Perceptual Gaps in Modern US-Sino Relations As Portrayed by the Western Media

Author: danwei chu

Persistent link: http://hdl.handle.net/2345/466

This work is posted on eScholarship@BC, Boston College University Libraries.

Boston College Electronic Thesis or Dissertation, 2004

Copyright is held by the author, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise noted.
Perceptual Gaps in Modern US-Sino Relations as Portrayed By the Western Media

Danwei Chu
Author’s Preface

I had entered college at the dawn of the new millennium in the year 2000. Since then, in the brief span of four years, the world has been witness to a multitude of new trends, new personalities, momentous milestones, as well as the demise and departure of familiar traditions and mindsets. September 11th, regional viral outbreaks such as SARS, the Bird Flu, and Mad Cow Disease, the Iraqi war, the economic depression, an increase in visible terrorist attacks, global warming, etc., are all familiar paradigms and subjects in the average American household by now. As my friends and I look forward to graduating this 2004, we are burdened with the task of carrying ourselves as delegates and agents of our respective societies. The challenge is even more exhaustive in the sense that the global landscape has been significantly altered as such so that we now live in a world which runs on a new breed of geopolitics; theories of interdependence perpetually interlock nation states in enduring fellowships of cooperation. Keeping this and the lessons that we’ve learned (both in the classroom and otherwise) in mind, there is an urgency to prevent and avoid future mass conflicts and ensure peaceful change. While this remains a worthy objective, the scope and complexities of modern-day world politics demands an understanding of a much wider range of issues. Moreover, new conceptual frameworks and theories are required to improve our understanding and assist in the development of better policies and practices. By human nature there naturally exists self-imposed obstacles and boundaries, which threaten to hinder progress. A more sophisticated knowledge and thorough education become essential countermeasures to safeguard growth and development.

Within the realm of a research paper, the investigation and analysis of this subject can hardly be brought to a satisfactory conclusion within a reasonable amount of time. Therefore I choose to concentrate on the mechanisms, which shape the relationship between two highly visible, dominant and powerful global antagonists: the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China. With the end of the Cold War era and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States was solidified as the most potent contender in the international arena. This title endured relatively undisputed and has remained fairly unchanged for the next decade thereafter. Interestingly enough though it was during this same period that China was concurrently grabbing headlines...
with its rapid development in many sectors. Analysts, professionals and experts are all in concurrence when they predict that by the first half of the 21st century this traditional Asian powerhouse will have met or surpassed the United States in stature and influence. It is reasonable, and accurate, to assume that US-Sino relations will have an unparalleled influence within the spectrum of international cooperation politically, culturally, and economically. Presently nations are vigilantly forming implicit alliances as they conceptually allocate themselves in favorable positions for the resurrection of a bipolar global infrastructure.

From my delimited personal experience, I have unfortunately discovered a significant number of my peers are ignorant of these developing trends and the implications of this interrelationship. The purpose of this thesis is to converse with an audience comprised of individuals similar to those that I have met in these past four years, namely: intelligent and educated young Americans who are simply not informed of the nature, potential and circumstances surrounding US-Sino relations and policy. In this light, I intend to further specify the concentration of this study largely on the relationship that western media has with US-Sino relations. There will be a special emphasis and focus on the modern issue of human rights and trade. Furthermore, the bulk of the analysis will be limited within the timeframe of the three most recent American presidencies: George Bush (1989-1993), Bill Clinton (1993-2001), and George W. Bush (2001-present).

The purpose of the first chapter is to give the reader a solid idea of the general issues that have plagued US-Sino relations in recent modern history. Again from personal experience it has come to my attention that the average American student has a narrow education concerning US-Sino relations often pervaded with misconceptions, which are not compensated for in personal readings. This recess of knowledge is particularly apparent concerning all episodes and trends that took place prior to the birth and maturation of our generation; mainly everything that took place before the early post Cold war era of the 1980’s. I feel that in order to have a solid grasp of current US-Sino relations, one must construct a respectable appreciation and foundation of knowledge concerning the historical events that took place from 1971 to the present.
After this brief history lesson the thesis will explore the composite components that make up the media. It is from these resources that most college students in American draw their first and sometimes, only, impression of US-Sino relations. This section attempts to create a framework by which the media is broken down into its fundamental and more understandable elements. It is necessary to analyze the fabrics of the media; from the concept of self-perception, stereotypes, propaganda, and interest groups to the purpose that it serves as a median by which images of diplomatic-strategy are marketed. In short, the second chapter attempts to place the western media in a comprehensible light, enough so that the reader may continue with the remainder of the thesis with enough insight to make educated judgments.

The dilemma between trade incentive and democratic moral ground is the key example that this thesis will use to illustrate the behavior of the mass media and the manners in which it can exert pressure on policy-making. Thus, a more mature understanding of the human rights debate is required. The third chapter explores the human rights issue in depth; tracing the evolution of the issue through contemporary history whilst highlighting this narrative with headlines from the press and mass media. The third chapter will additionally explore economics and trade relations in a similar manner using samples taken from primary sources. Finally, the core debate concerning these two issues will be scrutinized, analyzed and illustrated with headlines and proper examples from the media. In this realm analysis will naturally require some elements of subjective interpretation to hold any meaning.

