like "Mr. Democracy" and "Mr. Science" were repeated time and time again, the movement didn't have a coherent line of thought or reasoning on which everyone agreed and by which to proceed. Instead, people were drawn together by no more than fierce anti-Japanese and anti-imperialist sentiment – that shared feeling alone was enough to unify most of Chinese society.

The importance of emotion has its roots in the New Culture Movement, most notably in the literary sphere. Intellectuals of the New Culture Movement were largely influenced by American forms of writing, in particular American poetry. Lipeng Feng, in writing about the literature of the May Fourth Movement, notes that American poetry at the time was characterized by "unprecedented lyrical

freedom.”³⁹ Lyrical poetry was meant to inspire emotion rather than cling to rigid, traditional poetic structures, and the importance of inspiring emotion was emphasized by New Culture intellectuals.⁴⁰ Hu Shih learned this style of free-verse poetry in America and adapted the style to a Chinese context, choosing to write and publish his poems in the vernacular.

When discussing the students’ decision to protest, Chow states that:

“[The students] fully realized that their aim was not going to be achieved at once either by petitions or by mass demonstrations anyway. Their immediate purpose was to publicly demonstrate indignation against the warlords and against the national humiliation brought about by power politics.”⁴¹



Hu Shih (right) and Tsiang Ting-fu, Ambassador of China to the United States (left).
(Wikimedia Commons)

³⁹ Liping Feng, “Democracy and Elitism: The May Fourth Ideal of Literature,” *Modern China* 22, no. 2 (April 1996), 172.

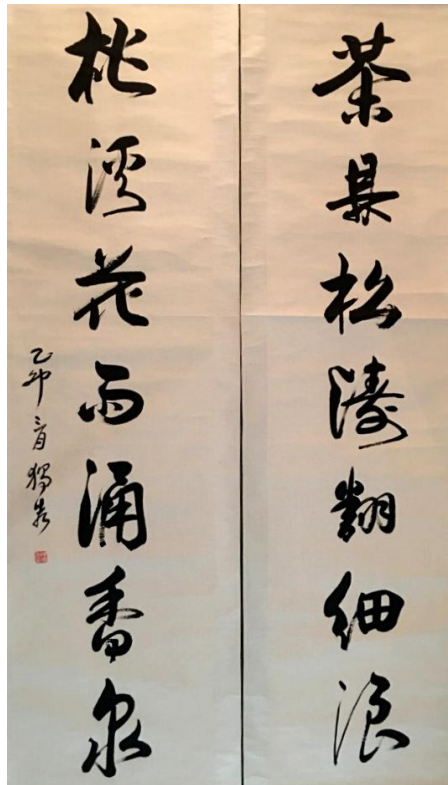
⁴⁰ Feng, “Democracy and Elitism,” 179.

⁴¹ Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1960), 106.

This observation is crucial to understanding the priorities of the students in the May Fourth Movement – knowing that forcing the government to bow to their demands was a long-run goal at best and a pipe dream at worst, the students focused their attention on conveying their emotional response to the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles and the Twenty-One Demands. By feeding on this emotional response, they were able to sustain the movement long enough to force the government into submission.

Emotion played a key role in the May Fourth Movement – perhaps we could even argue that the movement would have failed without it, hampered as it was by its lack of a clear ideology. That this emotional response was linked to anti-Japanese sentiment and Chinese nationalism has had far-reaching consequences even today. The CCP often foments anti-Japanese sentiments among the Chinese people to drum up easy political support, especially over such touchy subjects as the Nanjing Massacre and the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. The utility of this rhetoric as a tool of the CCP has made it harder to improve relations with Japan. Anti-Japanese – and, on a larger scale, anti-foreign and anti-imperialist – sentiment is so deeply embedded in the narrative of the rise of the CCP, as well as the memory of the Century of Humiliation, that constructing a positive relationship with Japan often feels nearly impossible.

Considering the current climate in East Asia – one in which territorial disputes in the South China Sea are constantly erupting, China is seeking to expand its regional power through the economic policies of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and the antagonism of North Korea is a constant threat to regional stability – it may be worthwhile for the CCP to closely examine the risks of relying too heavily on anti-Japanese sentiment. Moving away from such rhetoric could help China create more positive, cooperative relationships in the East Asia region.



Calligraphy by Chen Duxiu, 1939.
Chen was leading figure in the New Culture
Movement who went on to co-found the
Chinese Communist Party.
(Photo courtesy of Chi Wang)

Evolving Role of Students

The second aspect of the May Fourth Movement that bears investigation is its relation to the changing role of education and students in China. As Chow notes, in the pre-Republic era, the Chinese education system was closely linked with the civil service exam. As a result, most students were on track to become government officials. Students were also typically adults rather than youths.

But in 1905, the civil service examination system was abolished and the education system was Westernized. Students were no longer on a set track to become government officials immediately after completing their studies, which introduced a lot of uncertainty into their lives. It also introduced the opportunity to choose new paths for themselves, including becoming powerful leaders of mass movements

which Bertrand Russel observed pushed Chinese students towards becoming reformers or revolutionaries.⁴² Essentially, without a set and rigid system into which they could pour their efforts, students were free to pursue fulfillment and personal ambition through other means.

The students also had the support and influence of the intellectuals of the May Fourth Movement, in particular those who set into motion the New Culture Movement. Cai Yuanpei, a May Fourth Movement anarchist, was appointed chancellor of Peking University in 1916 and enacted serious Western-inspired reforms that awarded more agency to the students, in particular the freedom to participate in political activities, and academic freedom. Cai also encouraged the students to create self-governments and construct their own student societies for their interests. Cai's support and reforms gave the students the space to practice organizing movements and engage with politics.

New Youth, a journal established by Chen Duxiu that often featured the writings of Hu Shih and other May Fourth Intellectuals, was also a major inspiration for students looking to organize politically. Circulation of *New Youth* after 1917, according to Chow, reached 16,000 copies, which was quite significant for China at the time. Many student societies were inspired by *New Youth* and the ideals it espoused. Mao Zedong himself was an avid reader and follower of *New Youth* and the publication inspired him and his friends to create the New People's Study Society.

Due to the support and inspiration from these May Fourth intellectuals, the students were able to successfully organize their own mass movements for political purposes. As a result, the Student Union of the Republic of China was eventually established and "became the headquarters for students' activities throughout the

⁴² Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement*, 95.

nation.”⁴³ Through this Student Union, students across China were able to coordinate their movements, resulting in a wide-spread, cohesive movement rather than one that was limited to Beijing alone.



Mao Zedong (Wikimedia Commons)

The organization of the students and their political activism is a key feature of the May Fourth Movement. It relates closely to the evolution of China’s education system, inspired by Western influences and curated by the May Fourth intellectuals and the New Culture Movement. Students continued, throughout the rest of China’s 20th century, to engage in political mass movements. For example, students were at the center of the Cultural Revolution – with devastating consequences.

The CCP is keenly aware of the power of China’s organized student bodies. Which is why, when students once again organized to protest

⁴³ Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement*, 123.

corrupt government officials and call for democracy in 1989, the CCP's reaction was to declare martial law and shut down the protests at any cost. The brutal repression that was the Tiananmen Square Massacre shocked and horrified the Western world, but perhaps our surprise was misplaced. After all, history made it clear that the students were capable of organizing, striking, and gaining the support of other Chinese citizens to the extent that they could effectively take power from the CCP. For a government as obsessed with legitimacy, legacy, and authoritarian control as the CCP, this possibility was absolutely unacceptable.

Complex Relationship with America

The May Fourth Movement is often connected with anti-foreign (or, more specifically, anti-imperialist) sentiments. The Chinese people felt betrayed by the Allied Powers that essentially gave Shandong to Japan on a silver platter. Chinese intellectuals felt especially disappointed by the failure of the United States to sufficiently defend Chinese interests. Chinese intellectuals, as Chow notes, were enamored with President Woodrow Wilson's political idealism, including "his advocacy of the abolition of secret diplomacy, the guaranty of the political independence of small states, and national self-determination."⁴⁴

But Wilson's lofty ideals failed in the Paris Peace Conference, much to the shock and dismay of the Chinese people. There are two quotes from this period Chow includes in his manuscript to express how crushing a disappointment this was, not only for the Chinese people but for Americans.

First, this quote from the Chinese students expressed their disappointment with Wilson and America specifically:

"Throughout the world, like the voice of a prophet, has gone

⁴⁴ Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement*, 9.

the word of Woodrow Wilson strengthening the weak and giving courage to the struggling. And the Chinese have listened and they too have heard... They have been told that in the dispensation which is to be made after the war unmilitaristic nations like China would have an opportunity to develop their culture, their industry, their civilization, unhampered. They have been told that secret covenants and forced agreements would not be recognized. They looked for the dawn of this new era; but no sun rose for China. Even the cradle of the nation was stolen.”⁴⁵

Wilson’s ideals here are presented as being a beacon of hope and progress to all Chinese people. His principles were meant to be the “dawn of a new era” in China, one free from “secret covenants and forced agreements” of greater powers. Essentially, a freedom from the imperialism that China had struggled with since it was forced to open to the West.

According to the American Minister to China, Paul S. Reinsch, the Chinese people’s feelings towards Wilson’s ideals were not exaggerated. During this period, he stated:

“Probably nowhere else in the world had expectations of America’s leadership at Paris been raised so high as in China. The Chinese trusted America, they trusted the frequent declarations of principle uttered by President Wilson, whose words had reached China in its remotest parts. The more intense was their disappointment and disillusionment due to the decisions of the old men that controlled the Paris Conference. It sickened and disheartened me to think how the Chinese people would receive this blow which meant the blasting of their hopes and the destruction of their confidence in the equity of nations...

⁴⁵ Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement*, 93.

“The Americans in China, as well as the British and the Chinese, were deeply dejected during these difficult weeks. From the moment America entered the war there had been a triumphant confidence that all this sacrifice and suffering would establish just principles of world action, under which mankind could live more happily and in greater security. That hope was now all but crushed.”⁴⁶



President Wilson's official White House Portrait. (Wikimedia Commons)

These quotes reveal two important things about Sino-U.S. relations at the time. The first is that American ideology and values had a great impact on China during the May Fourth Movement. This is unsurprising considering many of the New Culture intellectuals and students had attended school in America. Hu Shih's ideals were rooted in his American education and he was deeply involved in both the

⁴⁶ Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement*, 93-94.

New Youth publication and the reformation of Peking University. His ideals were foundational to the May Fourth Movement, meaning that American values were deeply embedded in the movement as well.

Secondly, Americans were also unhappy with the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference. The United States had found itself outmatched at the conference. On January 27, 1919, Japan signed secret treaties with Great Britain, France, and Italy promising support for Japan's claim to Shandong. The United States was alone and isolated in attempting to defend China, giving it very little leverage to counter Japan's demand. The United States' failure was a blow not only to China, but to the Americans who sincerely believed in Wilson's leadership and principles.

