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**America's China
Policy and the Role
of the Congress,
the Press, and the
Private Sector**

Edited by Andrew B. Brick



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The Heritage Foundation
214 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E.
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U.S.A.
202/546-4400

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Edited by Andrew B. Brick

Andrew B. Brick

Policy Analyst, The Heritage Foundation

Richard Bush

Staff Consultant

House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs

Michael Chugani

Correspondent, *South China Morning Post*

William McGurn

Washington Bureau Chief, *National Review*

Mary Wadsworth-Darby

Executive Director, America-China Society

The Lehrman Auditorium

The Heritage Foundation

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Introduction: Orchestrating Washington's Voice to Beijing

By Andrew B. Brick

Like any aspect of American foreign policy formulation, U.S.-China policy results from the elaborate interplay of national security concerns, bureaucratic interests and perspectives, public constituencies, and individual opinions.

The policy-making process, moreover, is complicated and often works at cross-purposes. A congressional initiative aimed at extending the length of Chinese student visas, for instance, clashes with the President's traditional prerogative to define America's immigration policies. Other factors work to affect policy-making as well. Among the most prominent: the political calendar, the global context, the bilateral context, personal relationships between Americans and Chinese, the unpredictable outcome of events clashing with bureaucratic agenda, and the capabilities of the respective actors to convey their interests successfully.

The papers gathered here were presented at a July 9 seminar focusing on the role of the congress, the press, and the private sector in affecting America's China policy. The strategies the participants employ to change the behavior of their governments are described, and the clash of diverse goals, particularly in light of the events in U.S.-China relations since the 1989 massacre at Tiananmen Square, is analyzed. This nuts and bolts approach to the subject recognizes that Washington's China policy does not stand alone, enjoying a distinctive status and managed in a single arena. Instead, it approaches China policy-making as a pluralistic process, informed simultaneously on a great variety of fronts by a great variety of voices.

Historically, America seldom has spoken with one voice when it came to China. Generations of Americans have thought they knew the Chinese well, as special friends—or demonic enemies. Indeed, for two hundred years China has intrigued the United States. Young American children digging in their sand boxes are warned—or encouraged—that their efforts may end a world away in China. Like a magnet, China has lured American soldiers plotting conquest, merchants dreaming of wealth, and missionaries proselyting for Christian salvation.¹

As such, few of America's relationships with other countries have exhibited the fragility, confusion, and contradiction of the U.S.-Chinese relationship. Since the beginning of this century alone, U.S. policy toward China has shifted significantly with each Administration: from Theodore Roosevelt's indifference to Woodrow Wilson's sacrifice of Chinese sovereignty at Versailles to Franklin Roosevelt's vision of a unified, independent China. For over two decades after the communists won control of the mainland in 1949, U.S. policy sought to contain and isolate the People's Republic of China (PRC). Only in the decade and a half before the Tiananmen Square massacre had the relationship started to surmount some of its characteristic volatility.

¹ For more information on America's relationship with China, see: Michael Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

Structure and Process

The China network informs America's relationship with China. As is the case in Washington's relations with other important nations, the China network consists of government officials and outside parties interested in Sino-American relations. Each participant sees a different face of the issue at hand, and each has a different stake in policy determination.

At the center of the China network stands the President. His role and influence over China policy are qualitatively different than that of any other participant. He alone makes the crucial decisions that determine the general direction of U.S. China policy.

Although the President may make his role in foreign policy formulation as large as his competence and inclinations dictate, he usually delegates much of his operational authority to a handful of subordinates. Among the most important are his National Security Advisor, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Commerce, the Vice President, the White House Chief of Staff and Press Secretary, and others.² Indeed, almost every cabinet secretary has responsibilities dealing with China. These advisors assist in the initiation and coordination of policy. They screen pertinent information for the President and advise him on the issues at hand and the range of choices he enjoys.

A legion of China specialists generally advises the advisors. The National Security Advisor, for instance, draws on the staff of the National Security Council (NSC) for analysis and counsel before he consults with the President. The Secretary of State chiefly relies on the East Asian Bureau of the State Department (DoS) for his papers and briefings on China, though the State Department's Bureau of Planning, Bureau of Political and Military Affairs, and Bureau of Intelligence and Research may also inform his China policy recommendations. The Secretary of Defense looks to the Defense Department's (DoD) offices of International Security Affairs (ISA), International Security Policy (ISP), and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) to assess the military's interest in America's China policy. The Director of Central Intelligence, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretaries of Commerce and Agriculture, and the U.S. Trade Representative similarly rely on their respective department's China hands.

Interagency policy coordination generally is accomplished by these China experts. China specialists at the NSC, the Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce, and the CIA, for example, might meet to reconcile differences on U.S.-China technology transfer policy. If consensus on the issue cannot be reached, it is passed on to their superiors for resolution. If agreement cannot be reached at that level, the issue might be sent to the President for a final decision.

Policy coordination traditionally is one of the most contentious and difficult aspects of American foreign policy formulation, and the making of U.S.-China policy is no exception. Interagency rivalries, inadequate manpower, and lack of clout often obscure and complicate policy debate. Michel Oksenberg, Jimmy Carter's NSC China expert, indirectly gave voice to this in a 1984 reflection on his old job. Charged with the monitoring and implementation of presidential directives on China policy, Oksenberg noted that the task often brought him into conflict with recalcitrant bureaucracies. "To perform his multi-faceted task well," wrote Oksenberg, "an NSC staffer depends

2 For more on the structure and process of U.S. policy to China, see: Michel Oksenberg, "Reflections on the Making of American China Policy," *China Policy For the Next Decade*, George R. Packard, rapporteur, Boston, 1984.

upon assistance, often silently rendered, from middle and lower ranking officials throughout the government bureaucracy.”³

In addition to the President and his core of advisors, the China network is informed by other institutions as well. Principal among these is the U.S. Congress. From the very beginning of the Republic, Congress has chafed at the logic that made the presidency the chief inspiration for foreign policy; the history of legislative-executive relations over international issues is one of recurring dispute.

America’s China policy formulation has been no exception. The dilemma has been painfully clear since June 4, 1989, in the differences between the Bush Administration and many in Congress over Washington’s ties to Beijing.

The Bush Administration has argued that China, despite the events in Tiananmen Square, is important and worthy of continued dialogue. Constructive U.S.-China ties over the past several decades, the Bush White House contends, have reduced tensions in Asia, contributed greatly to regional stability, and helped defuse conflicts in critical areas, principally the peace across the Taiwan Strait. Although often repeated, it remains true that by virtue of its size, geographic position, historic role, and dimensions of its military, China’s centrality in Asia must be an overriding factor as Washington formulates Asia policy.

The opinion of many American congressmen, by contrast, is that China can be benignly neglected. China simply is not as important as it once was to U.S. national interests, say these critics of George Bush’s policy, who cite the events in Eastern Europe and the consequent reduction in East-West tensions. Moreover, congressional critics feel the Administration’s China policy fails to punish Beijing for its continuing human rights violations. The President, they have repeatedly stressed, encourages democratic and peaceful change in Eastern Europe but closes his eyes to the explicitly undemocratic regime in Beijing.

The Tiananmen Square debate reflects much about the congressional role in China policy formulation. For one thing, Congress is essentially a reactive body, putting its own stamp on decisions already taken by the President and his assistants. Congress also exercises some form of negative control on executive decisions, either by refusing to accept them or by changing their substance, direction, or timing.⁴

For another thing, Congress is more prone to reflect transitory shifts of public opinion than the executive branch. To no small extent, this is because it generally is more sensitive to electoral politics than the President, especially in the House of Representatives, where members must face the voters every two years.

Congressional influence on China policy is expressed through a wide variety of means. The sense of Congress can be found in the appropriations process, as it ratifies treaties, or as it approves executive branch personnel appointments. Congressional hearings, particularly in the House and Senate Subcommittees for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, can have an important effect on U.S.-China relations. Visits to Beijing by Congressman and their staffs, their speeches, their

3 *Ibid.* p. 71-72.

4 See: Daniel Cheever and H. Field Haviland, *American Foreign Policy and the Separation of Powers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952). Congress frequently has criticized the Bush Administration as "reactive," bemoaning what many feel is a dangerous absence of China policy.

quiet interventions and consultations with the President and his key advisors also influence the course of America's China policy.

Voices outside the government help inform U.S.-China policy as well. Sino-American cultural exchanges are promoted by prominent organizations like the National Committee for U.S.-China Relations. The U.S.-China Business Council facilitates American commercial contact with the PRC. The Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China sponsors exchanges in the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. Tourist agencies, professional associations like the AFL-CIO, and sundry American-Chinese community organizations have developed ties with counterpart PRC organizations and also have a vested interest in healthy Sino-American relations.

This is equally true for many in academia. The Johns Hopkins University Paul Nitze School for Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C., runs a forum on China affairs and manages a unique program for American and Chinese students of international affairs at Nanjing University in Nanjing, China. Think tanks like the Washington-based Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the Brookings Institution all staff experts in China studies who work to inform the policy debate. The Heritage Foundation publishes *Backgrounders* analyses on American policy to China, including one that outlined U.S. options for responding to the Tiananmen Square massacre within two days of the event. Another think tank, the National Institute for Public Policy, faxed periodic China updates to Washington policy makers and opinion leaders.

No institution, however, influences policy and opinion on China like the American press. In the policy arena, it is used by both Chinese and American officials for damage control and initiative advancement. As the political fallout from the Tiananmen Square massacre mounted, for example, the Chinese Embassy in Washington urged all visitors to read what they considered a relatively favorable *U.S. News and World Report* feature on China's turmoil.

The influence of the press on American public opinion is especially profound. The extensive press coverage of the pro-democracy demonstrations and suppression in Beijing made Tiananmen Square an important event in American consciousness. The massacre scenes in Beijing, vividly relayed via television, portrayed an armed suppression of student demonstrators. Tanks, soldiers, armored personnel carriers—the trappings of the military repression—came into American homes with terrifying clarity. Commentators glibly captured the event: The People's Liberation Army had turned on the people.

Indeed, it can be argued that the press contributed greatly to voicing the underlying sentiment of Americans toward China in the days and months after June 4, 1989. Largely because America's major networks aired more stories on China in the month from May 14 to June 14, 1989, than they had in the entire decade from 1972 to 1981, the words "Tiananmen Square" became linked in the American lexicon to the word "massacre."⁵ By association, it implied a democratic revolution crushed in mid-step, violently suppressed by a legion of totalitarians.

The political debate that subsequently ensued made George Bush and his China policy the target of a critical press. The *New York Times* and *The Washington Post* frequently questioned the

5 See: S. Robert Lichter, "Media insight: TV's China Syndrome," Council for National Policy, July 1989; and "The Gallup Survey on American Attitudes Toward China in the Wake of the June, 1989 Crackdown" (Princeton, New Jersey: The Gallup Organization, Inc., July 28-31, 1989.)

President's stewardship of the crisis. Newspaper coverage bemoaned the poverty of his rhetoric and his tin ear for the greater issues of democratic politics. Editorialists lambasted his inability to find ringing words to express America's dismay and repugnance at the events in China, and denounced him for dispatching his National Security Advisor to bandy words "with the butchers of Tiananmen Square" so soon after they had slaughtered protesting students. In such light, it is not surprising that George Bush's well-known problems with the so-called "vision thing" may have multiplied significantly in his China policy.

The China Network and U.S. Policy

The China network is important to the policy-making process for several reasons. Its very existence enhances America's capability to respond effectively to policy challenges. Confronted with the varied interests of a community concerned with China policy, government officials must cope with the forces of democratic consensus. Although consensus building is not necessarily a prerequisite of policy formulation, the sundry voices of a concerned network do help clarify the tasks at hand.

Among the most important tasks involved in policy-making are:

- ◆◆ Developing a coherent conception of U.S. interests.
- ◆◆ Articulating problems, collecting information, and identifying issues that may require action.
- ◆◆ Developing alternative courses of action and analyzing their costs and benefits.
- ◆◆ Making decisions, without undue delay.
- ◆◆ Taking effective action as required.
- ◆◆ Assessing the results of action and revising policy thoroughly.⁶

The existence of a China network also vests special interests and perspectives. In this instance, organizational arrangements are crucial. How power is distributed in an organization or network and the skill key players use to advance their interests determine whether and how effectively particular considerations will be represented.

Finally, and perhaps most important, the existence of a China network helps legitimate China policy. It makes decisions broadly acceptable by assuring that those with relevant competence are heard. Interaction among the President, Congress, the bureaucracy, the press, academia, private foundations, and think tanks, assures the representation of multiple interests, and enhances the likelihood that even those who sought a different policy will accept the policy adopted.

Orchestrating Washington's Voices

The papers collected here seek to identify the many voices that make America's China policy, focusing especially on the principal public players in the China network. Special attention is given to where the network defines—or fails to define—U.S. interests in Sino-American relations. Three aspects of policy formulation particularly are highlighted. These are:

6 For more on this see: Graham Allison and Peter Szanton, *Remaking Foreign Policy: The Organizational Connection* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1980), p. 21.