It is my hope that my audience will be able to walk away with that cultivated and deeper understanding not only of the media’s capacity in shaping US foreign policy towards China but also the misleading conclusion that are often drawn from such a habit. It is important to keep in mind that perceptual gaps whether based on diverging cultures, histories, ideologies or all three, can be dangerous mental barriers. Because a significant portion of this thesis will also be concentrating on the manner in which lucrative trade and investment potential more often than not edge out the human rights concerns in modern US-Sino relations debates, the moral of the story will have to be interpreted by the reader him/herself. However, due to the fact that these issues, as well as the periphery issues that surround it, are so new and in a state of constant re-evolution, the
fluidity of the subject makes it fairly difficult to draw conclusions. Moreover, it is also rather problematic to make firm stances and opinions either for one side or the other but I will write briefly on my own thoughts and opinions. Thus, ultimately I write this thesis in hopes to raise the issue of US-Sino cooperation into the consciousness of the young American mindset by providing an intelligent background upon which they may draw their own summations while being conscious of the influential ideas propagated by the media and the press around them.
Within the professionals’ realm the issue of US-Sino relations is not easily overlooked. The subject has been broached, considered, examined, and reported ad nauseam or quite sufficiently to say the least by experts across the board. Inevitably the vast majority of books written on the subject introduce their narratives with the pivotal Kissinger- Nixon visits to Beijing (then known as Peking) in 1971 and again in 1972. The magnitude of this event should not be underestimated for when the thirty-seventh president of the United States shook hands with China’s first (and only) prime minister Zhou Enlai, it marked the first time that an American president had ever recognized the Chinese Communist government. This signified the inauguration of opportunities for diplomatic correspondence between high-level officials and mutual cooperation since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949.

This event is often cited as the beginning of the modern relationship between the United States and China. Nixon himself is later quoted to have described the period in which these visits took place as “the week that changed the world.” After World War II, and prior to these watershed episodes in US-Sino relations, the rapport was typically characterized by highly pessimistic rhetoric, approached with suspicion, cynicism and high levels of mistrust.

Therefore it is not surprising that this liaison did not immediately evolve into an alliance or even a friendship after the initial steps taken by Kissinger and Nixon. Despite the initial “euphoric” mood that followed the visits, the relationship was still highly volatile and scarred from past misunderstandings and misperceptions. On China’s part the humiliation that it had suffered for the majority of the twentieth century left reverberating scars that were constant reminders for its leaders. As a result it remained semi-paranoid towards the United States and hyperconscious of any attempts that foreign powers might make towards “neo-imperialism.” The domination of the imperialist powers and the aftereffects made Chinese policy fairly sympathetic to nation states that were also emerging from similar straits. This tendency to aid developing and
underdeveloped nations was to characteristically define Chinese foreign policy throughout the course of its modern history. For the first half of modern Chinese history (or even longer) the Chinese government harbored deeply rooted suspicions towards highly developed nations, particularly the United States. Their relationship has evolved along rocky roads, oscillating between great optimism and complete distrust, progress and stagnation, solidarity and ambivalence.

Yet initial Chinese concerns were not completely unfounded, as the United States government had worked actively to hinder the progress of the Chinese Communist party and curtail their influence in matters of geopolitics. The United States hoped that the global isolation of China would inevitably lead to the strangulation of the Communist regime. Not only did the United States continue to maintain official ties with the Nationalist government in exile on the island of Taiwan, but kept a significant number of American troops stationed there as a constant deferment to the possibility of Chinese aggression (due to a security treaty in which the US had promised to interfere on Taiwan’s behalf in light of any Chinese antagonism). Military and strategic concerns were high priorities to consider and will continue to be in modern US-Sino relations. Prior to human rights though, Taiwan was the major issue that dominated US-Sino relations often blocking efforts of cooperation between the two of them.

Fundamentally it was a battle of contrasting political theology. From 1911 to 1949 China was engrossed in chaos after the collapse of the last dynasty. Factional groups battled for power in the face of foreign Imperialist powers and world war. From 1946 to 1949 Mao Zedong’s Communist party battled with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist party for the domination of China, uniting briefly to ward off the invading Japanese. The United States was preoccupied in a battle of containment and geopolitical strategy. Even after the end of World War II the United States was grossly engaged in anti-Communist rhetoric both domestically and in their foreign policy. Seeped in McCarthyism and the dogma of the Red Scare, America was almost obsessed with anti-Communist mania. They firmly backed the Taiwanese Democratic government as a staunch bulwark to ward off the Communist block in Asia, specifically China. Strategically Taiwan is close enough to China to serve as a military presence but mentally, also, serves as a move to display American disdain for Communism. After
expelling the Nationalist forces, Mao and his group moved quickly to intervene in the
Korean War, intercepting United Nations forces headed towards the Manchurian border.
Soon “Red China” was a common phrase used in the American media and household.
Yet, ironically enough it was going to be the mutual concern over the growing boldness
and power of the Soviet Union that drove China and the United States towards each other
in what would be a curious relationship filled with contradictions as well as compliments.

Nonetheless, underneath this insinuated alliance lays a fundamental difference in
political preference, which further reflects the deeper diverging rift in culture and history
as well. The United States perceived itself as a defender of the free world, and a warrior
in the name of Democracy and freedom. As a country built on the foundations of
individual rights, personal freedom and populism, it stood in direct contrast with China.
The American media played on these themes constantly, particularly in recent modern
history and not only against the Communist government in China. Traditionally, Chinese
culture already promotes Confucian obedience and self-sacrifice. The Communist
regime reinforced this mentality by imposing a system based on the ideologies of class-
conflict, communal labor, and the greater good of the motherland. The western media
therefore usually portrayed the Chinese political system of choice as oppressive,
restrictive, and a completely indifferent of basic individual rights. These “gaps in
perception” will be further discussed in subsequent chapters.

In keeping with their interests, the United States had given the losers of the
Chinese civil war substantial amounts of economic aid throughout the 1950s and 1960s,
in line with the hypothetical theory that Taiwan would eventually absorb the mainland.
In 1955 the United States formed a military agreement with Taiwan and subsequently
supplied it with the latest in military technology and weaponry. China and the United
States soon mutually initiated an era of hostile feelings towards one another.