Disillusionment with American leadership should not be blindly translated to anti-American sentiment, however. Chinese feelings at the time were consumed primarily with anti-Japanese sentiment. Chow notes that foreigners in China were often supportive of the students protesting the agreement. When the students were arrested in the wake of the May Fourth protests, the foreigners watching them pass by on the street cheered them on to show their support.

The disappointment China felt in American leadership, however, was long-lasting and gave the Chinese people reason to distrust the American government's promises and principles. Feelings of mistrust would continue to damage the relationship well into the 20th century, and the relationship would completely shatter when the U.S. government refused to recognize the CCP and intentionally isolated China after the communists came to power.

However, American ideals had been deeply embedded in the May Fourth Movement and the reformation of the education system. No amount of disillusionment could root out those influences. As a result, China and the U.S. have a complex relationship, one that is at times characterized by animosity, but at other times characterized by

mutual admiration and cultural exchange. Today, the result of this relationship is a growing economic interdependence and intellectual exchange that has risen up alongside a power competition that is often destabilizing to East Asia.

A Lasting Legacy

The impact of the May Fourth Movement is still felt in China today. Far from being a historical blip that the CCP exploits to claim legitimacy, the movement has shaped the politics and attitudes of the Chinese people from the beginning of the 20th century until the present day, and many of the May Fourth students and intellectuals went on to participate actively in the political tumult of the 20s and 30s. The movement used anti-Japanese and anti-imperialist sentiments and appeals to emotion to gain traction, strategies that are still used successfully in China today. It damaged Sino-U.S. relations but also intertwined Chinese modernity with American ideals, setting the tone for the complex relationship that the two nations continue to struggle to maintain. The impact of the movement on China's education system had major consequences for China's journey through communism to state-controlled capitalism, also known as "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics," and crafted a new role for students in modern China, one outside the traditional government apparatus of pre-Republican China.

Studying the movement reveals the importance of emotion, organization, educational reform, literary reform, and power politics. The lessons taken from the May Fourth Movement can be applied not only to China, but also to other countries struggling with their own social and political movements. The current era is chaotic and pessimistic in the West – many students are dissatisfied with the state of politics, the government, and the economy, especially in America. The American education system has come under fire in recent years and the internal struggles of the government have led to serious negative consequences both domestically and internationally.

Rona Vaselaar

America appears to be in its own era of humiliation now that its power in the international community is on the decline.

In many ways, the situation mirrors what was happening in China 100 years ago. History does not repeat, but it does rhyme – if America is going to survive this turbulent period and enact real change, it would serve the American youth well to review the lessons of the May Fourth era, commit them to memory, and put them to use as best they can.

DONALD TRUMP'S ANTI-CHINA RHETORIC IN THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN AND THE WHITE HOUSE STATEMENTS ON CHINA

Xiaodong Fang, PhD

It has become a popular strategy for American presidential candidates to use China as a scapegoat for America's domestic woes and to accuse their opponents of supporting policies that contribute to China's economic boom while harming American interests. Both Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential campaigns took tough stances on China in order to seek voter support.⁴⁷ Anti-China rhetoric in the presidential campaign was also widely reported and discussed in news media in recent election years. In the 2012 general election campaign period, 23 articles regarding anti-China rhetoric used by presidential candidates were published in the *New York Times*.⁴⁸ In the 2016 general election campaign period, that number climbed to 36.⁴⁹ However, the effectiveness of using anti-China rhetoric as a means to affect the White House's attitude towards or policy on China has not been substantiated. Few academic studies using a scientific methodology shed light on this phenomenon.

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⁴⁷ See: Keith Bradsher, "In Trade Stances Toward China, Clinton and Trump Both Signal a Chill," *New York Times*, June 20, 2016, www.nytimes.com.

⁴⁸ The statistics are calculated based on articles obtained online from the *New York Times*. The 2012 general election campaign period goes from August 27 (Republican National Convention) to November 6, 2012 (Election Day).

⁴⁹ The 2016 general election campaign period goes from the July 18 (Republican National Convention) to November 8, 2016 (Election Day).

What were the influences of anti-China campaign rhetoric on the President's policy decisions? Did anti-China campaign rhetoric orient the incumbent president's foreign policymaking towards China? Which issues did presidential candidates most commonly discuss in relation to China, and which were the most effective in engendering changes in the White House's attitude on China? These questions, underexplored in existing literature, are examined in this article.

Conventional wisdom suggests that presidential campaigns do not hold great influence over American foreign policy.⁵⁰ However, I argue the opposite – that anti-China rhetoric and references to the China 'issue' by presidential candidates can have significant influence. By exploring anti-China campaign rhetoric used by Trump over the course of the 2016 presidential general election campaign, I conduct empirical analyses to examine if strategies of using anti-China rhetoric affected the Obama White House's attitude towards China, and if so, how this occurred. My findings show that anti-China rhetoric used by the presidential candidates did, in fact, affect the White House statements regarding China during the campaign period. Further, I find that rhetoric specifically focused on economic-related issues was the most effective in terms of its influence on the President's attitude towards China. The findings of the study contribute to the literature on the Presidency and U.S. foreign policy towards China, as well as providing valuable insight into the use of campaign rhetoric to influence the White House in the past, present, and future.

This article proceeds as follows. In the second section, I briefly introduce the history and development of anti-China rhetoric in U.S. presidential campaigns. I flesh out the claim that anti-China campaign rhetoric may influence the President's attitude towards China. Third, I review relevant literature, and explain the necessity of examining the

⁵⁰ For example, Dr. Sutter suggests U.S.-China relations are following a historic trend independent from other factors. See his book *U.S. Policy Toward China: An Introduction to the Role of Interest Groups* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998).

influence of anti-China rhetoric used during the presidential campaign on the White House. I then introduce the methodology of the study and show the findings. To conclude, I discuss some limitations of this study and offer suggestions for the direction of future research.

A Historical View

The appearance of China as a campaign issue in U.S. presidential elections can be traced back to 1948.⁵¹ The rhetoric used by presidential candidates about China, specifically relating to the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists, played a role in elections in 1948 and, to some extent, shaped foreign policy towards China at that time. After receiving the nomination, Harry S. Truman, in his acceptance speech, stated that he would continue aiding the recovery of Europe, China and the Far East in the post-war period, but did not make any further reference to China.⁵² By contrast, his opponent, Thomas E. Dewey, charged the Truman administration with stinginess in its provision of aid to the Nationalists in China and declared that, if elected, it would be a cardinal principle of his administration to help combat communist influences in China.⁵³ Truman won the election of 1948. The Truman administration would later be blamed for the “loss of China.”⁵⁴

The outbreak of war in Korea in 1950 brought the U.S. and China into military conflict and the two contenders in the 1952 presidential election debated the China issue and policy on China.⁵⁵ Keeping his

⁵¹ The term “China” refers to the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

⁵² Lawrence K. Rosinger, “China Policy and the 1948 Elections,” *Far Eastern Survey* 17, no. 20 (1948): 233-238.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ In 1949, the Nationalists were defeated by the Communists. The “loss of China” was portrayed by critics of the Truman Administration as an “avoidable catastrophe.” See: Matthew S. Hirshberg, *Perpetuating Patriotic Perceptions: The Cognitive Function of the Cold War* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1993).

⁵⁵ For example, on September 4, 1952, Eisenhower charged President Truman with bungling foreign policy in Asia. He asserted, “We are at war because this Administration abandoned China to the Communists.” Eisenhower’s opponent, Adlai Stevenson, on the

campaign promise that “there would be no concessions to Chinese Communism,” President Dwight D. Eisenhower never attempted to restore friendly relations with Peking in the 1950s.⁵⁶ During the Vietnam War era, the China issue might not have played a major role in presidential elections, but it was still discussed by presidential candidates. For example, during the second presidential debate in 1960, Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy debated the threat posed by Communist China, particularly regarding Taiwan.

Later, during the 1968 election, Nixon indicated he would eventually negotiate with the leaders of Communist China, signaling his future policy towards engaging with China.⁵⁷ Following Nixon’s China strategy, Jimmy Carter established official diplomatic relations with China. American attitudes towards China came full circle by the 1970s,⁵⁸ and anti-China rhetoric had become more muted during presidential campaigns in that period. For example, a study conducted by Tsan-Kuo Chang in 1984 showed that Reagan’s rhetoric towards China was more positive than negative during the 1980 presidential campaign and during his first year in office.⁵⁹

Then, the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989 had a significant negative effect on Americans’ attitudes towards China, and the China issue became a topic for debate in presidential campaigns once

other hand, defended the administration’s record and pointed out America’s limited ability to affect the outcome of the Chinese civil war. See: David L. Anderson, “China Policy and Presidential Politics, 1952,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (1980): 79-90.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Denise M. Bostdorff, “The Evolution of a Diplomatic Surprise: Richard M. Nixon’s Rhetoric on China, 1952 – July 15, 1971,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5, no. 1 (2002): 31-56.

⁵⁸ Anderson, “China Policy and Presidential Politics, 1952.”

⁵⁹ See: Tsan-Kuo Chang, “How Three Elite Papers Covered Reagan China Policy,” *Journalism Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (1984): 429-432. The author found that 37 percent of the news and features in three papers (*Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post*) were coded as positive towards China, while 28 percent were coded as negative.

more.⁶⁰ During the 1992 presidential campaign, Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush attacked each other over their approaches to China's human rights violations, China's trade relations with the U.S., and the country's democratization.⁶¹ Entering the 21st century, discussions of China during presidential campaigns have been prolific, with topics ranging from bilateral relations to all kinds of world issues, including climate change, nuclear nonproliferation, regional security, and the global economy. For example, George W. Bush and John Kerry discussed China's involvement in North Korea and Iran's nuclear programs in 2004; Barack Obama promised to enforce rules against China manipulating its currency in 2008; Mitt Romney promised to crack down on trade with China in 2012.⁶²

Since the end of the Cold War, China's dramatic military and economic growth has been viewed by some China watchers as a threat to America's leadership and interests in the international arena, portending the possible decline of American influence in East Asia.⁶³ A Pew survey in 2009 found that 41 percent of the Americans polled felt the U.S. played a less important and powerful role as a world leader today than it did ten years earlier. Forty-four percent said China was the world's leading economic power, while just 27 percent named the

⁶⁰ According to *Gallup's* "Historical Trend of Americans' Opinion of China," favorability went down from 72 percent to 13 percent in 1989, and has remained under 50 percent since then. See *Gallup*, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1627/china.aspx>.

⁶¹ See: Thomas L. Friedman, "The 1992 Campaign: The Democrats; Clinton Asserts Bush Is Too Eager To Befriend the World's Dictators," *New York Times*, October 2, 1992, www.nytimes.com.