- ◆ ◆ Capabilities of each of the China network's participants, especially the quality of the experts and their organizations and the means they employ to influence policy.
- ◆ ◆ Perspectives of the network's participants, examining how the principal players see the issues under consideration, define their interests, and reconcile their differences.
- ◆ ◆ Coordination of policy implementation, focusing on the divergent interests that frequently inform the policy-making process.

America's China Policy and the Role of the Congress, the Press, and the Private Sector explores the varied interests that define America's tie to the People's Republic and, where possible, seeks to identify which interests advance which policies. The critical issue in making America's China policy is similar to almost every other aspect of U.S. foreign policy-making: a pluralistic society committed to continuing meaningful U.S.-China relations must seek to balance many objectives. How best to go about achieving such a balance is the purpose of the papers gathered here.



The Role of Congress in Shaping Washington's China Policy

By Richard Bush

On the afternoon of September 30, 1988, the China policy of the Reagan Administration was subjected to a minor congressional challenge. Republican Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina secured passage of an amendment to the conference report of the Fiscal Year 1989 foreign aid appropriations bill.¹ His measure prohibited the launching of American-built satellites on Chinese Long March rockets unless the President got formal written assurances from the Chinese government that it would no longer sell intermediate-range ballistic missiles to Middle Eastern countries, an issue which had roiled U.S.-China relations for months. Because Senator Helms caught everyone by surprise, however, there was little time to debate the amendment.

There ensued several hours of frantic activity. Congressional affairs offices in the Departments of Defense and State worked feverishly to mobilize their allies in the House against the amendment. In hurried phone calls between executive branch officials, members' offices, House cloak-rooms, and committee offices, key arguments were relayed and tactics thrashed out. Personal credibility built up over years of interaction was drawn upon to short-circuit the process of explaining why the Helms amendment was a bad idea.

In the end, a small coalition of House Democrats and Republicans convinced a majority of their colleagues to reject the Helms initiative. Their principal rationale was that Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci had already received "clarifications" from Chinese leaders that the missile sales would not occur; if, conversely, written assurances were demanded, Chinese restraint could become a dead letter.

In many respects, this brief incident is emblematic of the way Congress attempts to shape U.S. policy toward China.

- ◆◆ The episode began when the executive branch, by law, notified Congress that it intended to issue licenses to allow the satellites to be launched from China into the skies over Australia and Southeast Asia. The Helms amendment was merely a reaction to the original initiative. (If a license which entailed notification of Congress had not been required, the satellites might not have been an issue on Capitol Hill at all.)
- ◆◆ Policy substance and domestic politics were mixed. Allowing the satellites to be transferred would benefit U.S. relations with China, with Australia, and with friends in Asia. But it also represented a potential loss to the U.S. commercial launch service industry, which had lobbied against the proposal.

1 A conference report is the document that emerges from the House-Senate conference convened to reconcile the differences between the House and the Senate versions of a particular bill. Before the reconciled bill may be sent to the President, the conference report—and, in effect, the bill itself—must be approved by both Houses. Amending a conference report with a totally extraneous provision, as was the case in the instance described, is a significant deviation from the normal legislative process, but it does occur.

- ◆◆ The novel device Senator Helms used to block the proposal—amending a conference report—is a measure of how difficult it is for Congress to block an Administration initiative, especially when it is divided (which it is most of the time).
- ◆◆ That Democrats supported the Reagan Administration demonstrated how non-ideological the politics of U.S.-China relations had become since their normalization in 1979. Indeed, the harshest critics of Mr. Reagan's policy were conservative Republicans.
- ◆◆ How an issue is framed is often crucial to the outcome. Key House staff knew, and made sure that their bosses knew, what the Administration could not say publicly: that credible Chinese restraint on missile sales had been an essential condition for the American go-ahead on the satellites.

Most of all, the satellite episode demonstrates that congressional policy-making on China (as on most foreign countries) is episodic, inchoate, reactive, procedurally constrained, multi-layered in its motivation, and serendipitous—not the policy-making the text books prescribe.

This essay attempts to describe and explain Congress's role in shaping the conduct of United States policy toward China. The emphasis is on the process by which policy is made, and not on the substance of that policy. The approach is more analytical than historical. The perspective is that of a participant in the decision-making process and not of a judge of either process or policy. In no way do the observations that follow necessarily reflect those of the United States Congress, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, or any of its members.

Interbranch Rivalry

What makes American policy-making on China complex is the governmental role prescribed for the Congress by the Constitution. The American system lacks the hinge which makes for efficient executive-legislative relations: the appointment of leaders of the majority party in parliament as government ministers. The Founding Fathers foresaw neither the regulatory and imperial objectives which the U.S. government would assume by the mid-twentieth century, nor the necessity of bureaucratic institutions capable of carrying out such tasks. Indeed, they were guided by a very different compass: preventing tyranny by an autocrat, oligarchy, or mob. Their structural objective was to foster an equilibrium in governance, not to ensure the efficient formulation of policy.

The result is that the executive branch formulates policy toward China—and every other country—without the formal participation of the legislature. Members of Congress have no seat at the decision-making table, nor do they participate in negotiations with representatives of the Chinese government.

Yet Congress nonetheless does assert the right to define for itself the U.S. national interest and how to pursue it. To exercise that right, Congress uses what powers it has available to influence policy, and, if possible, expand those powers.

Over this split in government functions is the ever-present conflict between idealism and realism in shaping American foreign policy. Simply put, members of Congress, like the American public they represent, tend to focus on the values of freedom and democracy in policy-making. As a representative institution, Congress stresses idealism and moral values. The executive branch, which actually conducts foreign policy, tends to stress realism and the national interest.

To be sure, there are many members of Congress who take a realistic approach to foreign policy, or at least understand the need to balance the two poles, just as there are executive branch offi-

cials who do not shirk from promoting moral values. Yet the two tendencies do exist and have created within the two branches two very different political cultures in the American approach to foreign affairs.²

China, moreover, has been something of a special case in the politics of foreign policy, in that all initiatives designed to improve U.S.-China relations have come from the executive branch. Perhaps because of an underlying anti-Communism and a lingering sympathy for the government in Taipei, there is no bloc in Congress which takes positive initiatives to which the Administration must respond. Moreover, no social or economic group interest—including Americans of Chinese descent—sees itself either as the protector of China's interests or the champion of the bilateral relationship, sufficient to exert significant pressure on Congress. The greatest activism shown by Congress concerning China has taken the form of resistance to the Administration's initiatives or independent efforts to undermine its approach.

The Congressional Maze

Given the potential for executive-legislative disputes over China policy, what is surprising is that relatively little conflict has occurred—at least before June of 1989. Part of the explanation lies in the internal institutional obstacles that impede Congressmen who might wish to shape U.S. policy toward China. They must work within the Congress's structure and process—the accumulation of more than two centuries of American legislative practice—to exploit advantages and remove obstacles to policy making.

Where do issues concerning China come from then? Members of Congress may draw on a wide variety of information sources concerning China: the mass media, the Chinese media in translation through the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, contacts with the U.S. executive branch, the U.S. intelligence community, travel to China, short- and long-term visitors from China, China specialists and their writings, a broad array of non-governmental organizations (business, labor, human rights groups, think tanks, ethnic organizations, etc.), private citizens, and trusted colleagues who specialize in foreign affairs. Information can come directly to the Congressman through staff, or through hearings. Each source of information comes with its own limitation and bias, and those sources which, for one reason or another, a Congressman believes to be more credible are treated more seriously. Whether a Congressman, based on information available, chooses to try to shape Administration behavior depends on a complicated calculus of the political costs and benefits that such initiatives might entail.

Members of Congress who might try to influence U.S. policy toward China have a wide array of instruments at their disposal. These can be divided into three categories:

- ◆◆ Non-legislative pressure exerted on an individual or group basis.
- ◆◆ Non-binding legislation by either the House or Senate or both.
- ◆◆ Binding legislation enacted by the entire Congress.

2 For an illuminating discussion of these two cultures, see Stanley Heginbotham, "Dateline Washington: The Rules of the Games," *Foreign Policy*, Number 53, Winter 1983-1984, p. 158.

Non-Legislative Pressure

Non-legislative pressure may take many forms. Some are applied directly on the President or other executive branch officials through meetings, letters, and phone calls. Others derive from the privileges that each Congressman enjoys: introducing bills and resolutions, making floor statements, coordinating a series of floor statements on a single subject (called a “special order” in the House), sending out “Dear Colleague” letters (which are delivered to all members of the House or Senate), forming a caucus on important issues (examples relevant to China are the Congressional Textile and Human Rights Caucuses), creating more informal member networks (the China Working Group formed by Democratic California Representative Nancy Pelosi in 1990), sponsoring meetings for other Congressman or staff featuring individuals who possess some special qualification to speak about China, and making official fact-finding trips to China. Still other forms of non-legislative pressure target the mass media: press statements, press conferences, press briefings featuring experts, placing articles in newspapers and periodicals, and tipping off reporters to relevant stories. Miscellaneous activities include stimulating publicity by relevant interest groups, meeting privately with Chinese officials who visit Washington, and so forth.

These efforts may be undertaken on a one-shot basis, or as part of a deliberate public relations strategy. They may have one or more audiences: the general public, a specific group or constituency interest, the foreign policy community, or other Members of Congress and their staff. Some of these activities are probably intended to give only the appearance of taking a stand on U.S. policy toward China. Yet many others are deliberately designed to try to change the terms on which the objectives and modalities of the U.S. approach to China are discussed, in the hope of changing policy itself.³

By virtue of their power to call hearings, chairmen of committees and subcommittees and their staffs have an added advantage in framing policy issues and pressuring the executive branch. Because they have broad discretion in the choice of witnesses, they may define which points of view are heard. Through the questions posed before and during testimony, they can limit which issues are likely to be discussed. And chairmen can usually secure executive branch officials to appear before their panels to present and justify administration policy. By itself, the fact that these officials need to make a public accounting for their policy may shape the policy that is pursued.

Of course, not every committee or subcommittee has a clear interest in U.S. China policy. The most likely venues are the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Senate Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs for non-economic issues, and the House and Senate Trade Subcommittees for trade issues. Yet if the chairmen of other panels wish to hold a hearing, they can usually find a basis for doing so. In the fall of 1982, for instance, the late Republican Senator John East of North Carolina used his chairmanship of the Subcommittee on the Separation of Powers to voice conservative concern about the August 17, 1982, U.S.-PRC communique on American arms sales to Taiwan, on the grounds that diplomatic action by the Reagan Administration negated an act of Congress—specifically, the Taiwan Relations Act.

3 Members of Congress also intervene on specific cases involving individuals (businessmen, visa applicants, and so on), who contact their offices. Such initiatives give the individual in question better access and consideration by executive branch officials who carry out U.S. law and policy. Although these cases are often *sui generis*, a substantial number of similar cases may result in an adjustment as to how statutory or policy guidelines are interpreted or implemented.

Legislative Influence

These various forms of pressure concerning U.S. policy toward China would be far less effective were it not for the fact that the Congress may—and sometimes does—express its collective foreign policy preferences through legislation. Existing statutes, many of which are generic in nature, create a complex set of barriers and hurdles that constrain the executive branch's freedom of action in the conduct of foreign policy. Bureaucrats in the affected agencies, for example, frequently must look to their staff colleagues—particularly those in legal offices—for guidance on precisely what they may and may not do in following policy guidelines. The mere possibility that Congress will add more restrictions to policy implementation gives the legislature significant leverage over an administration. In the event of a serious initiative that is contrary to administration policy, the executive branch will seek out its friends in Congress to stop, deflect, or undermine the challenge.

Legislation may be of two kinds. The first kind is non-binding statements of congressional opinion on the subjects concerned. These take the form either of House and Senate resolutions, which express the views of a majority of one body, or concurrent resolutions, which are passed by both houses. One-house and concurrent resolutions do not have the force of law and are not sent to the President for his signature or veto.

Resolutions are often denigrated precisely because they are non-binding. Yet because they are taken seriously by the Chinese government, they have an impact that sometimes exceeds the expectations of their authors. As a prominent Representative has said, "Sense-of-Congress resolutions seem to travel at the speed of light to the affected country but sometimes seem to get lost in the mail to the State Department." In fact, resolutions serve an important signaling function, similar to the statements made by high-level executive branch officials or a commentary in *People's Daily*.

The second kind of legislation does have the force of law and is subject to a White House veto. It comes in two forms: joint resolutions and bills. Joint resolutions are usually used to disapprove a presidential action that is subject to congressional review.⁴ Bills are sets of legislative statements which inform the president and the officials he delegates what they may do under certain circumstances (called conditional authorizations), shall do (called mandates), shall not do (called prohibitions).

Appropriations or spending bills which allocate money to the Treasury for spending on specified purposes, under certain circumstances include language authorizing or specifying the circumstances under which the money may be spent. A bill may include statements of congressional views that are very similar to those found in one-house and concurrent resolutions, but these statements are non-binding, even though they are part of legislation signed by the president.