China has always viewed the American military presence as a complete affront in
which the United States was meddling in domestic matters that did not concern it. The
Chinese government observed Taiwan essentially as a renegade province. When Nixon
made the first attempt to normalize bilateral relations between the two nations, one of
China’s highest priorities was for the United States to remove its presence from the island
and dissolve all official ties with the Nationalist government, planting the seeds for a “One China Policy”.

Traces of America’s military presence was still discernable along the east as bad memories lingered from the war fought on the Korean peninsula from 1950-1953; it was in the wake of this particular war that all forms of diplomatic conversation were broken between the two countries. To the south in Vietnam, American troops were barraging Chinese troop concentrations and supply lines (at the time China was a Communist ally of the Vietcong despite the fact that the two countries have frequently been on opposite sides in history; Vietnam and China were to have a complete fallout in 1978 when the Vietcong invaded Cambodia and Laos). In 1964, China staged their first nuclear tests as top-level American officials contemplated using unilateral military force to destroy these nuclear facilities. Although the United States was a supreme military force that could not be matched by China, clearly the arms game and weapons proliferation was evolving into a major concern within the context of US-Sino relations. In addition to the mutual defense treaty with Taiwan then, the United States created military alliances with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand. Soon its military presence was dotted all over the Pacific region.

In return, China realized that it would need all the help that it could possibly muster in the face of American isolation. Throughout the latter half of the 1950’s and into the 1960’s, the Chinese government actively formed diplomatic relations with emerging third world nations. It also provided supplies and support to different liberation movements around the globe. There were also many instances in which China attempted to circumvent the American rule of isolation by establishing contacts with traditional US allies such as France and Japan. The consequences of these kinds of actions are extremely dangerous for nations emerging out of civil wars and in need of massive reconstruction.

The United States government followed their political segregation with the imposition of a series of trade embargoes, implicitly forcing all their allies to follow suite as well. They continued to economically starve China (at the time one of the poorest nations in the world) by forbidding the exchange of any international and/or foreign loan.
Specifically the People’s Republic lost the financial support that was being given to it by the World Bank and a substantial aid package that was being given to them by Japan.

The US actively sought to isolate China from the rest of the world by barring them from membership into global institutions. The most significant was forbidding the People’s Republic of China a seat with the United Nations while suggesting to other members that it was the Republic of China (created by the Nationalist party that had lost the Chinese civil war and exiled to Taiwan) which should be recognized as the real China. With the importance of political dogma and administrative ideology still deeply entrenched in the American psyche, Taiwan took center-stage in debates becoming the core issue dividing the two countries until the Carter Administration (1977-1981) when human rights replaced it.

**Nixon to Reagan**

1969-1989

Unfortunately during the 1970’s the Nixon and Ford administration were unable to achieve normalization despite their best efforts. This had to do with the timing of their efforts, which took place during an era of delicate geopolitics. In particular efforts were made in the face of resurfacing radicalism within Chinese domestic policy led by a reappearance of the fanatical Gang of Four (which consisted of Chairman Mao’s wife Madame Mao, and her extremist cohorts) in 1975 and 1976. Nixon and Kissinger had worked extensively prior to their 1971 and 1972 visits with the State Department in order to make it clear that the United States desired formal relations with the People’s Republic of China.

Kissinger’s preliminary visits to Beijing were in preparation for the president’s envoy. He had promised Chou Enlai and other Chinese leaders that the United States would not push the Taiwan issue and would officially recognize the legitimacy of the People’s Republic of China. In October of 1971 the People’s Republic of China finally won a seat in the United Nations while the Nationalist nation of Taiwan lost theirs. The issue had aroused intense discussion among the general public in the United States and
was extensively covered in the press appearing as front-page news several times. The subject of China was covered nearly every day in the New York Times from 1971 to 1972.

Prior to Nixon’s visit, ninety percent of Americans held an unfavorable view of China and seventy percent saw it as the greatest security threat against the United States, even more so than the Soviet Union. In September of 1969 Nixon and Kissinger ordered the U.S. Ambassador in Poland (Walter Stoessel) to contact the Chinese Polish ambassador, Lei Yang to open talks. The following winter on January 20 and February 20 in 1970, Stoessel and Lei Yang held the Warsaw meetings that were to be the first steps towards Nixon’s visit to China. These series of discussions at the Warsaw’s Palace of Culture made two important discernments: it displayed the United States willingness to retract from decades of anti-Chinese policy concerning the Taiwan Nationalist government matter; and it also set the stage for the manner in which the United States would handle political and diplomatic matters thereafter through the American President’s administration. The Warsaw talks had officially terminated any real role that the State Department had in deciding US-Sino policy. First, Kissinger was to take up the reins in what could be deciphered as his own personal diplomacy. But the major legacy was the pattern in which presidential administrations would often come to head with the State Department over China. It is to be imitated for presidencies after them. US-Sino relations matters were also set aside as particularly special and above traditional institutional procedures. For example, Kissinger had created clandestine channels of communication with China through the CIA and third party nations such as Pakistan and Romania. A detailed examination of these secret channels is available through the release of once classified materials under the Freedom of Information Act in the CIA Study, “US-PRC Political Negotiations, 1967-1984.”