⁶² See: USC US-China Institute, "China In US Presidential Debates," updated on 10/20/16, <http://china.usc.edu/usc-us-china-institute-china-in-the-us-presidential-debates>

⁶³ For example, Kennedy, writing in 2010, believed the rise and fall of the great powers was an example of power shifting from West to East. The shift of global wealth and power in this direction is a trend illustrated by China's breathtakingly rapid rise to becoming a great power on the global stage and America's fast winding down. See: Paul Kennedy, "Rise and Fall," *World Today* 66, no. 8/9 (2010): 6-9; Christopher Layne, "This Time It's Real: The End of Unipolarity and the Pax Americana," *International Studies Quarterly* 56 (2012): 203-213.

U.S.⁶⁴

As Komaiko explains:

With the economy in recession, America had fewer carrots and fewer sticks with which to influence the behavior of other states. Voters had to consider how each candidate would perform in a world that was increasingly dominated by Chinese interests and which candidate was best equipped to work constructively with China in order to pursue U.S. strategic interests.⁶⁵

Anti-China rhetoric was used in speeches, debates and other public statements throughout presidential campaigns. News on and reports about anti-China rhetoric in media coverage further increased its potential to influence U.S. foreign policy regarding China.⁶⁶ However, the impact anti-China campaign rhetoric has on the White House and, therefore, the processes of foreign policymaking have not been sufficiently researched. To bridge the gap in the literature, I explore the use of anti-China rhetoric in the recent presidential campaign and use qualitative methods to examine its effect on White House statements on China.

Literature Review

I. Campaign Rhetoric and Foreign Policy

Does rhetoric involving foreigner-bashing used in presidential

⁶⁴ Results of the general public survey were based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Abt SRBI Inc. of a national sample of 2,000 adults living in the continental United States from Oct. 28 – Nov. 8, 2009. See: “U.S. Seen as Less Important, China as More Powerful,” Pew Research Center, December 3, 2009, <http://www.people-press.org/2009/12/03/us-seen-as-less-important-china-as-more-powerful/>

⁶⁵ See: Richard Komaiko, “China and the US Presidential Election,” *Asia Sentinel*, July 11, 2008, www.asiasentinel.com.

⁶⁶ From July 18 to November 8 2016, 36 articles regarding the use of anti-China rhetoric by presidential candidates were published in the *New York Times*.

campaigns affect American foreign policy? Some scholars argue domestic factors must be included in analyses of foreign policy, with the belief that foreign policy is the outcome of both the effects of international relations and domestic structures.⁶⁷ As Kissinger explains, “[a]t a minimum, [domestic structure] determines the amount of social effect which can be devoted to foreign policy.”⁶⁸

The U.S.’s economic contest with Japan in the 1980s and 1990s, for example, triggered the use of anti-Japanese campaign rhetoric, especially in relation to American perceptions of Japan's unfair trade practices and its trade imbalance with America. Ornstein found that the increasing use of anti-Japanese rhetoric in 1992 was positively associated with public opinions on Japan.⁶⁹ In 1991 the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations found a significant decline in “warm feelings” towards Japan among Americans; and 31 percent of Americans identified Japan as America's greatest security threat in 1992, compared to 8 percent in 1990.⁷⁰ However, as Ornstein explains, even for those voters who felt threatened by Japan's economic power, this concern was not a high enough priority to supersede other worries, from the domestic economy to general concerns about leadership among the candidates.⁷¹

Similarly, scholars studying U.S.-Soviet policy during the Cold War era found a surge in anti-Soviet sentiment asserted in the year of the election. In short, presidential candidates tended to stress foreign policy issues in their campaigns, which were used to challenge each

⁶⁷ Peter J. Katzenstein, “International Relations and Domestic Structures: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States,” *International Organization* 30, no. 1 (1976): 1-45; F.S. Northedge, *The Foreign Policies of the Powers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968).

⁶⁸ Henry Kissinger, “Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy,” *Daedalus* 95, no. 2 (1969): 504.

⁶⁹ Norman J. Ornstein, “Foreign Policy and the 1993 Election,” *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 2 (1992): 1-16.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

other's stance on foreign policy, a tactic often used in campaigns. As Nincic explains, this occurs in a particular way, depending on whether the candidate is incumbent or non-incumbent:

If an incumbent is running for reelection, he will seek to disprove the challenger's claims by displaying examples of his own firmness; if non-incumbent challengers are competing against each other, they tend to demonstrate their toughness by promises of tough policies if elected.⁷²

In his analysis of U.S.-Soviet foreign policy and the electoral connection from 1952 to 1988, Nincic argues that the rhythm of domestic politics in the presidential campaign substantially shaped American attitudes and policies towards the Soviet Union.⁷³

Researchers cited here found that candidates' anti-foreign rhetoric followed public opinion on certain foreign countries. Though foreigner-bashing in campaign rhetoric had little influence on the U.S. electorate and actual foreign policy, it did draw the President's attention towards the perceived foreign threat. For example, coinciding with Reagan's harsh rhetoric on the Soviet Union in the 1980 presidential campaign, President Carter's strategy towards the Soviets was more confrontational and tougher in 1979 and 1980 than it had been in 1977 and 1978.⁷⁴ Carter's change in attitude may have been the result of a need to "toughen up" for an election run against candidates who planned to ramp up their anti-Soviet rhetoric. When Reagan did come to power, he kept the promise of a more assertive policy towards the Soviet Union and maintained a tough stance.⁷⁵

⁷² Miroslav Nincic, "U.S. Soviet Policy and the Electoral Connection," *World Politics* 42, no. 3 (1990): 370-396.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ T.M. Nichols, "Carter and the Soviets: The Origins of the US Return to a Strategy of Confrontation," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 13, no. 2 (2002): 21-42.

⁷⁵ Nincic, "U.S. Soviet Policy and the Electoral Connection."

II. Anti-China Campaign Rhetoric and China Policy

There is a dearth of literature regarding the effect of campaign rhetoric on the sitting President's attitude towards China. In the post-Cold War era, studies concerned with U.S. foreign policy on China shed light on the influence of certain interest groups on China's most-favored-nation (MFN) debate.⁷⁶ However, those scholars do not specifically explain how these interest groups influenced U.S. foreign policy on China, particularly during presidential campaigns. Some scholars aimed to understand the rationale of utilizing anti-China rhetoric in presidential campaigns. For example, Yang examined Mitt Romney's anti-China rhetoric during the 2012 U.S. presidential campaign and found that his rhetoric was a revised version of the traditional "yellow peril" trope, combined with the use of anti-communist tropes.⁷⁷ Peniston surveyed anti-China sentiments in speeches and statements made by both Republican and Democratic presidential candidates during the 2016 presidential nominations, and found that anti-China rhetoric manifested in three main areas of criticism: economic-related concerns, security issues, and condemnation of China's human rights record.⁷⁸ Though the rationale of using anti-China rhetoric in the presidential campaign was mentioned, the consequences of the use of this rhetoric on the sitting President's attitudes towards China and on the development of potential policy on China were not analyzed.

According to Sutter, overall, U.S.-China relations have followed a positive historical trend with little indication that issues of conflict

⁷⁶ John W. Dietrich, "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy: Clinton and the China MFN Debates," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1999): 280-96; Robert G. Sutter, *US-Chinese Relations: Perilous Past, Pragmatic Present* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2010).

⁷⁷ Michelle Murray Yang, "At War with the Chinese Economic Yellow Peril: Mitt Romney's 2012 Presidential Campaign Rhetoric," *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* 45, no. 1 (2016): 45-69.

⁷⁸ Rachel E. Peniston, "Why Anti-Chinese Rhetoric is Bad Politics," *Washington Journal of Modern China* 12 (Spring 2016): 59-79.

would have a meaningful impact on the two countries' larger foreign relations policies.⁷⁹ Indeed, foreign policy was not always a major issue of presidential campaigns.⁸⁰ However, the spread of anti-China sentiment through mass media highlighted some of the critical problems in U.S.-China relations, which may have drawn more attention from political leaders. In Kingdon's three-streams model (problem, policy, and politics), the problem stream is the first step in creating the momentum necessary to place an issue on the public policy agenda.⁸¹ Anti-China rhetoric used by presidential candidates has historically played a role in highlighting problems, impacting Americans' awareness of those issues, which may have, in turn, led to changes in the President's attitude towards China or subsequent policy changes. Ramirez found quantitative evidence that China-bashing in U.S. newspapers hurt U.S.-China relations.⁸² He developed an index based on the number of articles related to China in major U.S. newspapers and contrasted it with a monthly score measuring the overall relationship between the U.S. and China.⁸³ The results indicated that anti-China rhetoric in newspapers had a negative effect overall on U.S.-China relations.⁸⁴

There were certain factors related to this study that Ramirez did not explore. First, the author did not specify whether anti-China rhetoric strategies at one specific time were more influential than those at any

⁷⁹ Sutter, *US-Chinese Relations: Perilous Past, Pragmatic Present*.

⁸⁰ Foreign policy issues did play a role in some presidential campaigns, such as the Vietnam War in 1968 and 1972, and the War in Iraq and international terrorism in 2004.

⁸¹ J.W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1995).

⁸² Carlos D. Ramirez, "The Effect of 'China Bashing' on Sino-American Relations," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 17 (2012): 291-311.

⁸³ Yan et al. developed a sophisticated measure of Sino-American relations using statements and actions from the Chinese government. See: Xuetong Yan and Haixia Qi, *Zhong wai guan xi ding liang yu ce (Quantitative Forecasts of China's Foreign Relations)* (Beijing, China: Shijie heshi chubanshe, 2009).

⁸⁴ Ramirez found that one-standard-deviation shock in China-bashing led to a 0.038 point decline in Yan's Sino-American index after about four months. See: Ramirez, "The Effect of 'China Bashing' on Sino-American Relations."

other time, such as whether anti-China rhetoric might play a greater role in influencing foreign policy during a presidential election year than in non-election years. Second, the study did not consider whether anti-China rhetoric used by presidential candidates may have a greater effect on U.S.-China relations than similar anti-China sentiments simply mentioned in newspapers or editorials. Third, Ramirez's model only considered issues concerning human rights, Tibet, democracy, child labor, and social repression, ignoring economic issues. Recent presidential campaigns have been more concerned with trade, employment, and currency manipulation issues regarding China. Therefore, taking a close look at economic issues is necessary.

Methodology

To bridge the gaps in the existing literature, this paper will 1) focus on the use of anti-China rhetoric in the 2016 presidential general campaign period; 2) differentiate the rhetoric used by different presidential candidates; and 3) comprehensively detail the effects of the use of anti-China rhetoric on different issues, particularly economic issues.