Legislation, moreover, may apply to China without mentioning the country's name. Among the statutes in which U.S.-China relations have become entangled are:

4 Prior to 1983, such disapprovals could take the form of a one-house or concurrent resolution, depending on the action to be reviewed. The Supreme Court's decision on the *Chadha* case had been interpreted to mean that all such legislative vetoes are unconstitutional, because they have the effect of binding the President without giving him the opportunity of a veto. Gradually since 1983 Congress has revised the affected legislation to permit joint resolution disapproval.

- ◆◆ The Arms Export Control Act, which permits congressional review of any defense article or service export.
- ◆◆ The Jackson-Vanik amendment to the Trade Act of 1974, which links favorable U.S. tariff status, such as Most Favored Nation status to a non-market economy's emigration policy.
- ◆◆ An annual prohibition in foreign aid appropriations bills on U.S. contributions to organizations which "support or participate in a program of forced abortion or involuntary sterilization."

Once introduced, bills and resolutions are referred to the committee of jurisdiction, and then to the relevant subcommittee or subcommittees.⁵ Under the normal process, the chairmen of the committees and subcommittees of jurisdiction have substantial power over the fate of legislation referred to them. Subcommittee chairmen may choose whether or not to hold hearings, sometimes holding hearings as a way of deflecting pressure to take further action on the measures referred to them. They may also choose whether to schedule a mark-up session, at which the bill or resolution is debated, opened to amendment, put to a final-passage vote, and if passed, reported to the full committee. The committee chairman then decides if and when to mark up the measure, going through another round of debate, amendment, final-passage vote, and made ready for floor action. A chairman's prerogative to move or bottle up legislation is not absolute; pressure from colleagues—especially powerful ones—will sometimes stimulate action where none would otherwise have been forthcoming.

Floor action in the House of Representatives on a bill or resolution usually occurs in one of three ways, frequently depending on a specific legislation's importance. Controversial legislation, for instance, tends to be referred to the Committee on Rules, which then decides the procedures under which the measure is to be considered—how much debate time, how many amendments, etc. Right before the legislation is taken up on the floor, the House debates a House resolution—called "the rule"—which embodies the Rules Committee's decision.

The second type of floor action in the House is called "suspension of the rules." In this case, the bill or resolution is considered on the floor early in the week for no more than forty minutes. It is not amendable and must pass by a two-thirds vote. This method is frequently used for Sense-of-Congress resolutions regarding foreign countries, particularly those on which there is broad consensus.

The third type of House floor action is to bring up a bill or resolution under "unanimous consent." If one Representative objects to the legislation being considered, it must be set aside. This approach is rarely used. It is difficult to get Congressmen to agree on anything, much less unanimously to do so. Knowing this, most legislators are wary to submit a bill to such a high chance of failure.

In the Senate, by contrast, the most common mechanism by which legislation is brought to the floor is the unanimous consent agreement. The Senate version, however, is different than the House version. Here, an understanding is negotiated between the majority and minority leaders be-

5 If the House or Senate parliamentarian decides that a piece of legislation falls into the domain of more than one committee, it is so referred, on either a joint or sequential basis (joint referral gives each committee more power over the fate of the measure than sequential referral, which gives the committee concerned only a limited amount of time to act on the legislation or be discharged).

fore a bill comes to the floor that specifies the general terms under which the measure is to be considered—time for debate, limitations on non-germane amendments, etc. These agreements may apply to legislation that has been reviewed in committees or measures that immediately are put on the calendar without being referred to committee. The latter approach is most commonly used for House-passed or Senate-introduced items that are non-controversial.

The alternative to unanimous consent agreement is to bring up committee-reported legislation without any limitations at all. Such a move, however, has historically opened the way for filibusters.

Free-standing Legislation vs. Amending Major Bills

In practice, most legislation introduced on China—or on any other subject for that matter—does not move neatly along the subcommittee, committee, and floor route. For the 101st Congress (1989-90), the Legislative Data Base contains 113 items under the key word “China.”⁶ Of these, eighty-one were free-standing bills and resolutions where China was mentioned in the title. These focussed on the following issues:

- ◆◆ Human rights in China, including two sanctions bills (18 items);
- ◆◆ Human rights in Tibet, including one sanctions bill (3);
- ◆◆ China’s family planning program (2);
- ◆◆ Immigration and asylum matters (15);
- ◆◆ China’s Most Favored Nation status (21);
- ◆◆ The future of Hong Kong and Taiwan (4);
- ◆◆ Foreign policy issues such as Cambodia and missile proliferation (6);
- ◆◆ Sundry economic and miscellaneous issues (12).

Yet of these China-specific measures, only ten were passed by at least one House of Congress. Most of these were Sense-of-Congress resolutions regarding human rights in China that were sponsored by key members of the House or Senate leadership or the specific committees of jurisdiction.⁷ Three concerned the 1990 extension of MFN for China for which there was significant member pressure for a vote.

The only piece of China-specific legislation which went all the way through the process was a bill sponsored by Democrat Representative Nancy Pelosi of California concerning the visa status of Chinese students and scholars in the United States. It was swept forward by widespread rank-and-file support because of intense lobbying by Chinese students all over the country. It ultimately passed both the House and the Senate in late 1989 only to be successfully vetoed by President Bush.

6 Not included in the 113 items were general bills that do not mention China but would, if enacted have an impact on China (the biennial effort to restrict U.S. textile imports is the most obvious example).

7 In these instances, the gatekeepers were Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) Chairman Claiborne Pell, Representative Stephen Solarz, and Representative Gus Yatron (House Human Rights and International Organizations Subcommittee Chairman).

Because passing free-standing bills and resolutions is so difficult, Members of Congress who seek to influence policy toward China through legislation tend to be more successful when they try to amend major bills that either must be enacted—appropriations bills, for example—or have a good chance of getting the President's approval. In this instance, the committee of jurisdiction is more on the defensive, because it cannot necessarily block amendments to its bills when they are considered on the floor. Amending major bills is particularly common in the Senate, where there are fewer restrictions on the number and content of amendments that can be offered.

The thirty-two China-related items in the Legislative Data Base which did not make specific reference to China in their title represent those bills to which China-related amendments were added during the legislative process. These items specifically make reference to sixteen legislative efforts. The most important of these were the:

- ◆◆ Bill authorizing funds for the Export-Import Bank and Multilateral Development Banks, passed in November 1989, which included a provision prohibiting Ex-Im Bank funds for China. The prohibition was waived according to the provision's terms in December 1989.
- ◆◆ State-Commerce-Justice Department appropriations bill passed in November 1989, which included a provision prohibiting the launching of U.S.-made satellites on Chinese rockets. The prohibition was waived according to the provision's terms in December 1989.
- ◆◆ 1989 Foreign Aid appropriations bill, which set short-term China-related limitations on the obligation of U.S. funds for the World Bank.
- ◆◆ 1989 State Department authorization bill, actually enacted in February 1990, which suspended seven government activities vis-à-vis China until the President found that there had been a significant improvement in the political and human rights situation in China, or if he determined that it was in the national interest to end the suspension.
- ◆◆ 1990 Legal Immigration bill, which among other things made it easier for Chinese students and scholars to remain in the United States and work.
- ◆◆ 1990 Foreign Aid appropriations bill, which set China-related limitations on U.S. funds for the World Bank.

Though the remaining ten bills did not become law, their China-related provisions were often folded into the bills cited above.

Historically, amending major bills has been the strategy most successfully pursued on initiatives regarding China. For example, the conditions set on U.S. funding for organizations like the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, have been a regular feature of Foreign Aid Appropriations bills since 1985. A comprehensive statement of concern regarding human rights abuses in Tibet, moreover, was added to the State Department Authorization bill in 1987.

One procedure available to members of Congress opposed to U.S.-China policy that merits mention is special congressional review of certain executive branch initiatives. Such reviews include expedited floor consideration of joint resolutions of disapproval and can be particularly attractive levers of congressional influence. Indeed, these reviews often tend to cover China-related issues on which Congress is focussed. Yet the reviews are limited in their duration to thirty or sixty days, which makes them a less than ideal means of pressure. And joint resolutions of disapproval are

subject to a presidential veto. Consequently, congressional rejection of an administration initiative is unlikely unless there is broad opposition to the action in the first place—in which case it might not be taken at all.

As remarkable as it might seem, there have been only three China-related cases where Congress has tried to block Administration policy over the last decade. The first concerned the U.S.-PRC agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation, signed in 1985. In this instance, opponents of the agreement were finessed by leaders of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, who fashioned a resolution of approval with conditions. The second concerned the 1986 congressional review of China's F-8 aircraft. In this case, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee stepped in and voted down a proposed resolution of disapproval.

The most contentious review struggle came in response to the President's 1990 decision to extend Most Favored Nation Status for Chinese exports to the United States. In October, the House passed a joint resolution of disapproval on the extension, but soon thereafter the sixty-day review period expired. Simultaneously, the House acted on a bill that imposed conditions on the President's 1991 decision. This approach emerged because a number of members were uncomfortable with outright revocation and sought to set conditions on the decision for 1991. In response, the House Ways and Means Committee, which generally objects to using trade as a human rights weapon, recommended a bill with moderate conditions sponsored by Democratic Representative Don Pease of Ohio. Subsequent efforts to toughen the legislation—such as through a floor amendment offered by Representative Nancy Pelosi—died when the 101st Congress adjourned.

Policy Coalitions

The obstacles to policy-making posed by the legislative process are insufficient, however, to explain Capitol Hill's actions on China. Congress can act quickly, even precipitously, if it wishes to. Indeed, some of the measures concerning China policy adopted by Congress since the Tiananmen Square massacre had unexpected success. The reason: the changing breadth of the policy coalitions in Congress favoring or opposing the development of U.S.-China relations.

From the normalization of U.S.-China relations in 1979 until the violent suppression of the 1989 Chinese democracy movement, there existed in the Congress a broad, centrist coalition that accepted the premise that the development of Sino-American relations was in the U.S. national interest. Congress, like the executive branch, was deeply concerned about the expansion of Soviet power around the world, and saw the need to cooperate with China to contain Moscow. In addition, most members viewed favorable Washington-Beijing ties as assuring a constructive Chinese role in various regional conflicts such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Korea and enhancing the prospects for trade and investment in the PRC. This coalition was composed of both Republicans and Democrats and was anchored in the leadership of the committees with jurisdiction over foreign affairs and trade. The coalition did not set the pace of policy, passing that responsibility to the Administration. But the coalition was there to be mobilized by its leaders in support of Administration initiatives and to ensure that opponents could not use the legislative process to hinder policy formulation. Their pet issues: arms sales, the 1985 nuclear agreement, and satellite launches.

The opposition was arrayed in a series of counter-coalitions. These were mobilized both to block Administration initiatives and to support congressional initiatives that were at odds with Administration policy. Issues which brought out the so-called counter-coalitions: family planning, human rights in Tibet, and protectionist concerns over textiles. Though counter-coalitions members often were fundamentally opposed to the development of U.S.-China relations, they some-

times were joined, and in some instances led, by Members who sought to promote legislatively the interests of domestic groups that had a stake in the initiative concerned.

The centrist congressional coalition that sustained the development of U.S.-China relations through the 1980s collapsed with the suppression of the 1989 democracy movement in China. The indiscriminate violence used in Beijing and documented by the international media and human rights organizations shattered hopes for positive political change in China. And though outrage spanned the political spectrum, many Democrats saw President Bush's initially cautious response to the crisis as an opportunity to benefit politically. Argued the Democratic leadership: as the Soviet threat to the United States and Western Europe continued to decline, the need to downplay human rights because of geopolitical imperatives sharply receded. And as Chinese students in the United States formed new, anti-PRC lobbies, it quickly became clear the politics that had defined U.S.-China relations over the last decade had been transformed.

But while Congress more aggressively tried to shape U.S.-China policy, the results were anything but clear. Consider:

- ◆◆ In the summer of 1989, a number of Congressmen introduced bills to provide Chinese students in the United States more flexible visa status. One of these, the so-called Pelosi bill, was passed by both the House and the Senate in November 1989 and subsequently vetoed by George Bush. The February 1990 effort to override President Bush's veto failed in the Senate.
- ◆◆ After the Beijing massacre, there were a number of proposals to impose sanctions on the Chinese government. A few of these became law, the most comprehensive included in the State Department Authorization bill signed by the President in February 1990. Yet the main reason that the President did not veto the bill was because the relevant House and Senate conferees were willing to give him the broad authority to waive the sanctions if he found it in the national interest to do so.
- ◆◆ Through most of 1990, there was significant support in Congress—stimulated in large part through lobbying efforts by the dissident Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars—either to revoke or severely condition the extension of China's MFN status. This effort failed partly for lack of time, and partly because no single proposal commanded the support of a coalition large enough to overcome both procedural obstacles and a presidential veto. As a result, China's MFN status continued.