The birth of modern US-Sino relations had also set other precedents that were followed by politicians thereafter. A common source of misunderstanding between the two nations was, and is China’s lack of understanding towards the democratic process and government structure in the United States. After Kissinger and Nixon the bipartisan parties typically battled for the limelight in terms of progress with China. Generally speaking the progression of relations between the two countries was followed closely by
American domestic squabble, overprotective secrecy, and personal drudgery. For example, when Nixon and Kissinger prepared for their visits, they asked for the aid of the Chinese Communist government in keeping negotiations and tidings completely secret from the State Department and had refused to use the translators provided by them during the widely publicized and covered Nixon “toast” in 1972. Likewise, the White House had made the Chinese government promise not to meet with democratic representatives and cautioned them to avoid any consequential relationship with leftist parties.\footnote{5}

Thus it was during the Nixon-Kissinger era that many underlying precepts were sowed considering the manner in which US-Sino affairs would be handled by the American government. It would mostly be handled strictly by the administration in the White House at the time, sometimes highly personal, with the Congress and State Department barking in the background. At times the nature of the US-Sino relations would be secretive and unclear, partially due to the internal partitions that created competing fractions. China was conceptually situated in a distinctive category (and it would receive special treatment), often to the chagrin of the public and the American media.

The possibility that China may be willing to open its doors to the United States (and democratic principles) created a great degree of anticipation among the public. The invitation extended to the American table tennis team to visit China after completing the championships in Japan receive extensive U.S. press coverage in 1971.\footnote{6} Along with the American ping-pong team, three U.S. members of the press were also granted visas into China to cover the event; a very special first moment in US-Sino relations.\footnote{7} The public was amused; in a political cartoon published by the New York Times on April 18, 1971 an image of two western ping-pong players (strangely resembling William Shakespeare) attempting to jump over the Great Wall of China.\footnote{8}

Certain political figures came forth breaking from what was a “taboo among leading politicians for two decades” advocating a positive relationship with “Communist China.” Senator George S. McGovern, a democratic presidential candidate, asked America to dispel “dangerous untruths” and stereotypical barriers that had prevented progress in the past, an opinion, which in 1971 was placed extreme left. “(The Time has come) to dispel the fogs and myths which have for the past 20 years befuddled our
attitudes and our actions towards mainland China… (they are) the most costly and
dangerous untruths in American public policy.” Pope Paul shared his comments on the
Nixon visit to China as well, “something big and new is being fulfilled and is preparing
itself which may change in no small way the face of the earth.” Life Magazine even
released an editorial article in its March 7, 1971 issue calling upon the Nixon
administration to renew its China’s policy, asking “whether China’s continued isolation
from the world is in our interest anymore than it is in theirs.” President Nixon’s
specially requested a televised speech preceding his visit; in it he used phrases such as
“building a lasting peace in this world.” The atmosphere was propitious, already in
1971 people were expressing desires to close perceptual gaps and clear past
misunderstandings. Apparently the general public was also shifting towards a favorable
opinion of Red China as a 1971 Gallup Poll indicated that a majority of Americans
wanted Communist China to win a seat with the United Nations. The New York Times
attributed that “the change was undoubtedly a reflection of the current thaw in Chinese-
American relations that started when an American table-tennis team toured Communist
China.” The exposure of “ping-pong diplomacy” certainly had its charms.

Although the Kissinger-Nixon visits had created a favorable atmosphere
conducive for political dialogue, the televised event had its awkward shortcomings. Back
in the United States on nationally televised channels, Americans saw that their president
was not greeted by a multitude of photographic Chinese crowds; rather, the meeting was
stark, rigid and very Communist in nature. Although the presidential limo had been
flown in to Peking for the president’s convenience, Nixon was instead ushered into the
limousine bearing the flag of the Chinese communist party, for the Chinese officials had
refused to allow Zhou Enlai to ride in an American vehicle with the president.
Americans also expressed a certain degree of disappointed with the muted Chinese
reaction to this watershed visit, and the lack of interest displayed by the Chinese press
and media. Although the significance of these initial gestures are not underestimated,
specialists remained wary and fairly pessimistic. AS one New York Times article put it,
“We are like an estranged couple that has smiled at each other for the first time in 20
years but has not yet begun to discuss the problems that split them apart in the first
place.”
After laying out the underpinnings for relationships economic and cultural ties began to expand. Nixon had also initiated the opening of trade ties in modern US-Sino relations by removing the first of many trade embargoes that were created during the previous 21-year period. Trade grew at a relatively rapid pace but direct foreign investment in China was still nonexistent. Despite limitations on trade and economic development avenues were cleared for short-term cultural reciprocity, and some intellectual/academic conversation. The potentials were obvious though. Said Senator Edward Kennedy, “Rarely, I think, has the actions of the President so captured the imagination and support of the American people as President Nixon’s magnificent gesture last week of the improvement in our relations of China.”

Unfortunately, the initial euphoria that had succeeded the Nixon visits slowly waned, and by the end of the Ford administration in 1976 the public felt as if progress and halted. Any sense of improvement had given away to stagnation as Taiwan continued to dominate debates. However, according to former L.A. Times Beijing bureau chief, James Mann, it was what did not occur during the Ford administration that illustrated the progress of US-Sino relations rather than what did happen. From 1972 to 1976, the grounds upon which China and the United States had built their friendship was the mutual discord they possessed over Soviet expansionism. Mann illustrates the grounds of this relationship in amusing detail, “Recently declassified files of some of Kissinger’s early conversations with Deng Xiaoping show that the two men could barely say hello to one another without swapping lines about the Russians.” The appointment of George Bush as head of the U.S. Liaison office in Beijing also affected the ways in which the White House handled the normalization issue, for Ford faced many internal debates that argued for the delay of breaking off ties with Taiwan. As a result normalization was not achieved under Ford’s administration either, despite promises having been made by Nixon that it would be achieved by the end of his own term. The Chinese were insulted and angered. Despite Ford’s visit to China, Deng and his administration were even more skeptical of American initiatives (judging them to be “playing games”). This demonstrates the Chinese misunderstanding of the mechanisms that comprise the American bipartisan system. Kissinger had continued to appease the American public and Congress promising no more discussions for normalization and no
more thoughts of dissolving Taiwan relations; yet he privately kept assuring the Chinese officials that these issues were in the works.