The independent variable is the anti-China rhetoric used during the presidential general election campaign period, from July 18 (Republican National Convention) to November 8 (Election Day), 2016. The primary source used to catalog anti-China campaign rhetoric is the *New York Times*.⁸⁵ From the *New York Times* website, I

⁸⁵ There are several reasons I chose *The New York Times* as the primary source for cataloging anti-China campaign rhetoric in 2016. First, the articles published by *The New York Times* would have a wider audience, nationally and internationally, than other local news outlets. Rhetoric of the candidates might be made in a regional event, but the circulation of *The New York Times* expanded its influence and made it more likely to draw White House attention. Second, compared to conservative media outlets such as *Fox News*, the Obama White House and its staff were more like to be the audience of *The New York Times*, a relatively liberal media outlet (See Pew Research Center's ideological placement of each source's audience, available at http://www.pewresearch.org/pj_14-10-21_mediapolarization-08-2/). Third, a single campaign statement might be reported and

first used the keyword “China” to search all articles during that period. From those articles, I identified content containing anti-China rhetoric used in the presidential candidates’ campaign ads, debates, public messages, statements, speeches, etc. I then divided each of those articles into three categories: economic issues, security issues, and environmental issues, and examined and compared their different effects on White House statements. Some articles were included in multiple categories when appropriate.⁸⁶ The data is aggregated by month and the intensity is measured by the number of *New York Times* articles published in each month.

The dependent variable are the White House statements on China made from July 18 to November 8, 2016.⁸⁷ The primary source of the statements is WhiteHouse.gov. These statements represent the President and the administration’s attitude towards China. As the primary agenda-setter in American foreign policy, the President’s attitude is more likely to result in policy outcomes.⁸⁸ Accordingly, the president’s attitude towards China, indicated in White House statements, has substantial potential to influence U.S. foreign policy on China. Anti-China campaign rhetoric, if responded to or reinforced by the White House, would, in turn, have a profound impact on U.S.-China policies on certain issues.

commented on many times by multiple media outlets. By focusing on one primary source I was able to reduce redundancies and more clearly track changes in frequency over time.

⁸⁶ *New York Times* articles reporting on the same piece of anti-China rhetoric were counted as one article. If one article covered rhetoric on multiple issues, it was included in multiple categories (see Appendix for the content of each article).

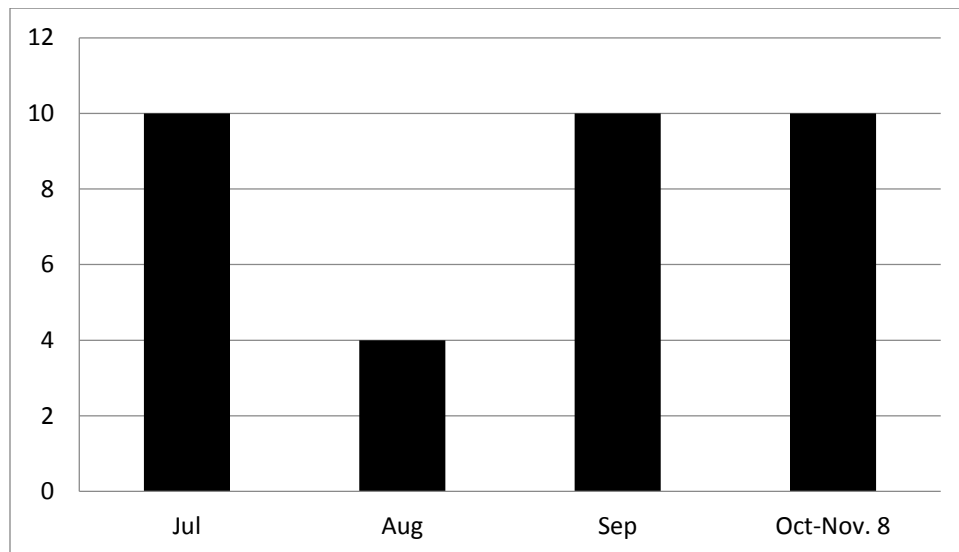
⁸⁷ In this study, “White House statements” refers to official public statements, which mainly consist of the policies of the President and the administration.

⁸⁸ In foreign policy, presidential power is much stronger than it is in domestic policy. The “two presidencies” theory suggests that American presidents exercise fundamentally greater influence over foreign than domestic affairs (e.g. Brandice Canes-Wrone, William G. Howell, and David E. Lewis, “Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis,” *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 1 (2008): 1-16; Richard F. Fenno, Jr., *Congressmen in Committees* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973); Duane Oldfield and Aaron Wildavsky, “Reconsidering the Two Presidencies,” *Society* 26 (July/August 1989): 54-59; Aaron Wildavsky, “The Two Presidencies,” *Trans-Action* 4 (December 1966): 7-14.)

To show how anti-China rhetoric in the presidential campaign affects the White House's statements on China, I used the *New York Times* articles as a way to approximate the volume of China related rhetoric used during the campaign, to create timelines for when particular rhetoric was used, and to compare with the timing of the related White House statements. I also singled out the *New York Times* articles with Trump's anti-China rhetoric during the campaign period in order to examine whether and how President Obama responded to the anti-China rhetoric used by the opposing party's candidate.

Anti-China Rhetoric and U.S. Foreign Policy on China

In this section, I explore the impact of anti-China rhetoric used in presidential campaigns on the White House statements on China.

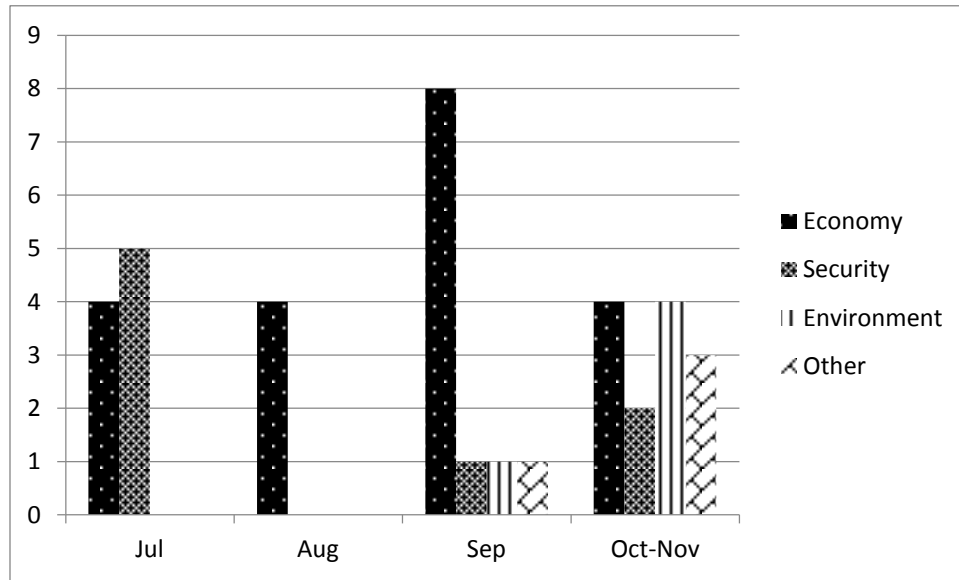


Number of *New York Times* Articles on Anti-China Rhetoric during the Presidential Campaign Period from Jul. 18 to Nov. 8, 2016. Source: NYTimes.com

Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the monthly number of *New York Times* articles that include anti-China rhetoric used in the presidential campaign from

July 18 to November 8, 2016. Presidential candidates attacked China during their parties' national conventions in July 2016; then, in August 2016, the use of anti-China campaign rhetoric decreased. In September and October, the use of anti-China campaign rhetoric surged again as the general election approached.



Number of *New York Times* Articles on Anti-China Rhetoric during the Presidential Campaign Period from Jul. 18 to Nov. 8, 2016 (by Issue Category)

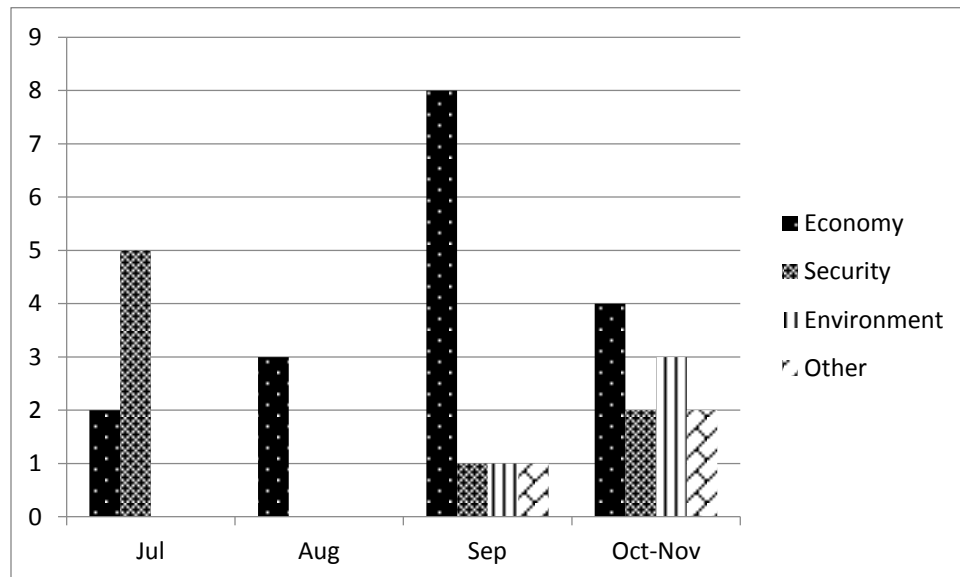
Source: NYTimes.com

Figure 2

Figure 2 shows the monthly number of articles regarding anti-China rhetoric during the presidential campaign from July 18 to November 8, 2016 by issue category. Economic issues dominated anti-China campaign rhetoric throughout that period. Even in August, when there was less anti-China campaign rhetoric compared to other months, anti-China rhetoric used by presidential candidates on economic issues was still reported. Rhetoric on environmental issues surged in September and October as the Obama administration signed the Paris

Agreement with China, which was opposed by Trump.⁸⁹

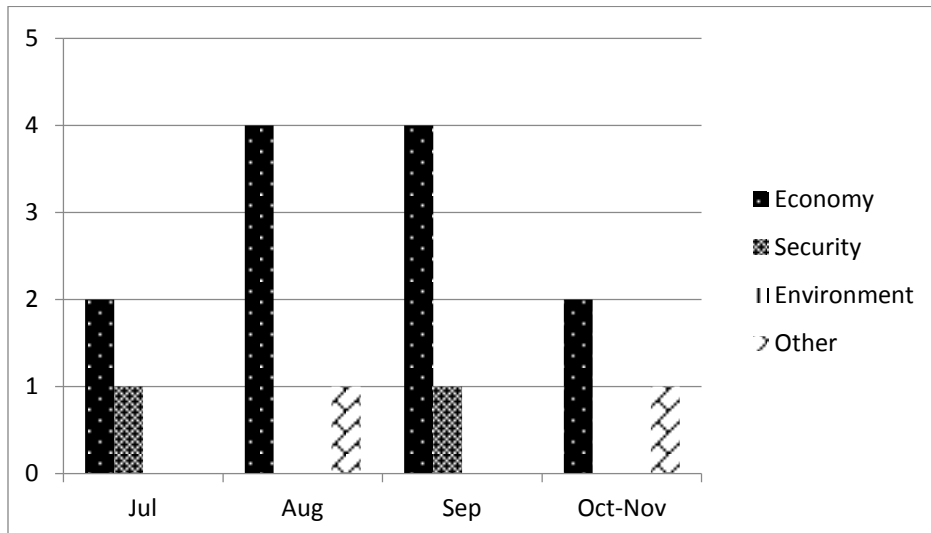
There were 31 articles detailing Trump’s anti-China rhetoric during the 2016 presidential general campaign period, whereas only ten articles mentioned Clinton’s anti-China rhetoric. Figure 3 shows the number of articles pertaining to Trump’s anti-China rhetoric during that period. From the White House’s official website, I found 38 statements on China, of which 16 took a tough stance on China (see Figure 4).