Prospects for the Future

It is difficult to speculate how Congress will seek to shape China policy in the future. But it is fairly safe to say that factors external to the policy process will likely most affect future congressional interest in Washington-Beijing ties. Areas of specific concern:

- ◆◆ Evolution of China's political system.
- ◆◆ Evolution of political systems in what used to be called the Soviet bloc.
- ◆◆ Changes in the threat the Soviet Union poses to the United States.
- ◆◆ Importance of regional conflicts to which China is a party.
- ◆◆ Strength and credibility of the anti-Beijing Chinese student lobby.

◆◆ The Democrats' willingness to use China as a political issue against President Bush.

How members of Congress and the American public view each of these factors will govern the emphasis that will be placed on human rights—as opposed to purely geopolitical considerations—in formulating U.S. policy toward China, and whether a centrist coalition supportive of a more normal relationship can be restored.

At least three scenarios for future Sino-American relations can be sketched out, and all assume that the executive branch will wish to restore the sort of relationship that existed prior to June 1989. The first scenario points toward a resumption of non-hostile government-to-government relations. It would require a majority perception in the United States that the Chinese government had closed the book on the 1989 democracy movement in a lenient manner and, more generally, was not enforcing a Stalinist political orthodoxy. This scenario would be enhanced by external factors as well. A resurgent Soviet expansionism or Soviet collapse, for instance, might require a Chinese role in geostrategic politics. Under such circumstances, there would be little doubt that the Administration could secure adequate congressional support for waiving sanctions and taking modest initiatives to improve relations.

The second scenario would anticipate a prolonged period of friction in U.S.-China relations. It would stem from a consensus that the Chinese government was engaged in continued and widespread repression; that Leninist systems were capable of transformation into pluralistic and democratic orders; that the Soviet Union had become a dominant and significant force for global peace and stability; that regional conflicts were becoming irrelevant to U.S. foreign policy, or that China was manipulating those conflicts in a way that served its own narrow interests and not those of the United States; and that the Chinese student lobby was a significant player in defining the U.S. interest to China. Under this scenario, there likely would be continued congressional initiatives to undermine U.S.-China relations.

The third scenario foresees a stalemate in America's China policy, fostered by deep and ongoing disagreement about what is happening in China, China's role in the world, and whether "the United States needs China more than China needs the United States." Any initiative would be the object of intense and probably fruitless political conflict.

Whatever the rationale of competing policy approaches toward China, there is a definite rationale in the political process by which policy is weighed. Because of the anti-Communist attitude of American public opinion, it is difficult to sustain support for a close relationship with a Communist country like China without strong executive branch leadership to promote it and a broad coalition in Congress convinced to sustain it. As long as such a combination exists, it is usually possible to head off the challenges to policy which the open American political system permits. But if either the Administration or the Congress (or both) sour on the idea of geopolitical cooperation with China's alien system, then the dynamics of the American system seriously complicate efforts to maintain and develop U.S.-China ties. That may well be where the relationship stands in 1991.



China and the Fourth Estate

By William McGurn

The setting was Tiananmen Square, the month was early April, and the topic of the day was reform. Over the previous few weeks those in favor of liberalizing China had suffered a number of setbacks, and public dissatisfaction was rife, looking for an outlet. It would come in the form of the public mourning around the Square's large memorial to the martyrs of the Chinese Revolution, ostensibly to honor the death earlier in the year of one of the leading Party members known to be sympathetic to reform. Thousands of ordinary Chinese soon gathered to pay homage to the dead leader with flowers, banners, poems, placards, and dedications. A public display of grief had transformed itself into a political statement.

As is usual in China, the protest did not occur in a vacuum. The gathering on the Square had been preceded by signs pointing to yet another intra-Party struggle, between those who favored opening up China to the West and those who saw in such moves a betrayal of everything they had spent their lives working for. The latter faction had recently stepped up its campaign, orchestrating attacks on the former group through the universities, assorted Party organs, and a host of officials.

The death of the relatively popular Party member thus provided an opening for his faction to vent their own feelings. The small group that had come to the Square to mourn his passing grew—as did the scope of their complaints. Taking on a momentum of its own, the demonstrators angered authorities with thinly veiled attacks on Maoism, and, at one point, even went so far as to set a few police cars on fire to express their displeasure. After being warned in a broadcast by the head of the Beijing Municipal Council not to be “duped” by the “bad elements carrying out disruption and disturbances and engaging in counterrevolutionary sabotage,” most people went home. But a few remained, undaunted.

Ultimately, the Central Committee decided that they had had enough. Late in the evening, on their orders, overwhelming numbers of paramilitary security forces descended upon the Square and made mass arrests. In the aftermath, a number of those picked up were subjected to a mass “people’s trial”; many were clapped into prison. Foreign influence was blamed, and the campaign against deviations from the Party line was stepped up.

It is so recognizable to the world, these events of 1989. The only problem is that what I have described was not 1989, it was 1976, and most people never knew it happened. The Party leader whose death set off the protests was not Hu Yaobang but Zhou Enlai, and the hardliner was not Li Peng but Hua Guofeng. In fact, in one of the regular ironies of history, the object of the purges that followed was Deng Xiaoping, charged with doing much the same as those he has now prosecuted for their roles in the 1989 Beijing pro-democracy demonstration.¹

What, then, was the difference between 1976 and 1989, apart from magnitude? The answer is easy: television. In the past, philosophers amused themselves by arguing whether a tree falling in a forest made a noise. So it is today. As we approach the third millennium, no event that has not first been recorded on Cable News Network can be said really to have happened. Most people, for example, still don't know the extent of public dissatisfaction in China in 1989, that there were in

¹ The bulk of the aforementioned account of the 1976 demonstrations is taken from Jonathon Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), pp. 640-652.

dozens of Chinese cities similar protests with whose breadth we remain only dimly familiar even though at least some of the information has been published by various newspapers and magazines. In the modern age only the camera is believed. Only the camera defines reality. Only the camera possesses the sacramental authority to consecrate distant happenings into news events.

This is not as novel as it first appears. From the start, China's cultural and geographical distance from the United States has always made it less accessible, and therefore more mysterious, than other nations. China has thus come to American eyes through a colored filter, whether it be Protestant American missionaries eager to introduce a quarter of the world's population to the Bible and the McGuffey Reader or those just as eager to convert American public opinion to appreciate the virtues of Chairman Mao. Which is only to say that our images of China have come to us through people who mostly have an agenda of their own.

Today the medium that communicates these images is indisputably television, though until recently this was a power wielded with equal effect by print. When Edgar Snow published *Red Star Over China* in 1938, he set the mark for that elite breed in the vanguard of shaping American opinion—the legions of newsmen and intellectuals who ceaselessly propounded the vision of a “New China.” In the preface to his own remarkable book, the former Peking correspondent for *The New York Times*, Fox Butterfield, admitted that after reading Snow's epic he and a whole generation of newsmen “instinctively felt attracted to Mao and his followers for the hope and idealism they offered China after the misery and corruption of the Kuomintang period.”²

In the 1960s the admiration for Mao exploded into hagiography. The lack of direct experience with the People's Republic of China gave the intellectual class something of a monopoly on shaping impressions, and it is worth noting that a large portion of the praise lavished on the PRC occurred precisely as it was being torn apart by the Cultural Revolution. Although a few brave souls—notably Miriam and Ivan London, and William F. Buckley, Jr.—expressed skepticism that Chairman Mao had somehow managed to repeal original sin, the preponderance of “expert” opinion was in the other direction:

Visitors returned fervent admirers of Mao's brand of Communism. China, one of them wrote, was “a kind of benign monarchy ruled by an emperor-priest who had won the complete devotion of his subjects.” Its people, another predicted, would be “the incarnation of the new civilization of the world.” Simone de Beauvoir testified: “life in China is exceptionally pleasant.” The country had become, said another witness, “almost as painstakingly careful about human life as New Zealand.” David Rockefeller praised “the sense of national harmony” and argued that Mao's revolution had succeeded “not only in producing more efficient and dedicated administration, but also in fostering high morale and community of purpose.” Another American visitor found the changes “miraculous.... The Maoist revolution is on the whole the best thing that happened to the Chinese people in centuries.” What attracted most admiration was the improvement in moral tone. “Of the many communes I visited,” Felix Greene reported, “all except one denied any knowledge of children born out of wedlock.” “Law and order,” another American visitor found, “...are maintained more by the prevailing high moral code than by any threat of police action.” Yet another insisted

2 Fox Butterfield, *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea* (New York: Random House, 1982), p. xiii.

that government tax collectors had become “incorruptible” and that intellectuals were anxious to prove their lack of “contempt for peasants” by “lugging buckets of manure in their free time.”³

Much of this “authoritative” opinion was based on nothing more than casual sketches drawn from quick two-to-six-week visits. Simon Leys in *Chinese Shadows* cited the story of the American journalist who wrote an account of his travels in China, only to be ultimately exposed as never having set foot there:

What is remarkable in this story is that the hoax was found out. Things being what they are, it seems to me that the feeblest hack should be able to write a report on China that would be lively, colorful, instructive, consistent, and convincing—all this without leaving his desk. Doesn’t he have a hundred more or less identical models to guide him? And if professional scruple got the better of him and he actually decided to look at China for himself, what more would he see that the others had missed? He would make the same tours with the same guides, sleep in the same hotels, visit the same institutions, meet the same people who would tell him the same things; he would partake of the same banquets, where the same speeches would be heard—always conforming to an unvarying and unreal ritual, neither Western nor Chinese, belong to an abstract world conceived by Maoist bureaucrats especially for foreign guests.⁴

Most fantastic were the claims of China’s awesome industrial prowess, almost always attributed to Mao’s ingenious ability to motivate China’s hundreds of millions of peasants. Even normally cynical newsmen responded to these fantastic claims by suspending reason. The standard photograph of the time, writes Steven Mosher:

showed hundreds or even thousands of Chinese dressed in identical baggy blue tunics and trousers, digging at the earth with picks and hoes or carrying cement in panniers and rocks in wicker baskets, on some massive project that would take months, if not years, to complete. To Americans, the Chinese had become the blue ants, creatures who worked in swarming masses, lived in communal nests, and submerged their individuality to the collective will. Rather than scoff at the absence of modern equipment, Americans were impressed that such mammoth projects could be undertaken by men and women working with simple tools.⁵

Each new visitor to China returned with his own tales of prodigious output, rivalling Marco Polo in fantasy, all, it seemed, in defiance of the accepted laws and practices of economics. Today we know that this was sheer nonsense, that most of the impressive figures bandied about in articles of the time were the sheer invention of Party hacks anxious to cover up the same shortages and inefficiencies that plagued the Soviets and other Communist nations. But we didn’t learn it at the time, and we didn’t learn it from the press, whose chronicle of almost two decades of successes helps explain the utter disbelief that greeted the violence in Tiananmen Square in June 1989.

3 Paul Johnson, *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Eighties* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), pp. 544-545.

4 Simon Leys, *Chinese Shadows* (New York: The Viking Press, 1977), pp. 1-2.

5 Steven W. Mosher, *China Misperceived* (New York: A New Republic Book, 1991), p. 87.

Ironically, the man who was to transform a hitherto minority position on China into a state creed was none other than Richard Nixon. He did so, moreover, with consummate skill, using the same journalistic and intellectual establishment that so moved him to advance his own goals, in the process showing a keener appreciation of the power of the T.V. camera than many of the industry's most seasoned practitioners. The faith was there, as was the opportunity; all it needed was a Constantine. Nixon had his reason, too: despite ideological differences, Washington and Beijing shared some crucial geopolitical interests, chiefly relating to Soviet expansionism.

It was Nixon's genius to realize that this alone would never be enough to effect the change in American foreign policy such an understanding dictated. Friends and foes alike have described the opening to China as an expression of *realpolitik*, but in fact it required new fictions far greater than ever before: greater than even the polite positions by which America indulged Chiang Kai-Shek's claim to represent all China. Given the moral tones in which American foreign policy frequently had been debated, and the contempt with which mainland China was then held in most American minds, it would not do to reach out to the PRC on the cold basis of need. To get away with it, Nixon and his colleagues had to refashion America's image of China, to turn its tyrants into far-sighted leaders, to downplay their Communism, by, as Henry Kissinger records, "highlighting fuzzy areas of agreement and obscuring differences with platitudinous generalizations."⁶

Put simply, they never could have pulled it off without the active assistance of the television camera. In his memoirs, Kissinger devotes considerable space to the Nixon Administration's careful manipulation of the television screen to create impressions that never could have withstood serious scrutiny; he quotes Ronald Reagan—not yet President, remember—as suggesting that the 1972 China trip had proved so successful as a T.V. "pilot" that it might be worth turning into a series. This was not hyperbole. The camera had served the Nixon Administration's purposes better than they had dared hope, reducing valid complaints (such as what the opening to Beijing meant for Taipei) to the level of petty carping. "Pictures overrode the printed word," Kissinger records. "[T]he public simply was not interested in the complex analyses of the document after having watched the spectacle of an American president welcomed in the capital of an erstwhile enemy."⁷

Say what you will about the morality or wisdom of the exercise, it worked. In 1968 a Gallup Poll found that Americans liked China least among twenty-eight nations selected, even less than the Soviet Union, Cuba, or North Vietnam. The terms most frequently used to describe the PRC's leadership were "ignorant," "warlike," "sly," and "treacherous." By the time Nixon returned from Peking in 1972, another Gallup survey found that "[f]avorable terms like 'hard-working,' 'practical,' 'intelligent,' 'artistic,' and 'progressive' were selected over negative terms by more than three to one."⁸ Even those bitterly opposed to what was happening saw the writing on the wall. "Because we are a people of conscience, unsuited to cynicism," wrote William F. Buckley, Jr., "it became necessary—indeed, it was inevitable—that very soon after Ping-Pong we should discover the virtues of Red Chinese society."