In efforts to keep the Chinese leadership happy, Kissinger followed through on a proposition made by Michael Pillsbury (a China scholar from Columbia University that publicized his suggestion of creating military ties with China). According to memos and research conducted by Pillsbury, the Chinese were very interested in opening military ties with the United States, mainly to modernize its martial technology. In an October 1975 trip to Beijing, Kissinger proposed military trade and cooperation to the Chinese leadership for the first time. Military trade was opened between China, the United States and its allies for the first time. American officials took particular care in arranging these sales, circumventing the traditional procedure in which China would have had to win the approvals of a committee consisting of modern NATO allies and Japan (in regard to regulating the sale of restricted technology to any Communist nation). Since American leaders in office after Nixon resigned, such as Reagan, Goldwater, Buckley, and Buchanan, were staunchly against the normalization of US-Sino relations, the White House continued to sell military technology to China in order to appease angry and insulted Communist leadership. This would lead to future concerns over China’s sale of highly restricted technology to other developing nations in the 1980’s through the present.

Finally in 1978, progressive development of Sino-US continued as new administrations took power in both China and the United States. A victim of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiao Ping had a different approach to dealing with the modernization and growth of China than previous leaders. He was accused of subversive economic activities in accord with Liu Shaoqi and sent for re-education in a truck factory by the Gang of Four, after being reinstated by Zhou Enlai in 1973 as deputy premier he was purged once again in 1976 for attempting to implement Zhou’s “Four Modernizations” plan. Reinstated in 1977, Deng emerged as the strongest Chinese leader since Mao Zedong and is often credited for the successful modernization and internationalization of China at the end of the 20th century.

The Democratic Jimmy Carter administration took power in the United States White House in 1977 and consciously sought to be internationally active. Also,
Kissinger finally took his exit in 1976, in the midst of intense criticism from Democrats, as well as unfavorable relations with Republicans that were in power under the Ford administration. Carter had the resources and capital to negotiate for the normalization of US-Sino relations with a comparatively open-minded Deng Xiaoping in China. Both Carter’s team and Deng’s team demonstrated the requisite flexibility, tolerance, and willingness to take US-Sino relations to the next level. Carter was able to absolve the Taiwan issue, appeasing the Communist government in China but meanwhile igniting a wave of controversy in the western press, American public and international community as well. The White House proceeded first to cease and close all official ties with the Nationalist party of Taiwan (although it should be noted that the United States continued and still continues to this very day to be closely affiliated with Taiwanese-Chinese relations). Carter then continued to terminate the mutual defense treaty with Taipei and pledged to remove the American forces from the island. Deng, in return, still allowed informal relations to continue and tolerated the continuation of arms and technology sales to the Nationalists.

Under pressure from Congress, the public, and the press the White House pushed the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979. In this act the United States reiterated its commitment as a defender of Taiwan in the face of any acts of military aggression from the mainland despite the fact that Carter had agreed to withdraw official ties. Although this drew the reproach of Beijing the agreements formulated by Deng and Carter still stood, paving the way for the normalization of relations.

As the Cold War slowly waned away, Americans had to find new rationale for US-Sino relations in light of all the obvious contradictions, to say the least particularly to find a reason for why the government was working so ambitiously to establish these ties. Carter’s administration thus broadened the military and technology relationship with China, citing global strategy as the motivation behind these moves. Carter also perpetuated the cultural and academic exchange greatly. The unanticipated long-term effects of this were that Chinese scholars and students became increasingly exposed to western democratic ideals, and began to openly demand them.

A wave of flourishing recuperation took place between 1978 and 1980 in which intellectual, academic, cultural and economic exchange grew substantially. China was
finally opened to American tourists for excursion and vacationing. American representatives and correspondents were permitted to station themselves in Beijing, while military cooperation and exchange developed as well. Arms control, technology transfer, and nuclear proliferation were to be a concern in US-Sino relations in the near future; the United States (despite being vastly superior in military intelligence and strength than any other nation) will begin to disapprove of the military growth, modernization and arms trade that China engaged in. The military advancement that I had fostered was now perceived as a threat.

One of the most attractive and alluring factors in this development was the growth of investments and trade. The first joint-ventures were created during this period. Business journals, professionals and experts continuously cited the immensity of the profits and opportunities that lay waiting in China. Trade incentives, investments, and business were to become heavy issues saturating in American foreign policy towards China. The predominant point of debate for present-day US-Sino relations is the usage of lucrative trade benefits as leverage against the human rights violations that run concurrent to American democratic principle and morals. Although the American government and businesses displayed some concern and hesitation over the difficulty of running businesses with, and in, China (many professionals and politicians insist that the business laws in China are grossly unjust against foreigners), and the public (fueled by a plethora of negative press, media, and propaganda) are adamantly against the human rights atrocities that are associated with the country, trade continued to flourish becoming an integral thread binding the United States to China.

However in 1980 the Reagan administration were less inclined to promote the evolution of the concessions that were formulated in the previous presidencies. Instead, it opted to reinforce official ties with the Taiwanese government while taking a conservative stance as the defender not only of the democratic government on Taiwan but traditional democratic, American values as well. This abrasive entrance into the 1980’s lead to a cycle of disillusionment in which both sides began to see the other in less optimistic lights, often bordering on negative and critical propaganda. This is yet an illustrative example as to how the bipartisan parties and the mechanisms of American government led many Chinese leaders to conclude that American leadership could not be
relied on to follow through on mutual understandings, and often betrayed previous compromises. The government criticized, what in their eyes was, the defective American process.