Number of *New York Times* Articles on Donald Trump’s Anti-China Campaign Rhetoric from Jul. 18 to Nov. 8, 2016 (by Issue Category) Source: NYTimes.com

Figure 3

⁸⁹ See: “Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump Answer Your Questions,” *New York Times*, October 18, 2016, www.nytimes.com.



Number of White House Statements Taking a Tough Stance on China from Jul. 18 to Nov. 8, 2016 (by Issue Category) Source: WhiteHouse.gov

Figure 4

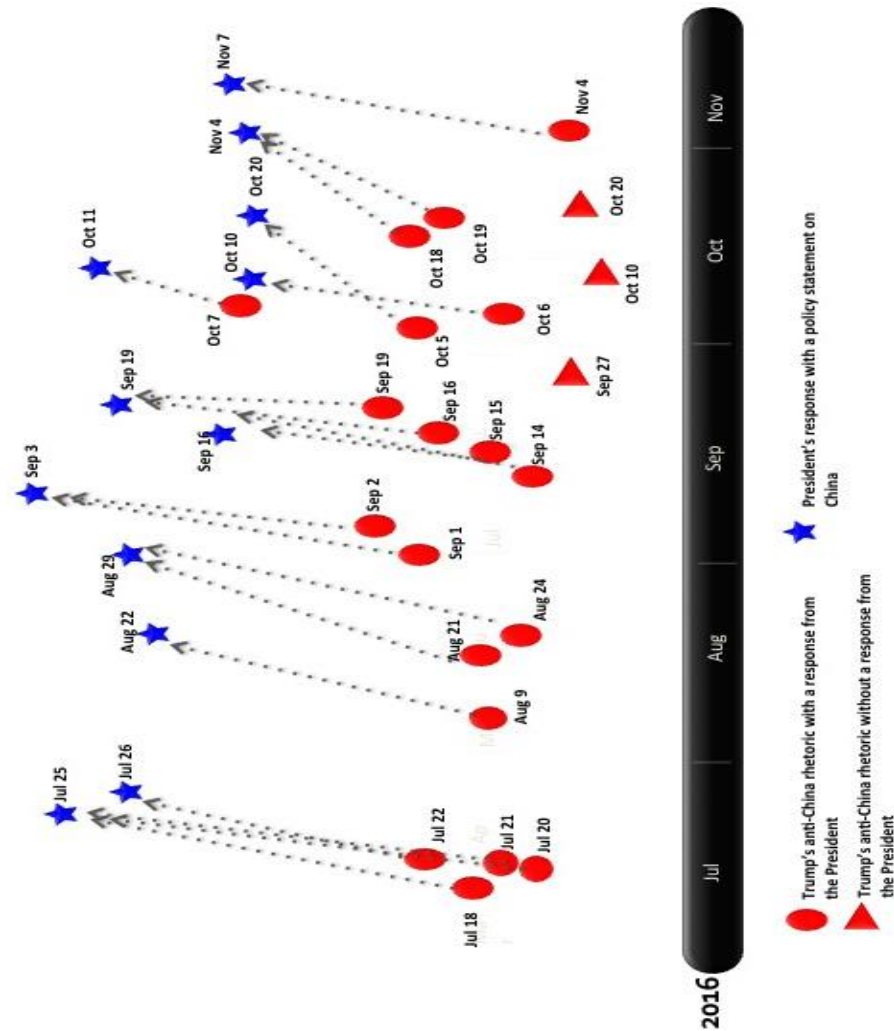
I. Findings: Response and Confrontation

By analyzing the evidence presented in the charts above, I found that Trump’s anti-China rhetoric did affect the White House statements on China during the presidential campaign. From July 18 to November 8, 2016, the White House responded to 81 percent (13 out of 16) of instances of Trump’s anti-China campaign rhetoric on economic issues by issuing tough public statements; 57 percent (4 out of 7) of instances of Trump’s anti-China campaign rhetoric on security issues, mostly by giving a positive public statement regarding China that confronted Trump’s rhetoric; and all instances of Trump’s anti-China campaign rhetoric on environmental issues by providing confrontational, positive public statements on China.

Trump’s Anti-China Rhetoric

Figure 5 tracks the *New York Times* articles containing Trump’s anti-China campaign rhetoric and responses in the form of White House

statements from July 18 to November 8, 2016 (see Appendix for the content of the rhetoric and statements). In general, whenever Trump used anti-China rhetoric during the campaign period, the White House would respond with a policy statement on China.



New York Times Articles on Donald Trump's Anti-China Rhetoric and Responses from The White House, from Jul. 18 to Nov. 8, 2016.
Source: WhiteHouse.gov and NYTimes.com.

Figure 5

During the 2016 general election campaign period, the White House usually chose to respond to Trump's anti-China rhetoric. Some of the rhetoric, however, was comparatively not as significant to U.S.-China relations and did not receive a response. For example, the White House did not remark on the comments Trump made on immigration and race issues.⁹⁰ Also, the White House did not respond to Trump's personal attack on Clinton that cited China-related issues.⁹¹ In addition, the White House did not respond to Trump's anti-China statements made at the three presidential debates, in part because Clinton had immediately responded during the presidential debates.⁹²

Clinton's Anti-China Rhetoric

Clinton did not use as much anti-China rhetoric as Trump during the 2016 general election campaign period. Only 10 *New York Times* articles cited Clinton's anti-China rhetoric, five of which referenced her responses to Trump's anti-China rhetoric during the presidential debates.⁹³ In keeping with the same attitude towards China as the White House, Clinton took a tough stance on economic issues and maintained a positive stance on security and environmental issues. The White House did not reinforce any of Clinton's anti-China rhetoric on economic issues, as her rhetoric simply responded to Trump's. The only White House statement that reinforced Clinton's campaign rhetoric on China was a positive statement made on September 12, which echoed Clinton's stance supporting cooperation with China on North Korea, made on September 9; however, this statement could

⁹⁰ See: "Explaining What Donald Trump Wants to Do Now on Immigration," *New York Times*, September 1, 2016; and "Donald Trump Is Seen as Helping Push Asian-Americans Into Democratic Arms," *New York Times*, October 1, 2016.

⁹¹ See: "How Trump Rallies the Faithful: Belittle Clinton, News Media," *New York Times*, October 15, 2016, www.nytimes.com.

⁹² See: "Transcript of the First Debate," *New York Times*, September 27, 2016, www.nytimes.com; "Transcript of the Second Debate," *New York Times*, October 10, 2016, www.nytimes.com; "Transcript of the Third Debate," *New York Times*, October 20, 2016, www.nytimes.com.

⁹³ Ibid.

also be seen as a response to Trump's anti-China rhetoric on national security, made on September 7.⁹⁴

Clinton did not talk about China much during the campaign. Accordingly, the White House did not respond to the Democratic presidential nominee regarding its public statements on China. As someone who had previously been part of the current administration and was now running for president, this likely affected her willingness to directly address the Obama administration's policies, such as those dealing with China related economic issues.⁹⁵

II. A Closer Look: The Evolution of White House Statements on China during the 2016 Presidential Campaign

The White House was not always tough on China during the 2016 presidential campaign. It either highlighted China's cooperation with the U.S. or took a tough stance depending on the issue category and intensity of the anti-China campaign rhetoric.

Economic Issues

Economic issues dominated the anti-China rhetoric used by presidential candidates in 2016. From July 18 to November 8, 2016, about 65 percent (20 out of 31) of *New York Times* articles referencing anti-China rhetoric were about economic issues, and about 75 percent (12 out of 16) of White House statements on China were about economic issues.

⁹⁴ See: "Hillary Clinton Takes Aim at North Korea, Then at Donald Trump," *New York Times*, September 9, 2016; "Forum Offers Preview of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump Presidential Debate," *New York Times*, September 7, 2016; and "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Josh Earnest, 9/12/2016," The White House, September 12, www.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/12/press-briefing-press-secretary-josh-earnest-9122016.

⁹⁵ For example, Clinton flip-flopped on Obama's Trans-Pacific Trade Deal (TPP), which put her in a vulnerable position. See: "Hillary Clinton Opposes Obama's Trans-Pacific Trade Deal," *New York Times*, October 7, 2015, www.nytimes.com.

Before the 2016 general election campaign kicked off at the national conventions, the White House took a relatively soft stance on China. This was evidenced in Vice President Biden's statement on July 20, which highlighted China's cooperation rather than its competition with the U.S.⁹⁶ After Trump attacked China on trade issues at the Republican National Convention on July 21, the White House shifted its tone on China from positive to negative. Press Secretary Josh Earnest responded to Trump's anti-China rhetoric in a press briefing on July 25, claiming the Obama administration had launched a World Trade Organization (WTO) case against China for export duties earlier that month, and stressed that, overall, the administration had brought 13 WTO complaints against China.⁹⁷ In early August, as the frequency of anti-China rhetoric on economic issues decreased, the administration did not release any new statements on economic.⁹⁸ However, by the end of the month Trump resumed his anti-China rhetoric on trade and job issues (as seen in three articles on August 9, August 21, and August 24). The administration replied on August 29 by claiming China did not set the same high standards as the U.S. for trade agreements.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ See: "Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden on the Future of the U.S.-Australian Relationship in Asia," The White House, July 20, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/07/20/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-future-us-australian-relationship-asia>.

⁹⁷ See: "Transcript: Donald Trump at the GOP Convention," *New York Times*, July 21, 2016; and "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Josh Earnest, 7/25/16," The White House, July 25, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/07/25/press-briefing-press-secretary-josh-earnest-72516>.

⁹⁸ For example, Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz claimed the U.S. did not want to get involved in South China Sea issues. See: "Press Briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz, 7/29/2016," The White House, July 29, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/07/29/press-briefing-principal-deputy-press-secretary-eric-schultz-7292016>.

⁹⁹ For example, see: "Trump Targets China Trade, Says Plans Serious Measures," *New York Times*, August 24, 2016; and "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Josh Earnest, Deputy NSA for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes, Senior Advisor Brian Deese and Deputy NSA for International Economics Wally Adeyemo, 8/29/2016," *New York Times*, August 29, 2016.