A generation later the same technology the Nixon White House had used to such effect in 1972 seemed to turn on the Bush White House, reaching its nadir when the American public was treated to the sight of National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft clinking champagne glasses with PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen. In 1972 China was an unknown; there were no television corre-

6 Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little Brown, 1979), p. 780.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 1092.

8 Mosher, *op.cit.*, p. 159.

spondents in Beijing; the White House had a virtual lock on the images that would be transmitted back to America; most important, as William Buckley pointed out, Nixon's visit was the logical next step in a massive public relations campaign aimed at polishing China's image. By contrast, the sight of George Bush's National Security Advisor toasting the same men who only six months earlier had given the orders to shoot peaceful demonstrators was something an American public—still reeling from the bloodshed of Tiananmen Square—simply could not stomach.

Oddly enough, the events of spring 1989 so dutifully chronicled by ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN revealed as much of the media's shortcomings as their strengths. Not one of the legions of China experts had predicted the Beijing Spring; until it actually happened, press attention in China had been sporadic, alternating between speculation about the February Beijing visit by first, George Bush, and then the May visit by Mikhail Gorbachev, with no hint that beneath the veneer of stability lay a powder keg. Demonstrations in March in Tibet against four decades of Chinese occupation merited scant coverage, and in discussing the likely reaction from Beijing to the students amassing in the Square, reporters were not wont to note that the same regime had shown no hesitation putting down the protest in Lhasa with force just a few weeks earlier.

Television, to be sure, has limitations that become magnified in the realm of foreign affairs, where striking images all too often substitute for reasoned coverage; its preference for drama, moreover, makes it particularly unsuitable for conveying day-to-day reality. In fact, the only reason so many cameras were on hand in Beijing to record the stunning events of the spring of 1989 owed itself less to the foresight of network editors than the exigencies of great-power politics. They were in Beijing for the May 14 arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev, the first visit by a Soviet leader to the Chinese capital in thirty years.

The Center for Media and Public Affairs has done considerable work on breaking down the coverage, yielding some intriguing results.⁹ In addition, the Media Research Center in Alexandria, Virginia, provided printouts of all stories run on China as well as tapes of individual broadcasts. Adding up the figures, the networks ran more stories on China in the five days of Gorbachev's visit than they had in all of 1988, and they ran more stories in the month following his visit than in the entire decade following Nixon's 1972 opening to the mainland.

The benefit of hindsight makes it easy to go back and find embarrassing lapses of judgment, wishful thinking, and downright falsehood. Among the many mistaken reports to emanate from China during those heady weeks were that Deng Xiaoping had been shot, that different divisions of the People's Liberation Army were engaged in combat with each other over whether to suppress the demonstrators, that Mr. Deng was not in control, etc. More common were lapses of judgment, ridiculous comparisons such as Eric Engers on "CBS Nightwatch" comparing Tiananmen Square to Kent State, John Chancellor comparing the thousands "gunned down in Beijing" to the "millions of American kids whose lives are being ruined by an enormous failure of the country's educational system," or Peter Jennings solemnly intoning on ABC one week before the crack-down: "No American analyst can believe that Li Peng would be so stupid or unfeeling as to resolve the crisis that way [i.e., by murdering the protestors]."

Because the inherent weaknesses of television essentially amount to its inherent strengths—immediacy, drama, imagery—the kind of errors and exaggerations that were associated with the

9 See "T.V.'s China Syndrome: How Networks Covered the China Story," in *Media Monitor*. Published by the Center for Media and Public Affairs, Autumn, 1989.

Tiananmen coverage are inevitable in any breaking story. The real fault in such coverage lies with its failure to place the isolated events it highlights so well into proper context. "Hardline anti-communists may think it naive to be shocked at the virulence of the repression, the government's use of guns and tanks and secret police and informers on its own citizens," says news critic Tom Shales. "But what made the crackdown so startling was the euphoria of the student protests that preceded it, and the rosy view of China that had been painted by the media during the seeming thaw of the 1980s."¹⁰

In this sense the biases of the medium are more telling than the biases of any individual reporter. The nightly coverage of the student demonstrations in South Korea, for example, with close-up after close-up of protestors being manhandled by security forces clad in Darth Vader-like gear gave a completely false picture of Korean society. It was not that the images were not true, it was that the sum of them painted a false picture of South Korean life. The perverse effect of this is best illustrated by split societies: regimes that open up at least somewhat (Saigon, Seoul, Taipei) have come off much worse in the public eye than countries that did not (Beijing, Hanoi, Pyongyang). Indeed, had China remained as closed in 1989 as it had in 1976 it would not have suffered such a blow to its international reputation.

The press vulnerability to official sources, particularly in the realm of foreign affairs, only exacerbates the worst tendencies here. In free societies there exists no dearth of non-government authorities with which to bolster the credibility of a story, representing institutions that carry their own weight against government statements. Totalitarian countries by definition tolerate no such institutional authority independent of the state, which makes it hard to get "experts" with opposing views. Consequently such governments are usually able to frame issues in the foreign press even when they are propagating patent lies. Add to this the proclivity of foreign correspondents to remain ensconced in their host country's capital, and the advantages the government enjoys are enormous. China is no exception. Not until Steven Mosher published two books on the countryside, for example, were we finally presented with a picture of a rural China sharply at odds with the portrayals of well-fed and apple-cheeked peasants that figured so prominently in most other coverage. The indifference to the more than one billion Chinese that do not live in Beijing was reflected in the coverage of the pro-democracy demonstrations; although similar demonstrations were reported in a number of other cities (particularly in Chengdu), less than a handful of television reports mentioned them, and then not until well after they had occurred and been put down.

Tiananmen Square was covered better, probably because the nature of the situation forced the press to operate outside its usual circle. According to the Center for Media and Public Affairs, of the 1,802 sources quoted in stories from January 1 to June 30, 1989, "[S]ixty percent were Chinese, and a solid majority of those were non-governmental sources."¹¹ The government was relegated to second fiddle as ordinary Chinese took the opportunity to speak directly to Americans what was in their hearts.

For those on the receiving end, even more important than what was said was what was broadcast. Whatever the slant individual newsmen might put in their voice-overs, the real arbiter is the hidden hand in the editing room that chooses between what will be shown and what will be left on the cutting room floor. Tiananmen Square threw much of these decisions to the wind: the sheer magnitude of the popular demonstrations, larger than the Red Guard crowds that had gathered

10 Tom Shales, "China: The Networks' Closing Chapter," *The Washington Post*, June 21, 1989, p. G1.

11 *Media Monitor*, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

there in the 1960s, plus the regime's brutal response, all made decisions largely a matter of recording the obvious. Two years later, the reporters' words are completely forgotten but what Americans remember is the replica Statue of Liberty erected on the square, the confusing footage of People's Liberation Army troops moving in on their own people in the wee hours of the night, and the lone Chinese in a white shirt who stood down a column of tanks.

Powerful stuff this, and it will take some time before it can be effaced from the collective memory of those who viewed it. A Gallup Poll in July 1989 recorded the dramatic shift in U.S. attitudes toward China occasioned by Tiananmen Square. The moderately positive impression most Americans had of China dropped to mostly negative. Americans said they no longer believed a peaceful transfer to multiparty rule in China was possible, or that China would honor its promises to Hong Kong and Taiwan. Although they had as late as 1989 rated China more favorably than the Soviet Union, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea, in the post-Tiananmen rating China came in dead last.¹² Press opinion changed likewise. Having long presented Deng Xiaoping as the consummate pragmatist, he is now portrayed as the "Butcher of Beijing," a shift that probably has more to do with those doing the viewing than any transformation in Mr. Deng's character.

Unfortunately, in the time since June 4, 1989, the shortcomings of press coverage continue to dog our perceptions of China. Following the bloodshed, the most immediate issue of substance at stake was the sanctions debate, and the press failed miserably. With the exception of former U.S. Ambassador to Beijing Winston Lord's insightful piece in the Fall 1989 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, there was virtually no exposition on the revolutionary effect U.S.-China trade had wrought on Chinese society—a fact that did not escape Mr. Deng, who denounced the spiritual pollution introduced by such contact with the West.¹³ Nor did the press note in this debate that countries with which the United States maintained a trade embargo—Cuba, Ethiopia, North Korea, Vietnam—had thus far managed to avoid the fate of their East European counterparts. Yet reporting on Sino-American trade remains limited to putting the black hats on the side favoring renewal of Most Favored Nation status and the white hats on the repeal side.

Ditto with population. More than any other issue, reporting on China's population policy betrays the double standard so often applied to the Chinese because of their yellow skins. When Steven Mosher brought the issue to public attention after his stay in China some years ago, he was rewarded by having Beijing's authorities pressure Stanford University into depriving him of his doctorate; the only major news outlet to come to his defense was *The Wall Street Journal*. Many more have followed the path of *The Los Angeles Times*, which similarly dismissed the contentious issue of forced abortions as merely "a tact condemned in the West."

Whatever one's position on abortion, it's safe to say that were white women in the Upper East Side or Nob Hill required by the federal government to submit to forced abortions, mandatory sterilizations, or even regular inspection of their bodies for the proper contraceptives, America's press would be full of thunder. But there is nary a word when it is applied to Chinese women, except to regurgitate statistics in a sympathetic tone of voice for the magnitude of the "problem" the Chinese government is trying to handle. That's a tragedy in itself, for reporting on the willingness of a regime literally to reach within the wombs of its citizens might have injected a little more realism in anticipating the same government's reaction in Tiananmen Square.

12 "The Gallup Survey on American Attitudes Toward China in the Wake of the June 1989 Crackdown." The Gallup Organization. Princeton, New Jersey, July 28-31, 1989.

13 "China and America: Beyond the Big Chill," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 68, Number 4, Fall 1989.

Still, the gaping hole in China coverage is Taiwan. One would think that the world's fourteenth-largest trading power, with a per capita income almost twenty times that of the mainland and a population of 20 million, crammed onto an island slightly larger than New Hampshire, might be hard to ignore. Yet where were the glowing reports about Taiwan's budding industrial might, which, unlike the reports coming out of China for the past four decades, would have had the virtue of being true? How is it that Taiwan managed this achievement, even as Americans' own efforts in the Philippines were such a flop? Those who rely on the television networks and the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Washington Post* still cannot answer.

Imagine the reaction, moreover, had Taipei conducted a Tiananmen-style operation against its people? Instead, the Nationalist government, while indisputably guilty of a great many transgressions, has in fact wrought the modernization Mao only wrote poems about. Under Chiang Ching-kuo, Taiwan further moved away from the dynastic tendencies that have crippled Chinese societies in the past; and today, under President Lee Teng-hui, and watched by no one, the Republic of China is inching forward, in a Chinese way and at a Chinese pace, toward what will become the first truly democratic Chinese society in history.

One might have thought that in the wake of Tiananmen there would be more press interest in other Chinese societies, but what has really happened is a drop-off in interest in *any* of them. In the second half of 1990, for example, only 42 television stories were broadcast. A handful of these dealt with the trials of student and democracy activists, while even fewer referred to Hong Kong or Taiwan. In short, when the tanks left Tiananmen so did the press.

In the not-too-distant future, we will probably look at what we now regard as state-of-the-art communications with the same condescension we today greet the linotype or the telegraph. Despite extraordinary technological advancements, the substance of what is being communicated has pretty much remained confined to inarticulate impressions, snapshots, and haunting images. Yet these same images—more than words, more than analysis, more than reason—have reached multitudes of people in much the same way that the stained-glass windows of medieval cathedrals brought the Gospel to the unlettered of the Middle Ages.

It is worth remembering, for example, that Nixon's famous debate with Khrushchev was set off over the latter's refusal to believe that an ordinary American kitchen could be equipped with what the Soviets would regard as luxuries. Similarly, the transmission of one U.S. television series has had more effect on world developments than all the hours of news combined; if the Chinese enjoyed *Dallas* it was less because of J.R. Ewing than the cut of his clothes, and if they tuned in to *Moonlighting* it was to take stock of how the average American home was furnished. Television provided these peoples a standard by which they might judge their government's claims, and the governments were found wanting.