China reacted to the restoration of official ties with Taiwan by moving away from the strategic alliances that it had with the United States against the Soviet Union. Each country became increasingly more antagonizing to the other, and between 1981-1983 US-Sino relations suffered on the diplomatic, military, economic and cultural fronts. The see-sawing pattern of amicability and disillusionment was already forming. As things got worse leaders on both sides knew that the need for reparations could not be ignored or else the progress made in the last decade would have been entirely for nothing. Within four months in 1984 the White House and the Communist party in China settled their differences on American arms sales to Taiwan, the loosening of restrictions on technology transfer to China, textile negotiations and other minor incidents that had irritated both countries. A new cycle of warm feelings and harmony germinated. Deng Xiaoping’s administration continued to open China to foreign relations, and domestic reforms. Excitement once again grew in the American public and the media. There were those who enjoyed the idea of an open intellectual and cultural exchange in which scholars and students may freely interact with one another and visit these reciprocal nations. Business leaders anticipated the huge profits to be made in lucrative trade; the first wholly owned American ventures were created in China during this period. There were even whispers that China was on the verge of capitalism and democracy itself as it continued to internally reform and evolve. It should be noted that often times this sort of American hope to remake Beijing in its own image was viewed by the Chinese leaders as a form of neo-imperialism through “peaceful evolution”19 in which the Americans attempted to create subversion by internal channels; such as seducing the youth through American products, media and other such ideals. The homogenization of pop culture in China intensified as it further opened its doors in the 1990’s.
George Bush to George W. Bush  
1989- present

Nonetheless irritants were overlooked on both sides as Americans eagerly anticipated mutual cooperation between their government and the Chinese government. This harmonious relationship only lasted until the infamous incident in Tiananmen Square on June 3rd and 4th, 1989. Pro-democracy students had staged series of protests and demonstrations since early April of that year. The Communist party had consistently put these down adamantly although not yet with any form of military action. On June 3rd the world stood aghast as tanks rolled along Changan Jie and soldiers opened fire on hundreds of unarmed demonstrators. The press coverage across the globe was tremendous, all expressing cries of outrage and demands for retribution. Nothing has matched this media frenzy within U.S.-Sino relations since then. Americans were infuriated with the barbarous inhumanity displayed by the Chinese government and demanded reactions from the government in the form of diplomatic and economic sanctions, sometimes more.

Human rights issues began to dominate the headlines as the press printed graphic images of the Tiananmen incident supplemented with critical reactions around the globe from world leaders, politicians, etc. These images continue to haunt western media to this very day. Every year the western media runs articles on the anniversary of Tiananmen on June 3rd as a constant reminder of the incident. Fervent American students concerning themselves with social justice constantly use Tiananmen as a reference. The suppression of the protest was symbolised by the infamous footage of a lone protester, several days after the demonstrations, defiantly standing in front of a column of advancing tanks, halting their progress. He continued to stand defiantly in front of the tanks for half an hour before someone had to come over and take him away. Despite efforts, there has been no light shed as to the identity of this demonstrator although this image is one of the most recognizable and famous in recent history. In an April 1998 special issue, Time magazine dubbed him *The Unknown Rebel* and named him as one of the "100 most important revolutionaries of the 20th century".20
Although the implications of such an extraordinarily violent episode would greatly damage China’s reputation in the world, not to mention America, it was the presence of the media and the images that were transcribed that pushed the bar even further. Imagery is a powerful weapon, it takes one second for an audience to absorb the context of it and one image can deliver a thousand messages at once. In that same special issue of Time magazine, the author, Pico Iyel, writes specifically about the use of graphics concerning the Tiananmen incident:

“But the man with the tank showed us another face, so to speak, of the camera and gave us an instance in which the image did not cut humanity down to size but elevated and affirmed it, serving as an instrument for democracy and justice. Instead of making the lofty trivial, as it so often seems to do, the image made the passing eternal and assisted in the resistance of an airbrushed history written by the winners… the man with the tank — Wang Weilin, or whoever — stands for the forces of the unnamed: the Unknown Soldier of a new Republic of the Image.”

This image was used in another special edition issue of Time magazine on June 19, 1989. Emblazoned in bold, yellow, print is the title of the report: “Revolt Against Communism: China, Poland, USSR.” The image on the cover was the “Unknown Rebel” of Tiananmen. Within this issue the headlines insinuated the existence of a sinister regime in the respective countries that were listed. There were a total of five articles concerning China directly, their titles were: “China’s Dark Hours”, “China, the Wrath of Deng”, “Fear and Anger in Hong Kong”, “Fax Against Fiction” (concerning the restriction of communication and expression that the students had to endure during protests), and “Saving the Connection”
(discussing President George Bush’s desires to maintain cooperative relations with China despite the human rights dilemma). The image was used repetitively in many press outlets throughout the year.