Statements issued by the White House about economic issues maintained a negative tone in September as Trump consistently attacked China on trade issues in his campaign. From September 14 to September 16, the *New York Times* reported Trump's anti-China rhetoric on trade three days in a row.¹⁰⁰ President Obama, who was attending the G-20 summit in China during that period, raised currency and trade issues in a meeting with Premier Li Keqiang of China in September 19.¹⁰¹ In late September, the *New York Times* did not publish any articles containing anti-China campaign rhetoric, and White House statements on China shifted focus from economic conflicts to cooperation on North Korea and the South China Sea conflict. For example, Press Secretary Josh Earnest praised China on its initial steps regarding the previous U.N. Security Council's resolution and the nature of their condemnations of North Korea's actions.¹⁰²

In early October, Trump continued to attack China on all kinds of issues, including trade, cyber security, and climate change. The White House replied to Trump's anti-China rhetoric on economic issues with a tough statement, but stuck to its positive tone on security and environmental issues. On October 6, in response to Trump's plan to impose a 45 percent tax on goods imported from China, the White House released a document about a major trade enforcement case won by the Obama administration against China on behalf of U.S. auto manufacturers.¹⁰³ In mid and late October, as anti-China campaign

¹⁰⁰ See the *New York Times* articles "Divided America: Losing Out to China, Workers Embrace Trump" (September 14), "God Loves Donald Trump. Right?" (September 15), and "Can You Have a Good Life if You Don't Have a Good Job?" (September 16)

¹⁰¹ See: "Readout of the President's Meeting with Premier Li Keqiang of China," The White House, September 19, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/19/readout-presidents-meeting-premier-li-keqiang-china>.

¹⁰² See: "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Josh Earnest and Ben Rhodes," The White House, September 20, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/20/press-briefing-press-secretary-josh-earnest-and-ben-rhodes>.

¹⁰³ See: "Global Trade War, Trump Edition," *New York Times*, October 6, 2016; and "Revitalizing American Manufacturing," The White House, October 2016,

rhetoric on economic issues decreased after the second presidential debate, White House statements on economic issues and China turned soft. On October 17, President Obama claimed the loss of jobs to China was because of competition on education, rather than any unlawful economic practices.¹⁰⁴

In November, with the election was approaching, White House statements on China still echoed Trump's anti-China campaign rhetoric on economic issues. After Trump attacked China as an economic competitor on November 4, President Obama responded on November 7, claiming Trump used Chinese steel in his hotels, giving jobs to Chinese steelworkers, not American steelworkers. He also emphasized that his administration had successfully brought a trade enforcement case against China.¹⁰⁵

Security Issues

The White House generally maintained a positive tone regarding China and security issues during the 2016 presidential campaign period, in direct contrast to Trump's rhetoric. When Trump attacked China on security issues, including the South China Sea conflict and the topic of North Korea, the White House generally responded by issuing positive statements to reinforce its cooperation with China on these issues.

During the week of the Republican National Convention, two *New York Times* articles on July 20 and July 21 mentioned Trump's foreign

https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/NEC_Manufacturing_Report_October_2016.pdf.

¹⁰⁴ See: "Remarks by the President on Education," The White House, October 17, 2016 <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/10/17/remarks-president-education>.

¹⁰⁵ See: "Donald Trump's Moments and Missteps: A Look Back," *New York Times*, November 4, 2016; and "Remarks by the President at Hillary for America Rally in Ann Arbor, Michigan," The White House, November 7, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/11/07/remarks-president-hillary-america-rally-ann-arbor-michigan>.

policy agenda, which expressed his harsh stance towards China in the South China Sea conflict.¹⁰⁶ The White House responded with a soft statement saying the U.S. would not take a position on any particular territory in the South China Sea.¹⁰⁷

Trump's anti-China campaign rhetoric in August and September focused on the economy; no security issues were raised regarding China. Correspondingly, most White House statements on China centered on economic issues. The focus on the economy continued in October and through to Election Day. The only anti-China rhetoric on security issues was used by Mike Pence on October 5 when, at the vice presidential debate, he attacked China on its involvement in the South China Sea conflict.¹⁰⁸ In response, Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz took a positive position on China when answering a question on the South China Sea conflict, highlighting that it was in the interests of national security for partners and allies in the region to have strong relationships with China, which would be consistent with international norms.¹⁰⁹

Environmental Issues

Environmental issues relating to China did not receive media attention until September, when the U.S. and China formally joined the

¹⁰⁶ For example, in a wide-ranging interview with the *New York Times*, Trump outlined an approach to the use of American power that included the possibility of taking American forces through the South China Sea, the area China argues is sovereign Chinese territory. See: "Donald Trump Sets Conditions for Defending NATO Allies Against Attack," *New York Times*, July 20, 2016; and "Envisioning Donald Trump's Foreign Policy: The U.S. Steps Back," *New York Times*, July 21, 2016.

¹⁰⁷ See: "Press Briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz, 7/29/2016," The White House, July 29, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/07/29/press-briefing-principal-deputy-press-secretary-eric-schultz-7292016>.

¹⁰⁸ See: "Transcript of the 2016 Debate Between the Running Mates," *New York Times*, October 5, 2016, www.nytimes.com.

¹⁰⁹ See: "Press Gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz en route Miami, FL, 10/20/2016," The White House, October 20, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/10/20/press-gaggle-principal-deputy-press-secretary-eric-schultz-en-route>.

Paris Agreement – a global action plan to tackle climate change. The *New York Times* published an article highlighting Trump’s repeated claims that climate change was a hoax and was invented by China to hurt the U.S.’s economic competitiveness.¹¹⁰ On October 11, White House Senior Advisor Brian Deese defended the President’s policy on climate change and argued that the U.S.’s domestic leadership in reducing emissions provided the credibility for it to form a historic partnership with China, and encouraged countless other countries to follow suit in joining the Paris Agreement.¹¹¹ The *New York Times* continued to report Trump’s attacks on China regarding climate change in two articles on October 18 and October 19, and on November 4 the White House responded to Trump’s attacks, maintaining its stance regarding its cooperative relationship with China, and proposed a series of technical exchanges on mid-century strategies with China.¹¹²

III. Beyond Economy: The Proliferation of Anti-China Campaign Rhetoric

From 2012 to 2016, anti-China campaign rhetoric was prolific, from economic issues to those of security and the environment. During the 2012 general election campaign period, all of the anti-China rhetoric used by both presidential candidates concerned economic issues.¹¹³ In 2016, anti-China campaign rhetoric focused on a variety of issues, from the economy, to security, the environment, human rights, and

¹¹⁰ See: “What About the Planet?” *New York Times*, October 7, 2016 www.nytimes.com.

¹¹¹ See: “Remarks for Senior Advisor Brian Deese – As Prepared for Delivery,” The White House, October 11, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/10/11/remarks-senior-advisor-brian-deese-%E2%80%93-prepared-delivery>.

¹¹² See: “Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump Answer Your Questions,” *New York Times*, October 13, 2016; “70 Nobel Laureates Endorse Hillary Clinton,” *New York Times*, October 19, 2016; and “United States Mid-Century Strategy for Deep Decarbonization,” The White House, November 4, 2016, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/mid_century_strategy_report-final.pdf.

¹¹³ The 2012 general election campaign is the period from the Republican National Convention on August 27 to Election Day on November 6.

immigration.

Though anti-China campaign rhetoric on security, the environment and other issues was not as prolific as that on economic issues, rhetoric on those issues did emerge and relevant foreign policy statements were issued by the White House during the 2016 presidential general election campaign period. Table 1 sets out the main forms of anti-China rhetoric on security and environmental issues used by presidential candidates (as described in *New York Times* articles) and the relevant White House statements towards China in 2016.

Anti-China Rhetoric		White House Response	
Date	Issue	Date	Content
Jul 20 & 21	Trump took a tough stance on China on the South China Sea conflict and North Korea and said the U.S. is under cyber-attack from Russia and China	Jul 26, 28 & 29	The President's National Security Advisor Susan Rice highlighted the U.S.'s cooperation with China on North Korea and the South China Sea conflict on her trip to China; and Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz refused to take a position on any particular territory in the South China Sea.
Oct 7	Trump suggested that climate change was invented by China to hurt U.S. competitiveness	Oct 11	Senior Advisor Brian Deese emphasized the partnership with China on climate change.
Oct 19	Trump described climate change as a "hoax" perpetrated by China	Oct 20	Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz said it was in the interests of national security when partners and allies in the region had strong relationships with China, consistent with international norms

Anti-China Rhetoric on Security and Environmental Issues in the *New York Times* and the Response by the White House from July to November 2016

Source: NYTimes.com and WhiteHouse.gov¹¹⁴

Table 1

¹¹⁴ Obama administration White House statements can now be found on the archive website: www.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov

Unlike its stance on economic issues, the White House maintained a soft stance on China regarding security and environmental issues during this period. In other words, anti-China campaign rhetoric on security and the environment drew the White House's attention but did not change the President's attitude towards China on these issues.

Conclusion

Trump's anti-China rhetoric affected the White House statements on China during the 2016 presidential campaign period. The pressure from a presidential candidate's anti-China campaign rhetoric and its subsequent media coverage could effectively make the White House respond with relevant public statements on China. Specifically, the White House responded to anti-China campaign rhetoric used by the opposing party's presidential candidate by issuing White House statements. Anti-China campaign rhetoric increased, relating to economic issues, issues of security and the environment. Compared to other issues, anti-China campaign rhetoric on economic issues was the most effective in influencing the White House statements on China.

This study may still have some theoretical and methodological shortcomings. First, the President's attitude towards China is subject to many governmental and environmental factors, which might undermine the effect of anti-China presidential campaign rhetoric. Second, the study focuses solely on one President and the findings and implications might be inclusive and unable to be generalized to other presidencies in the past and/or future. Third, the White House statements may not result in concrete policy changes, which undermines the influence of anti-China campaign rhetoric on foreign policymaking. Future studies could begin with addressing these limitations, refine the methodology, and use more comprehensive data to estimate the effects of anti-China campaign rhetoric on U.S. foreign policy towards China.

The relationship between the U.S. and China does not follow a historic pattern. On the one hand, the White House is apt to use anti-China rhetoric and is not always tough during the campaign period. On the other hand, the use of anti-China rhetoric in presidential campaigns exercises significant influence on a president's attitude towards China, which may result in profound consequences for relations between the U.S. and China. The White House will generally issue a public statement on China in response to anti-China rhetoric used by the opposing party's presidential candidate during the general campaign period. Based on my study, a good strategy to influence and propose foreign policy changes as a presidential candidate is to use anti-foreign rhetoric in campaign activities to raise certain issues relevant to relations with that foreign country. It is highly probable that such anti-foreign campaign rhetoric, once it receives enough media coverage and public attention, would result in a change of U.S. foreign policy.