On this side of the divide we have proved ourselves no more sophisticated. First in Tiananmen Square, then in the war with Iraq, we have been given ample proof of the power of the camera to capture images and transmit them back home instantly. It is the main reason Beijing was not able to get away with in 1989 what it did with impunity in 1976. We have yet to see, however, whether it will develop a capacity for perspective that appeals to our minds as much as it plays on our hearts.



America's Chinese Community and Washington-Beijing Ties

By Michael Chugani

In the spring of 1989, when China's youth massed on Tiananmen Square to press for democracy, the conciliatory nature of the Beijing regime's initial response to the many weeks of protests fooled the world into thinking change was at hand. Overseas Chinese communities were particularly hopeful, having long lamented from afar the unpredictable and often harsh politics of their former homeland.

For them, the early television images of good-natured soldiers tolerating the huge, almost festive demonstrations, nurtured the wishful perception that a reform-minded Chinese leadership under Deng Xiaoping would yield to the pressure for a more meaningful easing of authoritarian rule. But when the aging rulers, fearful of losing their total grip on power, eventually applied brute military force to crush the student-led democracy movement, the scale of the slaughter plunged the sizeable Chinese community in the United States into a moral crisis.

For Chinese-Americans, many of whom trace their roots back to China or Taiwan, the turbulent politics of their former homeland traditionally has been something to avoid. The reason: the deep sensitivities within the community over the "Two-China" controversy continues. But the June 4 crackdown caused many to wonder how it was still possible to stand aloof in the face of a massacre.

In the days and weeks that followed the violent Tiananmen suppression, it became clear to Chinese-Americans that it would be unconscionable for them to remain passive. As global condemnations mounted, the community's leaders came under immense pressure to shift from the preferred policy of saying nothing on issues affecting China to one of loudly deploring Beijing's atrocities.

The cry for action reached a peak on August 3, 1989—two months after the Tiananmen killings—when the community's leaders gathered in Detroit, Michigan, for the annual convention of the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA), the Washington-based group which represents a good slice of the Chinese community in the U.S. With rank and file members pressing the organization to champion unambiguously human rights in China, OCA leaders held a marathon crisis meeting to examine the community's response. That night's emotional arguments for and against taking a stand on the Tiananmen carnage came close to tearing apart the OCA.

The Two-China Question and the Chinese Community

When the community's leaders set out in 1973 to form the OCA as a way to unite Chinese-Americans, they had in mind an organization that would serve the interests of all members, whether from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, or elsewhere. The founders recognized from the very start that such a diverse organization faced the risk of inflaming the conflicting loyalties of its members if it ever became embroiled in the highly sensitive politics of the China-Taiwan dispute. To assure harmony, the founding members restricted the OCA's activities to purely domestic issues by agreeing on a constitution that read in part: "This organization shall have no collective interest in the politics of any foreign country."¹

1 Part of the constitution of the Organization of Chinese-Americans. Adopted June 9, 1973.

The popular perception that any involvement in the politics of modern China would not only bring Chinese-Americans little gain but would also risk dividing the community is the basis of much of the OCA's Tiananmen reluctance. Indeed, there traditionally has been little organized effort by the Chinese-American community to influence U.S. policy towards China, a characteristic distinct from Jewish, Hispanic, or black community efforts to influence American foreign policies toward Israel, Latin America, and South Africa.

But there was little doubt among those who gathered for the Detroit crisis meeting that on the Tiananmen issue at least, many in the community no longer wanted to be uninvolved. For twelve hours the leaders fumbled for solutions. No solution was found and the meeting ended inconclusively, prodding some rebellious members to launch an attempt, unsuccessfully, to rewrite the constitution during the convention.

The divisiveness of the episode, however, marked a turning point for some in the community. Although the inability to "reconcile the two-China dispute," as OCA founder Wang Kung-lee put it, had hamstrung the organization, the board eventually did agree on relaxing guidelines to allow members to participate in promoting human rights in China.² With their hands untied, some OCA members joined others in the community—especially younger, more impressionable American-born Chinese—to protest the violence in Tiananmen Square. Together with students studying in the U.S. from the People's Republic of China (PRC), they waged a two-pronged campaign: advocating a sterner American denunciation of the Beijing regime and U.S. sanctuary for Chinese nationals.³

To be sure, not all within the community backed a policy of punishing the Beijing leadership. There was a large body of opinion in favor of President Bush's "go-easy" China policy, despite Beijing's remorseless behavior following the massacre. Those who shared the view that Washington needed to keep the door open to China included prominent Chinese-American academics, intellectuals, and businessmen.

To understand why there exists such a diversity of views, it is important to bear in mind the diverse makeup of the Chinese-American community. Various estimates put the size of the community between 1.3 and 1.8 million people, divided into four main groups:

- ◆◆ The Chinatown immigrants from the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Many fled communist China for Hong Kong or Taiwan and subsequently settled here. San Francisco and New York boast the two largest Chinatowns where the inhabitants, like other Chinatowns across the country, are conservative, opposed to communism, generally supportive of Taiwan, but nonetheless choose to stay out of politics except for local neighborhood issues.
- ◆◆ The intellectuals. These professors and scholars are mostly anti-communist but feel deep pride for their mother country. While there is revulsion among the intellectuals over the Tiananmen brutality, there is also a general feeling that the Bush Administration's approach of keeping channels open to rather than isolating Beijing is the correct way to save China's open-door policies. Some believe the stu-

2 Interview with Wang Kung-lee, founding member of the Organization of Chinese Americans.

3 For information on Chinese-Americans' efforts to affect China policy, read Joel Kotkin, "Bush and China: Un-Realpolitik," *Washington Post*, December 19, 1989. Kotkin is co-author of *The Third Century: America's Resurgence in the Asian Era*.

dents were too hasty and went too far in pressing for reforms which eventually would have come to China in any case.

- ◆◆ The American-born Chinese. These generally younger, domestically educated, more liberally minded professionals are anxious to support democracy in China. As such, they are a source of support for the PRC students. But because they see themselves as Americans rather than Chinese, they tend to channel more effort into domestic issues that affect them directly, such as civil rights, increasing Asian immigration, or fighting against anti-Asian hate crimes.
- ◆◆ The PRC students. Their number in the U.S. varies from 40,000 to 50,000. Leo Orleans, China specialist and consultant to the Congressional Research Service, puts the figure at closer to 50,000, although he says neither the U.S. nor the PRC governments are able to keep track of all the students.⁴ Whatever their true number, the PRC students are now by far the largest group of foreign students in the U.S. They come mostly for master's and doctor's degrees and hold either J1 visas, which means they are sponsored by the PRC government, or F1 visas, which means they have come through private means.

Before the watershed events of 1989 the PRC student community, unorganized and largely apolitical, pursued mostly academic and cultural goals. Campus associations, sanctioned and watched over by Chinese Embassy and consular staff, were little more than social clubs. There was minimal interaction with the Chinese-American community. The more politically active Chinese-Americans channelled their efforts into domestic issues affecting them, which were of little interest to the PRC students.

As temporary visitors here, the PRC students are not really considered a part of the Chinese-American community, and there is a view among some Chinese-Americans that the students should not play a role in influencing U.S. foreign policy.⁵ Still, in the period after the Tiananmen killings, the PRC students were able to mold themselves into a force that, at times, surpassed even the Chinese-American community in gaining the attention of the U.S. policy-making machine, especially Congress.

Gaining attention, though, is not the same as affecting policy formulation. For all the sympathetic attention heaped on the PRC student and Chinese-American communities after the Beijing crackdown, leaders of both groups are the first to admit their impact in the shaping of U.S. policy towards China has been limited at best. Han Lianchao, the former vice president of the Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars (IFCSS), one of three leading overseas-based dissident groups, concedes that although his organization spearheaded the drive for a tougher China policy after Tiananmen, its arguments were mostly ignored by the Bush Administration.⁶

4 July 7, 1990, episode of "China Forum," which aired on Channel 56 WNVC.

5 *Ibid.*

6 Interview with Han Lianchao, former vice president of the Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars.

The Pelosi Bill

But on one vital China policy issue, the students and the Chinese-American community did sizeably affect Washington's policy towards Beijing. This issue: temporary sanctuary for Chinese nationals fearful of returning home to possible prosecution.

Many students and Chinese-Americans point to this as the only real example of having made a noteworthy difference in President Bush's China policy. But their influence was manifested in far different ways.

For the students, the success or failure of the sanctuary issue depended on support from the U.S. Congress. Congressional pressure came in the form of a bill introduced by Democratic Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi of California who sought to widen dramatically the limited sanctuary offer put forward by the White House immediately after the June 4 crackdown. The White House had suspended normal visa processing for the students after Tiananmen, which would have required the students to return to China for at least two years after completing their studies. But the Pelosi bill went further. It gave Chinese students four years to apply for new visas or permanent resident status in the U.S.

The widespread congressional support that the Pelosi bill generated provides ample proof of how ably the students won over Congress, if not the executive branch.⁷ With little lobbying experience, the students effectively appealed to the emotions of Congress. In the lead-up to the Pelosi bill vote in November 1989, student leaders were a common fixture on Capitol Hill, scooping up with great success allies such as New York's Republican Congressman Gerald Solomon and Republican Senator Slade Gorton of Washington State.

Led by the IFCSS, the students tapped congressional sympathies for their cause with anti-communist rhetoric and emotional recountings of the June 4 massacre. China specialist Leo Orleans summed it up best when he remarked of the students: "Anywhere they went they had a platform. They knew how to play on American emotions more than any group I have ever seen."⁸ While fighting to defeat the Pelosi bill, Senate Republican whip Alan K. Simpson of Wyoming paid grudging tribute to the organizational skills of the students on the Senate floor by remarking that he had received 5,000 Christmas cards from them from across the country.⁹

Although Mr. Bush ignored student pleas to sign the bill and eventually vetoed it, the lopsided congressional votes supporting the legislation—the House voted 403 to 0 in favor—proved instrumental in getting the President to improve his own sanctuary package, incorporating into an executive order many aspects of the Pelosi legislation. In the final analysis, there was scarcely any difference between the grand and consolation prizes for the students.

Chinese-American leaders were far from bystanders as the students launched their blitz on Congress. Though seriously divided on many aspects of the U.S. response to the Tiananmen massacre, many in the community nevertheless felt strongly that PRC students should be given some form of temporary safe haven.

7 See, for example, "Tiananmen Anniversary," *The Washington Post*, June 3, 1990, A15.

8 "China Forum," *op. cit.*

9 Senate debate to override President Bush's veto of the Pelosi bill, January 25, 1990.

A combination of factors informed their position. Student pressure, strong congressional support for the Pelosi initiative, and—most important—an initially weak effort by the White House to promote any alternatives, made many Chinese-Americans believe that the Pelosi bill offered the best deal for PRC students.

But this would change when Congress geared up in late January 1990 to override Bush's November 1989 presidential veto. Confronted with a largely partisan challenge, the White House launched a campaign to win over the Chinese-American community to help preserve the President's veto of the Pelosi bill. Never before had the Chinese-American community been so involved in U.S. China policy formulation.

The campaign began with a January 11 White House meeting between Bush Administration Chief of Staff John Sununu and National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft and seven Chinese-American leaders. While attending a speech by the President to the Asian Republican Leadership Conference, the Chinese-American leaders were pulled aside and urged by the two Bush aides to promote George Bush's plan to protect the PRC students and support a presidential veto of the Pelosi bill.

Three days later, the Administration's lobbying efforts continued. In response to a suggestion by Republican Chinese-American leaders, a deputy assistant to the President and one of the highest-ranking Asians in the Bush Administration, Sichan Siv, flew to San Francisco to discuss further the Pelosi bill veto fight with the community.

On January 14, Siv, student leaders supporting the Pelosi bill, student leaders backing the President's executive order, and a group of Chinese-American scholars attended a dinner at the home of Professor John Tsu during which the issue was again thrashed out.¹⁰ Professor Tsu, who helped arrange the event, was an adviser to the Republican National Committee when George Bush was its chairman and had close contacts with the Bush White House. During the 1988 presidential elections he was the national co-chairman of the Asian-Americans for the Bush and Quayle campaign.

The January 14 San Francisco meeting led to two other White House meetings, on January 19 and 22, between bipartisan groups of Chinese-American leaders and senior Bush aides during which the Administration again insisted that its plan to protect the PRC students was superior to the proposed legislation. The lobbying worked. When the Senate voted 62 to 37 on January 25 to narrowly sustain the President's veto, Chinese-American leaders could correctly claim partial credit for the victory.

The reason: last-minute community lobbying, particularly on the eve of the Senate vote, had proven instrumental in convincing several legislators to change their votes. The California Chinese Republican Association, for instance, collected the signatures of 100 of the most influential Chinese-Americans in San Francisco in support of George Bush and relayed the petition to concerned Senators, some of whom had benefitted in the past from Asian community campaign donations.¹¹ Privately, some Chinese-American leaders believe that this pressure helped change the votes of California's Pete Wilson and Texas Senator Phil Gramm.

¹⁰ *Young China Daily*, January 16, 1990.

¹¹ Read, for example, *National Journal*, October 22, 1998, p. 3.