Excessive press coverage during the Tiananmen crackdown in June 1989 was made possible for the Western media because they had already been invited to cover the Mikhail Gorbachev tour of Beijing in May. Domestic political structure was also undergoing a period of conflicting interests as Deng Xiaoping’s group supported by General Secretary Zhao Ziyang were contesting against another faction lead by Premier Li Peng and senior economic planner Chen Yun for authority over reforms. Deng’s series of political and economic reforms in the early 1980’s had initiated a wave of change that brought both positive and questionable repercussions along with it. With the acceleration of economic growth in both the agricultural and industrial sector, wages and incomes went up as did the general standard of living for the Chinese people. Deng loosened the strict Communist dogma allowing the Chinese people to exercise greater choice in their lifestyles and punishment became less arbitrary for open political dissent. Change had its consequences. Inflation, unequal distribution of wealth, corruption, and the alienation of certain groups within society were the undesired consequences of these reforms. The reforms catalyzed the evolution of traditional Chinese social structure; this in turn is what fueled the demonstrations and pro-democracy protests that lead up to the Tiananmen incident on June 3rd, 1989. The division in central authority stemmed from a difference of opinion as to how to best approach these developing problems. Central leadership was deeply fractionalized on nearly all issues; as a result the leash that Beijing usually held over the western press was not well managed. Orders given by one faction were often quickly countermanded or put down by another contending faction, leaving the press fairly free to cover the event. Members of the press were even able to cover some of the government crackdown, live, through networks such as the Cable News Network (CNN) before Chinese leaders managed to cut off satellite access. CNN was eventually ordered to terminate broadcasts from the city during the crackdown, but were able to cover the protests through telephone lines; not to mention that a substantial collection of images pertaining to violence, death and repression had already been collected by the western press. A June 5, 1989 article of Time magazine was specifically
dedicated to the circumstances endured by the reporters that were on hand to witness the Tiananmen crackdown. The reaction in the United States was to immediately demand economic and political sanctions, asking their allies to follow suite. Internally, Deng Xiaoping and other leaders responded with a fundamental reorientation of policy in order to am mend the negative consequences of the early 1980 reforms. However, both sides still displayed the desire to maintain formal relations with one another. The mutual benefits to be reaped were too great to ignore; this was evident as the White House continued to protect China’s most favored nation status despite protest and disagreement among many within the media as well as the general public. The White House continued to come into conflict with the State Department and Congress on matters concerning US-Sino relations; many members of Congress demanded tougher sanctions no matter what the consequences not only for the gross demonstration in Tiananmen but for missile sales to the Middle East and the burgeoning trade surplus.

At this point in 1989 it was clear that the reforms enacted by Deng Xiaoping had a ripple effect that touched upon all facets not only internally in China but changed the scheme of US-Sino relations. Great changes were underway that could not be easily undone. The mindset of the younger generations were already thinking in modern ways that alienated them from both the traditional generations prior to them as well as the central government itself. China was in the midst of opening; in a semi-bloom that was vulnerable to new ideas, and western influence. It was also in the fetal stages of modern development with many varying possible paths still lay ahead of it; the appeal of the West was omnipresent.

From the inauguration of George Bush on January 20, 1989 to this administration under his son, George W. Bush, US-Sino relations has been characterized by a superficial courtship through periods of uncertainty. The relationship obtained more sophisticated substance during this modern period and both countries were pushed in new directions, forcing them to constantly renegotiate a relationship characterized by parallel competition and cooperation.

For the majority of his four-year presidency George Bush was considered very pro-Chinese. After the Tiananmen Square massacre Bush did little to symobilize the
moral outrage of the great majority of the American people, even pushing through some trade deals in the wake of the massacre. In the days after Tiananmen, Bush had just returned from a tour of Europe and was enjoying a short vacation in Kennebunkport, Maine. He had issued a formal statement criticizing the violent use of military force to attack demonstrators but when approached by members of the press at his vacation home he was reported to have curtly said, as he prepared for a morning run, “Not while I’m running.”

He had also spent considerable time living in China as the U.N. ambassador, which he fondly recounted for the media during a tour of Beijing, which was organized by the White House to counter-balance the Soviet diplomacy of Gorbachev’s tour. He surprised both members of the western press and the Chinese media when he gave this statement to a Chinese reporter expressing optimistic friendship with the Chinese and encouraging cooperation for “world peace”:

“It really has, because of China’s importance and ours, a lot to do with world peace. And so, before much times went by, I wanted to reaffirm the importance that the United States places on this bilateral relationship, and wanted to pledge to the Chinese leaders—and I’ve met the top four leaders in the last day and a half—that this relationship will grow and it will prosper.”

After creating a moral contradiction between his administrative policies and the democratic principles that the general public and the Congress adhered to, Bush recognized that his subsequent plan of action would have to be carefully balanced. There was a good reason to prevent antagonizing Chinese leadership with an extremely aggressive reaction yet it was also important not to alienate his administration from the American public with one that was too lenient. From the Tiananmen incident on, human rights and sanctions would divide the executive branch and legislative branch on US-Sino relations; a rift was also created between general public sentiment (as represented and propelled by the American media) and the government’s policies.

The first sanctions were not enacted until February of 1990, eight months after the Tiananmen incident actually took place, and labeled “PL 101-246”. This was due to the combative nature in which the White House and Congress conducted their deliberations over economic and military sanctions. The most controversial bill introduced concerning
the Tiananmen massacre was the Chinese Students Immigration Bill proposed by Congress. The intent of this legislation was to protect the 30,000 or so students and scholars that were residing in the United States during June. There was a moral dilemma for the American public as well as the government in forcing the return of these students to a nation that was at the time conducting investigative hunts for dissidents once their visas were expired. The Bill proposes to automatically renew all these visas without formal registration with the American government. Although the vast majority of the government viewed this proposal as a good plan of action in the humanitarian spirit, President Bush realized that this bill may insinuate antagonizing messages to Chinese leadership. The Chinese Students Immigration Bill was adopted by the House 403 to 0, on November 30, 1989. Bush then pocket-vetoed the bill, intending to carry out its clauses through administrative action. “I want to keep control of managing the foreign policy of this country as much as I can. And I didn’t think that legislation was necessary.”