Appendix

1. Trump's anti-China rhetoric with a response from White House

Jul 18	Trump promised to erect trade walls with China and Mexico
Jul 20 & 21	Trump took a tough stance on China regarding the South China Sea and North Korea
Jul 21	Trump said the U.S. is under cyber-attack from Russia and China
Jul 22, 26 & 27	Trump pledged to stop China's outrageous theft of intellectual property, along with their illegal product dumping, and devastating currency manipulation
Aug 9	Trump claimed he could bring back millions of manufacturing jobs to the United States by slapping retaliatory tariffs against China for manipulating its currency, offering illegal subsidies to its exporters, and stealing intellectual property from American companies
Aug 21	Trump mentioned China as one of the major components of the plane industry overseas
Aug 29	Trump threatened to slap tariffs on Chinese products
Sep 1	Trump attacked China on intellectual property protection
Sep 2	Trump railed against trade deals, blaming them for jobs lost to Mexico and China
Sep 14	Trump was viewed as a champion to many Americans who said America's political leaders had stood by while competition from China
Sep 15	Trump claimed Obama had allowed China to continue its economic assault on American jobs and wealth, refusing to enforce trade deals and apply leverage on China necessary to rein in North Korea
Sep 16	Trump pledged to protect American workers from harmful practices by trading partners like China
Sep 19	Trump said he would sharply raise tariffs on goods imported from China and Mexico
Oct 5	Mike Pence claimed China was building new islands in the South China Sea during the vice presidential debate
Oct 6	Trump proposed levying heavy taxes on imports from China and Mexico
Oct 7	Trump suggested climate change was invented by China to hurt U.S. competitiveness
Oct 19	Trump described climate change as a "hoax" perpetrated by China
Nov 4	Trump assailed China and Mexico as economic competitors

2. Trump's anti-China rhetoric without a response from White House

Jul 29	Trump said he would slap a 45 percent tax on imports from China
Sep 1	Trump said he would swiftly sanction countries that decline to receive criminal deportees – notably China
Sep 7	Trump mentioned the recent diplomatic incident in China where local officials did not provide the requisite staircase for Air Force One
Sep 27*	Trump attacked China on trade, cyber security, and Iran issues at the first presidential debate
Oct 3	Trump mentioned the U.S. was under cyber-attack from Russia and China
Oct 10*	Trump said China was dumping vast amounts of steel all over the United States
Oct 15	Trump attacked Hillary Clinton's China policy in a Cincinnati campaign rally.
Oct 20*	Trump attacked China on trade, cyber-attack, and campaign contribution at the third presidential debate

* I combined multiple *New York Times* articles.

3. The White House responses to Trump's anti-China campaign rhetoric in 2016

Jul 25	Press Secretary Josh Earnest said the President had launched a WTO case against China for export duties
Jul 26	Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (APHSCT) Lisa O. Monaco admitted that nations like Russia and China were growing more assertive and sophisticated in their cyber operations.
Jul 26	National Security Advisor Susan Rice highlighted the cooperation with China on North Korea and the South China Sea during her trip to China
Jul 28	Press Secretary Josh Earnest said tensions in the South China Sea did not change the nature of the military-to-military relationship between the United States and China
Jul 29	Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz refused to take a position on any particular territory in the South China Sea.
Aug 22	Press Secretary Josh Earnest said China was undermining the TPP and was not looking for a higher standard when it came to workers' rights, the environment, or protecting intellectual property
Aug 29	Press Secretary Josh Earnest took a tough stance on China on trade but highlighted cooperation on security and environmental issues
Sep 3	President Obama emphasized concerns regarding trade and currency at a meeting with President Xi Jinping of China
Sep 12	Press Secretary Josh Earnest said the United States welcomed a rising

	China, but it seemed unwise for America's strategic interests to avoid competition with China
Sep 13	President Obama launched its 14th trade enforcement challenge against China at the World Trade Organization (WTO)
Sep 16	President Obama warned China was pushing hard to create its own trading regime out in Asia
Sep 19	President Obama encouraged China to accelerate its continuing efforts to address industrial excess capacity, foster an environment conducive to innovation, and advance an orderly transition to a market-determined exchange rate. The President also urged China to establish a level playing field for all firms to compete fairly in China during a meeting with Premier Li Keqiang of China
Oct 6	The White House released a document showing the Obama Administration won a major trade enforcement case against China on behalf of U.S. auto manufacturers
Oct 11	Senior Advisor Brian Deese emphasized the partnership with China on climate change
Oct 20	Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz said it was in our national security interest when our partners and allies in the region had strong relationships with China, citing consistency with international norms
Nov 4	The White House released a document saying the United States is working closely with allies, which included a series of technical exchanges on mid-century strategies with China
Nov 7	President Obama said Trump used Chinese steel in his hotels, giving jobs to Chinese steelworkers instead of American steelworkers.

4. Clinton's anti-China rhetoric with a response from White House

Sep 9	Clinton said she would deal with China to prevent a serious conflict with North Korea
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5. Clinton's anti-China rhetoric without a response from White House

Jul 28	Clinton trash-talked China and vowed to bring manufacturing jobs back to Pennsylvania
Jul 29	Clinton mentioned Trump's ties in China, and the unfair trade relations with China at the Democratic Convention
Aug-11	Clinton urged aggressive spending on green energy to counter China and Germany
Sep 27*	Clinton attacked China in trade, cyber security, and Iran issues at the first presidential debate
Oct 5	Tim Kaine emphasized the cooperation with China on security issues

	and attacked Trump on his debt to Bank of China during the vice presidential debate
Oct 10*	During the second presidential debate, Clinton said China was illegally dumping steel in the United States and Donald Trump was buying it to build his buildings, putting steelworkers and American steel plants out of business
Oct 18	Clinton treated China and Germany as major competitors on clean energy
Oct 20*	Clinton attacked China on human rights and trade at the third presidential debate

* I combined multiple *The New York Times* articles.

6. The White House responses to Clinton's anti-China campaign rhetoric in 2016

Sep 12	Press Secretary Josh Earnest said the United States welcomed a rising China, but it seemed unwise for America's strategic interests to avoid competition with China
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BOOK REVIEWS

Sam Kleiner. **The Flying Tigers: The Untold Story of the American Pilots Who Waged a Secret War Against Japan.** New York: Viking, 2018. 294 pages. \$28 Hardcover.

Reviewed by Ariane Rosen

When discussing World War II, most Americans are quick to talk about Pearl Harbor, D-Day, and the atomic bombs. They might mention the Allies and the Axis powers and remember prominent figures on both sides of the war, such as Hitler, FDR, and Churchill. What often gets overlooked, however, is that China, too, was part of the war and that they had, in fact, fought the Japanese for much longer than the U.S. did.

Sam Kleiner's book *The Flying Tigers: The Untold Story of the American Pilots Who Waged a Secret War Against Japan* reminds us of this aspect of WWII and the often forgotten U.S.-China alliance. He does this in a captivating way, by focusing on The Flying Tigers, a group of American pilots who had found their way to China as volunteers (unofficially sanctioned by the White House) and ended up behind enemy lines when the U.S. finally joined the war.

This "radical and even dangerous idea, for enlisting American pilots to fly American aircraft" (63) in China at a time when the U.S. was technically not at war, created the Flying Tigers who would go on to bring hope and awe to millions after the U.S. joined WWII. Clair Chennault, leader of the Flying Tigers, was even played on film by John Wayne in 1942 and graced the cover of *Time Magazine* in 1943.

The book uses Chennault as the anchor for his tale, starting from his early years and continuing on to his time in China – before, during, and after his days as part of the American Volunteer Group (AVG), fondly known as the Flying Tigers. By following Chennault's story, Kleiner is able to paint a vibrant picture of China during the Sino-

Japanese War (which would later merge into WWII after the bombing of Pearl Harbor), the American efforts to balance their support of countries like China with the will of the public to avoid outright war, and the China-Burma-India Theater of WWII. He also brings in a vibrant cast of characters, including Chennault's fellow pilots and, most notably, Madame Chiang, the First Lady of China.

While the Flying Tigers, with their shark-nosed planes and heroic tales, were well known at the time, "the memory of World War II, and the young men who fought in it, receded as the decades wore on. New wars came to clam new warriors, and those from the Greatest Generation grew gray, paunchy and arthritic" (234). It is important for us to remember both our past heroes and the wars they fought.

Especially now, as global tensions are high, particularly between the U.S. and China, it is useful to look back and remember a different time. A time when the U.S. and China were allies. A time when Americans like Chennault upended their lives to come to China's aide.

This epic tale of a rag-tag bunch of American heroes, complete with aerial guerilla warfare, covert operations, war, and adventure, captures readers – even more since it's true – and, in doing so, sheds light on a significant chapter of American history.

Stephen R. Platt. **Imperial Twilight: The Opium War and the End of China's Last Golden Age.** New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018. 553 pages. \$35 Hardcover.

Reviewed by Allison Golden

What if the Opium War was remembered not as the beginning of China's "Century of Humiliation," but instead as the end of its era as the preeminent power in the East? So posits Stephen R. Platt in his latest book, *Imperial Twilight: The Opium War and the End of China's Last Golden Age*. Focusing not so much on the Opium War itself as on the handful of British merchants, missionaries, and military men responsible for shaping the British perception of China, *Imperial Twilight* takes the reader along for a reexamination of early British relations with China beginning in the late eighteenth century. Platt describes the highs and lows of the British in China, relying on personal correspondence and memoirs to paint vivid portraits of everything from McCartney's failed ambassadorial mission to drunken parties of the British and American merchants in their factories in Canton. While stopping far short of justifying Britain's decision to declare war, Platt details how the fateful choice was not entirely about opium, but ultimately came to pass out of the calculated decisions of a few idealistic, proud, and flawed individuals.

"If we revisit these events as they actually unfolded," Platt writes in the introduction, "rather than as they have been reinterpreted afterward, we find far more opposition to this war in Britain and America on moral grounds, and far more respect for the sovereignty of China, than one would otherwise expect." The Americans in particular come off positively in Platt's telling. While acknowledging that one fifth of the opium in China came from American smugglers, he also takes lengths to explain how prominent Americans in the trade, like the Forbes brothers, chose to stop participating in the illicit

trade (though they would resume once China legalized opium). He also takes time to explain that John Quincy Adams' famous defense of the British decision to go to war with China was not representative of the vast majority

Platt's choice to frame *Imperial Twilight* largely around the personal experiences of some of the earliest Britons in China- such as George Staunton, Thomas Manning, and Robert Morrison- helps him shape a cohesive, linear narrative out of eighty years of historical record that included three Chinese emperors and three British monarchs. Staunton in particular becomes so familiar that the reader feels sympathy, centuries after the fact, for the painfully shy politician after reading in detail about his humiliation upon being cutoff while trying to convince Parliament not to abolish the East India Company's monopoly on the China trade in 1833. The Chinese actors in this history are not awarded as complex a rendering, but Platt does highlight such diverse figures as White Lotus leader Zhang Zhengmo, pirate Shi Yang, and Hong merchant Houqua, as well as the Jiaqing and Daoguang emperors.