Diverging Goals in the Community

The Pelosi bill experience is instructive in helping define the frequent divergence between PRC student and Chinese-American interests in affecting Washington's China policy. Though the two groups sometimes agreed on the ends of policy—both sought assurances for post-Tiananmen student sanctuary—the two sides frequently differed on the means to achieve the ends.

The students, for instance, sought to politicize their interests wherever they could. Their first and frequently last resort for policy influence was Capitol Hill. When the Chinese swimmer Yang Yang defected at an athletic competition in Hong Kong in September 1989, the U.S.-based Chinese Alliance for Democracy (CAD), a student-led dissident group branded as counterrevolutionary by Beijing, lobbied sympathetic congressmen for help in obtaining a U.S. visa.¹² Yang's subsequent October 4, 1989, appearance at a Capitol Hill press conference—immediately upon his arrival in the U.S.—with California Democratic Congressman Tom Lantos, co-chair of the Congressional Human Rights Foundation showed, at the very least, that the PRC student community knew exactly where to turn if it was to influence U.S.-China policy.

There were plenty of issues on which PRC students and the Chinese-American community fundamentally differed as well. This especially was so in the cases involving punitive U.S. sanctions on China and the renewal of Beijing's most-favored-nation (MFN) status.

Led by the various dissident organizations, the PRC students saw sanctions and the threatened termination of MFN as levers Washington could use to force human right and political reforms on Beijing. Their spirited campaigns frequently won support from a sympathetic Congress not only because it was viewed as a vote for the Chinese people's human rights, but also because of partisan politics. Democrats, the students discovered, were using China as a political tool to vote against a popular Republican President who had drawn considerable fire for his go-easy policy towards the despised Chinese leadership.

The Chinese-American community, meanwhile, had pragmatic as well as emotional reasons for adopting a low-key approach on the two issues, particularly MFN. Businessmen in the community with trade links to the PRC had no wish to see their livelihood threatened by a unilateral move to disrupt commerce with China. The community was also unenthusiastic about seeing a decade of pronounced economic advance in their former homeland undermined by a cut in cultural and educational ties. They had family back on the mainland whose livelihoods had greatly improved over the last ten years of Deng Xiaoping's reforms.

Moreover, while Chinese-Americans reasoned that helping the PRC students gain sanctuary was a human rights goal worth supporting, they likewise saw a disruption in U.S.-China trade as a human rights issue worth opposing. The logic: economic and trade sanctions would put PRC workers out of work. The community with roots in Hong Kong particularly argued this point.

12 Interview with Ernest Liu of Chinese Alliance for Democracy; and "Yang Yang heads for US," *South China Morning Post*, October 4, 1989, p. 16; and "China rebukes Hong Kong for allowing Yang's flight to the US," *South China Morning Post*, October 5, 1989, p. 4.

Conclusion

Whatever the success or failure of the PRC students or Chinese-Americans to affect U.S.-China policy formulation, the lessons since Tiananmen show their influence clearly depends on the issues involved, the interests of the diverse communities involved, and the political needs of the policy makers deciding those issues.

In dealing with the executive branch and a President who feels he "knows China," both the community and the PRC students are consulted, as one Chinese-American leader put it, only on an "as needed" basis and their role is most frequently reactive rather than proactive. Indeed, it is only rarely that a handful of academics, like Professor John Tsu, have been invited to offer their views on America's China policies.

In the instances where the PRC students push for human rights reform in China as a specific issue on its own, the Administration has lent its own support only on its own terms. Both Vice President Dan Quayle and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, for instance, agreed to meet separately with escaped student leader Chai Ling during her June 1990 Washington visit after it was made clear she would restrict her agenda to human rights during the meetings. No similar meetings were available for China's leading dissident, Professor Fang Lizhi, when he visited in February 1991, most likely because Bush aides feared that it would upset Beijing, which had cooperated with the U.S. in the Persian Gulf crisis. Notes China specialist Doak Barnett: Although dissident groups have become a new and complicated factor in U.S.-China politics, the Administration is determined to pay little heed to their call for a tougher China policy because the President sees that as conflicting with America's national interests.¹³

Chinese-American leaders like to think that as time progresses and as the community's numbers grow, it will emerge from its political cocoon to become a more assertive part of the policy-making process.

"The Jewish people, for example, never shy away from Israeli politics. But we've never been vocal," comments Paul Shie, Executive Director of the Chinese American Society. "That's our fault. The Administration doesn't feel the pressure from us."

But Shie's comments fast are becoming outdated. There is significant evidence that the Chinese-Americans are learning that their money talks as loudly as anyone's in the American political arena. On the West Coast particularly, Chinese-Americans are fast building a reputation as being second only to the Jews in the generosity of their donations. The Democratic Party, for example, raised \$200,000 in a single Los Angeles event from only forty Chinese-Americans during the 1988 election campaign.¹⁴

As an indication of the growing Asian clout, both the Democratic and Republican National Committees now have, for the first time, Chinese-Americans running new Asian outreach sections. The Asian-Americans for Bush and Quayle Campaign in the 1988 elections delivered 61 percent of the Asian vote. That's higher than the percentage of Caucasians who voted for Bush and Quayle. As a reward, the Bush Administration has made about eighty Asian-American political appointments since taking office, about fifty of them Chinese-Americans.

13 "China Forum," *op. cit.*

14 "Finding a new well of campaign cash," *National Journal*, October 22, 1988, p. 4.

Increasingly too, Chinese-Americans are working with other Asian-American communities that share similar goals to gain political influence. New census figures show that the Asian-American community, including Asian Indians, Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Koreans, and Vietnamese, have swelled to well over seven million in the past decade. With high income levels and a growing political awareness, coupled with a rapid increase in its size, the Asian community is now simply too important for either political party to overlook.

While the Chinese-American community moves forward politically, the future direction of the PRC student community is less clear. Although student dissidents commanded much attention after the crackdown, it should be remembered that a large number of them are apolitical. Even though they clearly disagree with the repressive policies of their government, the majority of Chinese students in America are more concerned with pursuing their education than participating in dissident activities.

Student leader Wang Huiyun, a University of Chicago graduate student and chief editor of the Voice of June 4 radio, estimates that less than 10 percent of the PRC students are politically active, a view not disputed by State Department officials handling China policy.¹⁵ Of those who are politically active, there is disunity and constant squabbling over policy goals. Some student factions, in fact, prefer Bush's China policy, especially his policy of granting MFN to China.¹⁶

But the biggest problem for the PRC students is a thinning audience for their cause. While memories of students mutilated by tanks in Tiananmen Square cannot be easily erased, Chinese leaders are determined to put the episode behind them, and they are being helped in this goal by a growing number of governments which want to return to business as usual with Beijing.

Already some of the generous attention and sympathy lavished by Congress on the student groups has dissipated. Although the students will always find willing allies in Congress for a human rights crusade, it is not certain that they will be able to generate the same kind of overwhelming backing they enjoyed in the early days after the Tiananmen Square massacre.



15 "Tiananmen Anniversary," *Washington Post*, June 3, 1990, p. A15.

16 Read, for example, testimony given by Li Xianglu, Intenational Fellow, School of Business Management, Pepperdine University; Lu Mai, economics student, University of Colorado; and Gong Xiaoxia of the China Information Center, at the hearing by the House of Representatives Ways and Means sub-committee on Trade on June 19, 1990.

China-Watchers in Not-for-Profit Organizations: The Community's Response to Tienanmen Square,

By Mary Wadsworth-Darby¹

Every country has its group of "country-specialists." But China, perhaps more so than even the Soviet Union, has a distinct "community" of professionals whose principal task is understanding developments within Chinese society and interpreting their significance for policy makers, businesses, the media, and the American people.

Never was this task more important than in the aftermath of Tiananmen Square. U.S. policy towards China has been forced to undergo a tough re-examination in the face of the overwhelming national reaction here to the suppression of democratic protest by military force in Tiananmen Square on June 3 and 4, 1989. China-watchers in not-for-profit organizations within the community have been forceful and articulate in framing issues in the policy debate. But has a consensus emerged? What strains have been felt within the community as it groped to respond to the events in Beijing? Did, in the final analysis, China-watchers exert any influence in shaping post-Tiananmen policy? What should their role be in the future? This chapter will examine these issues by focusing on the work of academics, private foundations, and think tanks in helping formulate Washington's policy towards Beijing.

The China Community

In the United States, China-watchers are found at government agencies like the National Security Council, the State Department, and the Department of Defense, and also include journalists, China specialists within business organizations, and a group of scholars and policy analysts concentrating on China who are resident within not-for-profit organizations. This diverse and extensive group thinks of itself as a community in large part because there are many extraordinarily close personal relationships that transcend organizational and political demarcations and which depend on common roots of professional training and experience.

It is easy to forget that relations between the U.S. and China have been normalized for less than fifteen years and that prior to 1973 very few Americans had even visited China. Indeed, very few colleges or universities offered a significant curriculum in Chinese studies before the middle 1960s. Many members of the U.S.-China community, and particularly those who are in leadership positions, have attended the same language schools, studied with the same language teachers, lived with each other in the same hotels in Beijing, and negotiated with (and in many cases became friends with) the same relatively small group of Chinese officials. Moreover, they generally share a deep affection for China and its people.

There are a number of not-for-profit organizations that focus on China, but there are three principal organizations which are devoted completely to China. These are the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, the U.S.-China Business Council, and the America-China Society. The Na-

¹ Mrs. Wadsworth-Darby is particularly grateful to Winston Lord, Harry Harding, David M. Lampton, Michel Oksenberg, and Thomas Robinson, along with many others in the community, for sharing their views on the policy-making process with her. The views expressed are solely those of Mrs. Wadsworth-Darby and are not necessarily those of the America-China society.

tional Committee and the Business Council both have large memberships and are of long-standing stature and importance. The National Committee is comprised principally of academics and business leaders with a special interest in China, and the China Business Council is comprised principally of corporate members. The America-China Society was established in 1987 to promote understanding and cooperation with China and is concerned primarily with long-term political and economic issues. The America-China society is comprised of a small group of former senior government officials and distinguished business leaders who have a special interest in China.

There are also organizations with a broader mandate in economic and policy studies that retain China specialists. Among the most prominent are the American Enterprise Institute, The Asia Society, the Brookings Institution, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Council on Foreign Relations, The Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institution, and the Rand Corporation.² There are also centers for China studies at major universities; some of the most prominent are at Columbia University, Harvard University, the Johns Hopkins Paul Nitze School for Advanced International Studies, Princeton University, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Michigan.³

The Challenge of Tiananmen Square

Tiananmen Square posed a difficult and immediate challenge for the China community and especially for not-for-profit organizations. A decade after the normalization of relations in 1979, a broad consensus within the community as to the direction of China policy had been forged. Generally speaking, there was little questioning of the principle that closer economic and political relations between our countries could not but further both our national interests. The United States' initial uneasiness with embracing a communist regime in an effort to regain balance in our global influence following the Vietnam era was relieved by the modernization policies undertaken by Deng Xiaoping.

Beijing's encouragement of foreign investment and import of foreign technology, as well as a more general effort to integrate China within the international economic community, was critical to China's Open Door strategy for economic growth in the 1980s. Moreover, it quickly became clear that China was itself undergoing a transformation in economic organization as the responsibility system replaced collectives in agricultural organization and important productivity gains were achieved. The reversal of Mao's policy of "self-reliance" manifested itself in a dramatic increase in the number of Chinese students sent abroad and tremendous growth in scientific and cultural exchanges at a number of levels. American business showed widespread interest in opportunities for economic cooperation in special economic zones through a variety of joint-venture arrangements.

Although there were differing analyses of how, when, and to what extent economic and political modernization would proceed, the China community broadly conceived reform as an irreversible process. Significantly, China was implementing a legal system, and after the chaos of the Cultural

2 The role of these broad-based organizations in policy formation generally has become increasingly important in the past twenty years. See James A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers—Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite* (New York: The Free Press, 1991).

3 For a general survey of the activities and interests of "China specialists" outside government, see the forthcoming article by Thomas W. Robinson, *The Private Sector China Specialists* (Washington, D.C. American Enterprise Institute).

Revolution, the nation as a whole yearned for political stability. The Chinese Communist Party appeared to be relaxing its iron grip on people's daily lives, and the public visibility of outspoken critics of the regime such as physicist Fang Lizhi and journalist Liu Binyan suggested a greater freedom in political life. Religious minorities were even afforded a larger measure of tolerance in public worship.

Of course, there were voices of caution that warned of the potential for trouble ahead, who worried about the failure of the government to check inflation in attempting to implement price reform in 1988, who warned of political instability inherent in uncertain leadership succession, and who pointed out that China's authoritarian political tradition had difficulty coping with dissent. But few disputed the direction or sweep of the historical change that appeared to be evolving, particularly in view of the background of events in Eastern Europe that to many signaled the "end of communism."⁴ The predominant image was of a vibrant, successful, confident China that was aggressively pursuing an independent foreign policy.⁵

Moreover, China represented a vast potential new market and American business understandably consistently lobbied the federal government to remove trade barriers such as export restrictions. Various analysts questioned whether the economic ties that were being established between American industry and Chinese state or, in some cases, provincial or even local, economic units were a sufficient foundation on which to base our policy, and they called for an articulation of a new strategic perspective. But "reform" generated, if not euphoria, a willing suspension of critical judgment as history unfolded.