While the personal narratives in *Imperial Twilight* make for compelling reading, they are not the sole focus of the book. Instead, Platt uses the experiences of such individuals so that the reader can understand the reality of Sino-British relations in the Canton era, as well as how it was perceived by the governments in London and Beijing. It is clear from reading *Imperial Twilight* that studying the opium trade alone will not present a complete understanding of how and why the Opium War happened. Platt does not even mention opium until page 193, a striking choice indicative of the scope needed to better appreciate how the war began.

There are many factors, beyond opium, that must instead be assessed to fully comprehend why Britain elected to engage in a war with China that was opposed by many in Parliament, the press, and the public. These include: the sheer distance between London and Canton, which

required six months for letters to be exchanged and a full year for a reply; a lack of understanding about China by the men chosen to lead British policy in Canton; and, most critically, an unwavering desire on behalf of all British contingents (merchants, missionaries, military, and Parliament alike) to defend British prestige in the face of what was perceived to be a declining Qing Empire.

Platt undercuts the idea, held by many in both China and the West, that the war was fought because Britain wanted China to legalize opium. Having just abolished slavery, there were in actuality strong contingents in Britain morally outraged by the prospect of the nation's continued involvement in the opium trade. Even the opium smugglers themselves would not have wanted legalization, as it would have rendered their unique expertise irrelevant. Instead, the war was justified more on the ground of defending British honor in the wake of the detention of the British merchants at Canton. Platt is decisive in saying that without the detention of the merchants, which lasted for six weeks following a renewed crackdown on the opium trade, the war would not have happened. The detention certainly pushed relations to a new low, and the emotional reaction of Charles Elliot, the man in charge of the British in Canton, did not help matters. However, it is harder to definitively say war would not have happened without the detention than Platt suggests. There was still growing discord between Britain and China that could have boiled over had circumstances developed differently.

In describing the various proposals and recommendations the Qing emperors considered to address the opium problem, *Imperial Twilight* echoes the debate surrounding the current opioid epidemic in the United States- an epidemic, ironically fueled in part by fentanyl smuggled from China. The emperor considered, at various times in the decades preceding the Opium War, legalizing opium, prioritizing the medical rehabilitation of addicts, and executing addicts, before finally settling on targeting those responsible for smuggling opium into

Canton.

Platt points out that the three main domestic challenges the Qing confronted in the lead up to the Opium War are the same that China is faced with today: overpopulation, corruption, and sectarian dissent. While not explicitly stated, *Imperial Twilight* also details how once positive and mutually beneficial relations between Britain and China were ultimately undone by misunderstanding, suspicion, and changing perceptions of national prestige. These very things are currently threatening to derail the US-China relationship. Let us hope that the core individuals involved in shaping the future trajectory of this relationship, on both sides, show more restraint, logic, and integrity than did their British counterparts two hundred years ago.

Stephen R. Platt is currently professor of Chinese history at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His previous book, *Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom: China, the West, and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War* won the Cundhill History Prize and was praised by both the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. *Imperial Twilight* is recommended for those interested in Sino-British relations, the Canton system, early-modern Chinese history, and the history of transnational crime.

Edited by Jennifer Rudolph and Michael Szonyi. **The China Questions: Critical Insights into a Rising Power.** Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018. 337 pp. \$27.95 Hardcover.

Reviewed by Rona Vaselaar

For the average American, seeking to understand China is frustrating at best and a fool's errand at worst. One of the editors of *The China Questions: Critical Insights into a Rising Power*, Michael Szonyi, calls attention to the issue in the book's introduction: "We might even say that just as the United States has a trade deficit with China, it also has an understanding deficit." (Page 2) There are significant gaps in the American public's understanding of China. Szonyi largely attributes these gaps to the failings of both Chinese and U.S. news media, which are focused disproportionately on "what is most visible or striking" (page 2) and cater to the biases of their readers. *The China Questions* seeks to fill in these gaps by raising critical questions about China's past, present, and future – questions that the authors believe Americans *should* be asking about China – and presenting factual, comprehensive answers to these questions.

The book is a series of 36 articles separated into six categories: politics, international relations, economy, environment, society, and history and culture. Each section consists of anywhere from two to nine articles and seeks to give a well-rounded perspective on the topic as a whole, with the articles themselves focusing on specific subtopics. The articles are short – usually only a few pages long – and are concise and clearly written. The end of the volume contains a short section that features further readings, acknowledgements, contributor biographies, and an index.

Five of the six sections of the book have between six and nine articles

each. For an introductory book focused on basic China-related issues, this is ideal – it gives adequate coverage of the foundations of each topic without overloading the reader with information. However, there is one section – the section on the environment – that has only two articles. Two articles is nowhere near enough to introduce readers to this topic, especially because climate change and air pollution are currently leading issues in China that the Chinese government is struggling to address. In order to understand current events in China, it is crucial to understand what is happening with the environment. The lack of a satisfactory section on the environment left the volume feeling incomplete.

One of the key benefits of the book is that the contributors come from a variety of backgrounds. Rather than just focusing on American academics, the book takes a broader scope, including experts from Europe, China, Taiwan, etc. As a rule, the authors in the book studied in China, and many conducted on-the-ground fieldwork and research in China. Their understanding of China is, as a result, nuanced and less biased than someone who has only ever approached China Studies from afar. Each and every contributor is an asset to this volume.

The greatest asset of this book is that it is not written for the academic community, but for policy makers and the general public, in order to promote greater understanding of China in America on a larger scale. All of the authors in this volume are affiliated with Harvard University's Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies which, as Szonyi notes, has a history of affiliates leaving the "ivory tower" of academia to pursue paths in the public sector. Szonyi closes the introduction by musing on the importance of venturing outside the academic sphere: "With U.S.-China relations moving into uncharted waters, we think this public role of educating and informing policy makers and the general public is more important than ever." (Page 8)

Szonyi is right, and this volume reflects a departure from academia. Many of the authors in this book indeed have left the ivory tower.

Aside from academics, the volume includes politicians, government employees, and journalists, among others. It should be noted, however, that nearly every author is or has been a professor, and all have a strong background in academia. Nevertheless, their ventures beyond academia have informed their experiences and made their writing more accessible to the public.

The choice to write for the general public is crucial and laudable because many books and articles are published on China in the academic field. These works are usually minutely detailed and complex; written to be consumed by other China scholars already equipped with the substantial background necessary to understand the complexity of the topics at hand; written in academic prose that is only intelligible to those well-versed in academic terminology and culture; and difficult to access without the aid of a University library or paying significant money. While these works are important contributions to the China Studies field, they make little difference for the average American whose main exposure to China occurs through U.S. news media. This book, by consulting China experts in a variety of fields, highlights and makes accessible important context and information that the average American doesn't get from the media. For China experts seeking to improve the American public's understanding and perceptions of China, this is a huge step in the right direction.

Additionally, unlike the media, the book has succeeded in presenting a largely unbiased view of several complex issues. While some of the articles are persuasive and use loaded language, most of them address the questions at hand in a factual, comprehensive manner. For example, Mark Wu's article, *Is China Keeping Its Promises on Trade?*, takes a very controversial, difficult issue and breaks it down into its components, then gives a clear and accurate assessment of China's trade practices. In so doing, it allows readers to better understand the recent news about the U.S.-China trade war and draw their own well-

informed conclusions.

While the organization of the articles themselves was straightforward and rational, the same cannot be said for the additional sources and materials included in the book. The biographies for each contributor, for example, were not included with the relevant articles, but were relegated to the back of the book instead, making them less accessible.

Additionally – and more importantly – the sources for each article and the ‘Further Reading’ section presented a serious problem for this book. The ‘Further Reading’ section is located at the back of the book. It lists a series of books and papers that one can refer to for more information on specific topics. It also lists a website that readers can access that, the book claims, keeps updated records of new and important research in China Studies. Almost as an afterthought, this section mentions that the sources for each article in the book can be found on this website.¹¹⁵ As a result, there are no citations in the book, and since it is impossible to tell which specific claims come from which specific source, fact-checking these articles is similarly difficult. It appears as though the book’s editors have made it intentionally difficult for readers to fact-check what they’re reading – that should be very concerning for anyone who picks up this book.

On the other hand, the benefit of redirecting readers to the website is that China Studies resources can be kept up-to-date much more easily than in a print book, which is bound to go out-of-date in a few years. It makes sense to include a website with further readings and resources. Each individual article, however, should include in-text citations or footnotes for easy sourcing and fact-checking. Without it, the quality and veracity of the research is left in question. This is my greatest criticism – and the greatest weakness – of the volume.

Overall, this book makes an important contribution to the general

¹¹⁵ The website listing these readings and sources can be found at the following URL: <https://fairbank.fas.harvard.edu/china-questions/>.

public's understanding of China. Anyone who wants to understand China issues better can read this book and come out the other side with the foundational knowledge necessary to understand what's really happening in U.S.-China relations. While the book has certain shortcomings, these are outweighed by the benefits it brings to the average American on a quest to understand why China is important and how China's course of action will affect the future of the United States. Through this book, the Fairbank Center lives up to its aspiration to be the world's leading research institute for the study of China. Other academic institutions and researchers would do well to acknowledge and consider the importance of informing the general public rather than just writing for their fellow academics.

IN MEMORIAM

The Honorable Herbert E. Horowitz
(1930-2019)



Ambassador Herbert Horowitz at the 2018 U.S.-China Policy Foundation Gala
Top L to R: DCM & Minister Li Kexin, Ms. Tammy Tam (SCMP), Amb. Gary Locke,
Mr. Chow Cung Yan (SCMP). Bottom L to R: Dr. Chi Wang (USCPF), Ms. Florence
Davis (The Starr Foundation), Amb. Herbert Horowitz

On March 2, 2019, Ambassador Herbert E. Horowitz passed away in Pasadena, California. He was a career diplomat, serving as Ambassador to the Republic of Gambia from 1986-89.

Horowitz spent much of his years of service focused on Asia. He held postings in Taipei, Hong Kong, and Beijing. He went on to serve as the director of the Office of Regional Affairs, East Asian Bureau in DC (1978-79) and as the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing (1984-86). During his long career, he gained first-hand knowledge on the complicated U.S.-China relationship that was only strengthened by his own personal interest and fluency in Chinese.

Even after retiring, Ambassador Horowitz remained involved and interested in U.S.-China relations. He was a longtime Board Member for the U.S.-China Policy Foundation and was one of our most active members and dearest friends. The U.S.-China Policy Foundation Board

Members and staff all have fond memories of him joining our events and sharing his stories and personal experiences. His passion and dedication never wavered. His presence will be missed.

Ambassador Horowitz left behind a wife and two children. Our hearts go out to his family and friends.