The restrained optimism of the community was, of course, shattered in June 1989 as television captured the compelling images of the occupation of Tiananmen Square by student protesters. Few viewers will forget the man—Wang Wellin—who, by himself halted a column of tanks, or the rough "Goddess of Democracy" art institute students brought to the square, or the grim violence as troops bloodied evacuating students. The American people were shocked and dismayed.

That feeling was even more pronounced in the community and was also accompanied by confusion and self-doubt. A former vice president of the U.S.-China Business Council best captured the community's dismay when, in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on July 19, 1989, he said:

The U.S.-China Business Council has spent years promoting business and developing contacts with China under the assumption that reform was irreversible and that something like the events in Tiananmen Square on June 4 and afterward could not happen. Now that they have, the Council, along with the entire U.S. business community in China, is struggling to pick up the pieces.⁶

A number of prominent members of the community worried openly that their credibility with decision makers had been damaged because they had not clearly foreseen the dimensions of the confrontation or its outcome. The shock from the tragedy of Tiananmen was sufficiently devastating

4 Andrew J. Nathan clearly sensed the currents of discontent and identified the signs of social alienation in his 1989 article "Politics: Reform at the Crossroad" in *China Briefing*, 1989, Anthony J. Kane, ed.; but even this remarkably perceptive review did not capture the latest violence of China's political turbulence.

5 See Michel Oksenberg, "China's Confident Nationalism," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 65, No. 3, 1986.

6 See Richard E. Gillespie, "Commentary," *The China Business Review* No. 6, September/October 1989, p. 24.

for Michel Oksenberg, Professor of Political Science at Michigan and a highly respected and experienced authority on China, to declare that he lacked confidence in his own judgments about China's future and that the United States must prepare for the possibility that anti-reform leaders would rule China for a long time.⁷

The China Community Responds

In retrospect, it is manifest that the China community did, in fact, pick up the pieces and, in the process, emerge with a strength and a purpose that it had rarely had. Most important, not-for-profit organizations provided real leadership in responding to the Tiananmen challenge not only by outlining the range of policy options, but also by actively working to inform the policy-making community. In short, not-for-profit organizations became a center of gravity in the process of policy formation, largely because of the role they played in shaping opinion within the broad China community.

There has always been some controversy, even some mystery, about what China policy is and how it is made. There is a romantic view that China policy consists fundamentally of attitudes emanating from broad strategic conceptions anchored in personal relationships between policy makers at the top—Nixon and Mao, Kissinger and Zhou Enlai. The scientific view sees China policy as a bundle of specific issues whose resolution depends on the interplay of a variety of institutional, political, and individual concerns.⁸ Neither view has traditionally paid much attention to the role of institutions outside government in the formulation of policy. Individuals with energy and intelligence can, through personal contacts and prestige and the force of their arguments, personally influence the thinking of those directly concerned with policy decision making, but that influence has usually been considered limited and indirect except in the case of a few individuals, Nixon and Kissinger being the obvious examples. China-watchers watched, and their views were solicited by other professionals inside government, but the force of attraction on policy makers was a weak interaction.

In the case of Bush Administration, it is widely assumed that China policy is closely gathered in the hands of a small group of senior policy advisers and George Bush himself. Because of his own first-hand experience in China, the President is generally believed to exercise directly his policy-making authority.

Tiananmen changed the policy-making matrix because China became an issue of national interest far surpassing its highest visibility at any time since the "Week that Changed the World" in 1972. China specialists were sought out by news commentators, by businesses looking for help in coping with the "disaster," and by concerned opinion makers at all levels who not only needed to understand what had happened but also wanted to know what they ought to do about it.

Sanctions quickly became the key issue. On June 5 President Bush suspended military sales and ordered an interagency review of China policy. There were fundamental questions to be addressed. What other concrete steps should be taken to express the national outrage at the brutality of June 3 and 4, 1989, that could realistically be expected to promote a return to the path of reform? How

7 See Michel Oksenberg, "Confessions of a China Watcher," *Newsweek*, June 19, 1989, p. 16.

8 The mechanics of policy-making are explored from the scientific viewpoint in Michel Oksenberg's essay "Reflections on the Making of American China Policy" in *China Policy for the Next Decade*, a report of the Atlantic Council's Committee on China Policy, 1984.

could we honor our commitment to human rights and still maintain the relationship? The China community quickly perceived that its challenge was to address the issue from a moral perspective as well as a matter of interest analysis. Within the community, there was, of course, a flurry of immediate informal activity as small groups gathered in person or by conference telephone call to try to make sense of the events.

More important, very quickly not-for-profit organizations acted to frame the debate. Leading organizations rapidly put together conferences or formal briefing sessions to which Administration policy makers and congressional leaders as well as key staff aides were invited.

Characteristically, in less than forty-eight hours, The Heritage Foundation provided a succinct outline of "U.S. Options for Responding to the Slaughter in China," which not only called for the U.S. government to express its horror at the killings in Beijing, but also to respond in a balanced and measured manner to safeguard "the immense geopolitical importance of China to the U.S."⁹

On June 6, the Asia Society held simultaneous press briefings in its New York and Washington offices that were widely used in media analyses. The National Committee had the previous day also expressed its initial dismay in a public statement sent to Chinese leaders and read into the *Congressional Record*.

Henry Kissinger's June 11 *Washington Post* article recognized that the international consequences of the event were as profound as its human consequences were tragic, but called for great self-restraint when it observed the outcome most consistent with American values and interests—a return in China to economic modernization coupled with political conciliation—was largely outside our control.¹⁰

On June 14, 1989, the National Committee and the U.S.-China Business Council together organized a Capitol Hill briefing for key Senate and House staff aides to assess developments in China and possible implications. Participating at the briefing were top China-community spokesmen for both Brookings and the University of Michigan's Center for Chinese Studies.

The American Enterprise Institute China Studies Program held a half-day seminar to examine the consequences of the demonstrations and subsequent military crackdown on July 6. Appropriately, the three sessions were led by A. Doak Barnett of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Douglas Paal of the National Security Council staff, and Robert Sutter of the Congressional Research Services.

Enormous credit has to be given to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations for providing a forum on July 7 to 9 at the Wingspread Conference in Racine, Wisconsin, for members of the community to talk face to face about what had happened and to try to reach some consensus on the issues and an appropriate response. The conference report, which reveals the deep differences within the community, courageously undertook to formulate a consensus view that, while the actions should be strongly disapproved, it was not necessary for the United States to condemn the Chinese government. The report recommends that the U.S. take as few irreversible policy steps as possible, probing and testing and making decisions on a case-by-case basis.

9 Andrew B. Brick, Asian Studies Center *Background* No. 92, June 7, 1989.

10 See also Richard Nixon's June 25 article "Stay the Course—Overreaction by the U.S. Could Deepen Damage" in the *Seattle Times*.

The sanctions that the President ultimately imposed were generally congruent with congressional desires. From the perspective of this writer, a consensus on policy prescription was essentially arrived at in the community through a process of internal and external debate. Moreover, it appears that the consensus has held even though it has undergone tremendous stress over the past eighteen months.

In his extremely thoughtful article "China's Big Chill" (*Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1989), former ambassador to Beijing Winston Lord raised a concern about a possible double standard in the U.S. human rights policies towards the Soviet Union versus China, but he nevertheless concluded:

We should pursue policies, including quiet diplomacy, that promote real progress rather than mere visceral satisfaction... We should not expect instant breakthroughs or American models. We should gear our attitude to relative movement and not to snapshots that do not measure up to our ideals. And we must continue to consider our major geopolitical and economic interests with China in tandem with our pursuit of human rights.

Lord publicly broke with the Administration in December 1989 following Scowcroft's return from his second China visit.¹¹ That break does not, however, appear to mean that Lord was repudiating the views he expressed earlier that summer. Rather, he was expressing frustration at what he believed to be a callousness toward the American people on the part of the Administration when, in his view, it adopted the very double standard toward China and Eastern Europe that had concerned him earlier.

Lord's case, however, does illustrate the emergence of serious and sometimes bitter debate over how best to pursue long-term U.S. interests while making clear American repugnance at and condemnation of the Chinese leadership that directed the killings and seemed to be turning back the clock on Chinese reform.

Congressional attention turned to China's MFN status as a potential instrument within Congress's own grasp. MFN status is by itself a commercial matter, but as its availability had become linked through the Jackson-Vanik amendment to human rights concerns albeit originally in the context of emigration policy, it has become a symbolic point of conflict between the moral and pragmatic dimensions of foreign policy that threaten dangerously to turn China into a partisan issue. MFN is especially complicated, because China's MFN status is not merely a matter of China policy, but it also gets swept up in the perennial constitutional tension between Congress and the executive branch over control of foreign affairs.

The Administration's position is that MFN is the wrong instrument to achieve the purported policy goals—it hurts us as much as it hurts them. The Bush Administration has deplored the tragedy of Tiananmen Square and imposed limited sanctions on China, but it has nevertheless sought to maintain what is considered an "important dialogue" with one of the world's most influential powers. Constructive U.S.-China ties over the past several decades had reduced tensions in Asia, contributed greatly to regional stability, and helped to reduce conflicts in several critical areas, principally across the Taiwan Strait.

The opinion of many on Capitol Hill, by contrast, was that China could be benignly neglected. According to this view, while Washington should maintain working-level contact with the Chi-

11 See Winston Lord, "Misguided Mission," *Washington Post*, December 19, 1989, p. A19.

nese, high-level visits and secret trips, such as those taken in July and December 1989 by National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, are very inappropriate. China is simply not as important as it once was to U.S. national interests, said critics of the Bush policy, who cited as reasons the events in Eastern Europe and the subsequent reduction in East-West tensions.

In the MFN debate in 1990-1991, once again not-for-profit organizations have played a critical role in defining the parameters of and influencing the MFN debate. The community has long understood since the days of the Open Door Policy in the nineteenth century, the importance of sound trade-relations to U.S.-China relations generally. The U.S.-China Business Council's position paper strongly condemned removal of MFN status because of its likely effect on American business. Its paper also shed light on the potential human rights impact of MFN denial on people and businesses in China and Hong Kong.¹² The point was made even more strongly by David M. Lampton, President of the National Committee on U.S.-China Trade, when he testified in the House of Representatives that removal of MFN would produce an intensive and destructive nationalistic and xenophobic environment in which China's intellectuals and business persons always suffer first, most, and longest.¹³ The Heritage Foundation weighed in, likewise, arguing the pros and cons of MFN renewal, but nonetheless observing that MFN denial "might be too big a fly swatter for the size of the fly."

Conclusion

By vigorously and candidly engaging the policy debate before Congress, the community of China-watchers in not-for-profit organizations has embraced the responsibilities that flow from the influence it is being afforded. The community of China-watchers not only influenced Washington's Beijing policy but also gradually came to define their own feelings about the events of June 4. The significance of this leadership stands out if we look back to the earliest days of contact between the United States and China in the 1960s and 1970s. There are historic parallels of importance.

It is nearly twenty-five years since the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on China policy in which A. Doak Barnett articulated the policy of "containment without isolation." Few would doubt that his testimony and that of similarly minded scholars helped tilt both congressional attitudes and the Administration in favor of more gradual steps towards resumption of relations.¹⁴ His testimony provided the intellectual framework for expressing the sentiment of the American people that the time had come to reach out to the Chinese. It was a critical moment.

What has happened since June 1989 is that the community has been able to build strong, substantial intellectual and cultural bridges on China policy between Congress and the Administration and between government and the American people. It has been another critical moment.

The not-for-profit community's fundamental role has always been educational, and the knowledge that we have imposes a special trust to communicate our vision to both government and the

12 See "The Cost of Removing MFN from China," a Position Paper by The United States-China Business Council, April 23, 1990.

13 See "Testimony Prepared for the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations," the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, and the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, May 16, 1990.

14 See *U.S. Policy with Respect to Mainland China*, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Eighty-Ninth Congress (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, March 1966).

American people. The community exercises influence when it communicates its understanding of Chinese politics and economics, culture and civilization, philosophy and tradition to decision makers. The influence derives principally not from any network of friendship and access, but because informed and far-seeing vision is needed in responding to the concerns of the other voices in our society which have claims to be heard in China policy making.

Exercising this influence is a serious responsibility that will require some hard judgments, including some that our Chinese friends may not agree with. This will not be easy. The China community is always somewhat emotional about China. Our sensibilities respond sympathetically to the aesthetic ideals of Chinese civilization. We are genuinely fearful of any prospect that reform might be reversed into xenophobic isolation, even the anti-Americanism which unfortunately and undeniably characterized a long period from 1950 to 1972. We need a humble sense of the importance of the role we can play in improving those relations.