The most caustic veto debate under the Bush administration took place over this bill. The polarization of Congress began to emerge along party lines and the public began to view Bush as insensitive to the cause of human rights. Bush also endeavored to salvage what remained of the cooperative relationship between the White House and Beijing. Unfortunately, Deng Xiaoping was also experiencing internal discordance with the conservative leaders who accused him of being too friendly and flexible with the United States. The human rights and economic sanctions issue shall be further explored in depth in another chapter.

Deng Xiaoping and the Bush administration should be credited for rescuing the remnants of US-Sino relations that had been established by prior presidencies; the reaction after Tiananmen was critical as to whether or not deteriorating forces would completely annul the progress that had been initiated or leave enough leeway for a relationship in the future. Both administrations lost their credibility in the eyes of the other not to mention internal factions as well. Yet in the end they managed to think in a broad strategic framework and sustain relations, for these two leaders realized that there was too much at stake to simply rupture such an important diplomatic rapport.
Towards the end of the Bush administration and transitioning into the Clinton administration, US-Sino relations took a backseat to other major trends that were occurring around the world such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the Middle East crisis. Slowly the American public began to see China as a nation in the midst of transitioning into a more capitalist and democratic framework. However in the 1992 American elections, one of the facets of the Clinton platform was to accuse George Bush of being indifferent to human rights violations, particularly with China and ethnic cleansing in Eastern Europe. Clinton took the next presidency on November 4, 1992 with 43 percent of the popular vote and 68 percent of the electoral vote. Despite his allegations against President Bush during the 1992 campaign, Clinton would eventually relax his human rights demands to increase the scope for trade, and nonproliferation objectives. His presidency would also carry the stigma of being too lenient and “soft on China.”

The emergence of the first Democratic President in twelve years made leaders in Beijing anxious; not to mention that the democratic leaders had little recent experience in dealing with foreign relations. Despite his harsh criticism of Chinese human rights violations, Clinton immediately reaffirmed the importance of preserving and maintaining relations both for the greater good as well as the reforms in China. The dualism of his political rhetoric prompted both human rights groups and those with interests invested in a positive US-Sino relationship to push him either way in what seemed to be presidential indecision on the subject of human rights versus trade. A huge factor in Clinton’s campaign was his promise to dedicate his presidency to domestic issues and particularly issues dealing with the economy. One of Clinton’s first official functions was to create the National Economic Council (fundamentally similar to the National Security Council but dedicated to American economic interests both domestically and within international relations). Wall Street investment banker, Robert Rubin, was appointed the head of the NEC. Rubin dutifully then encouraged Clinton and the administration to maintain US-Sino relations if not for anything else but the great economic potential that is implicit in it. This was a form of “commercial diplomacy”.

His contradicting priorities were reflected in the personnel that Clinton appointed as his advisors and supporting administration. Clinton focused on the economy as he had
promised by structuring his cabinet with economic experts and those with similar financially focused concerns. His closest associates were also employed in the economic-related agencies around Washington D.C.. However, he counterbalanced these advisors with human rights politicians in the National Security Council and the Department of State, as well as his personal coterie. This entangled agenda of weighing moral issues concerning human rights against powerful trade incentives is the characterizing element that defined the Clinton administration on US-Sino relations. This conflicting debate became the defining US-Sino relations event of the Clinton administration. Clinton then linked the issues in an official “ultimatum”. Human rights concessions were directly pitted against the Most Favored Nation status extensions. The situation that unfolded thereafter included not only intense disagreement between the State Department, NSC, NEC, and Clinton administration, but the ultimatum presented by Clinton was not having its desired effect.

Unfortunately, to the chagrin of human rights activist groups across the country and worldwide, the apex of this issue was reached on May 26, 1994 when Clinton moved to “delink human rights from the annual extension of Most Favored Nation trading status for China…”27 This move was implicitly defeatist in nature; a victory for Chinese leadership, who had called Clinton’s bluff.

US-Sino relations were further challenged by the Taiwan Strait issue, which reappeared in July 1995 and lasted until roughly March 1996. Then Taiwanese president, Lee Teng-hui had been promoting official relations for Taiwan in many international arenas to anyone who was willing to listen. Taiwanese leadership felt bitter and angered over its sudden isolation from international matters and were attempting to alleviate the situation. Among its goals included a seat in the United Nations General Assembly as well as the functional organizations associated with it and other respectable international bodies. In an incident most likely intentionally pre-concocted, Lee Teng-hui asked permission from the United States to spend a night in Hawaii for refueling purposes while on his way to tour in Central America and Africa. The State Department had rejected this request in light of the MFN controversy; the government did not want to risk further antagonizing its relationship with China at the time. Unfortunately many members of
Congress as well as the public disapproved of this decision, citing Taiwan as a traditional friend and ally of the United States, and thus deserving cordial treatment.

President Clinton was also battling a Republican victory in 1994 that took both the Senate and the House of Representatives; an extremely unusual event to occur under a Democratic presidency. The new Republican committee chairs were already steadfast in their convictions to attack Clinton’s reputation with the same “soft on China” rhetoric that Clinton has used on George Bush in the 1992 presidential election campaigns. Thus the government was suffering from internal conflicts when the Taiwan Strait incident began to unravel.

There were some improvements in US-Taiwanese relations prior to Lee Teng-hui’s instigation in 1995. The United States had continued to honor its traditional alliance with Taiwan by informal means. President Clinton sold 150 jet fighters in 1993 to the island and the Taiwan Policy Review of 1994 should have been reassuring gestures for the Taiwanese government. Furthermore, even the central government in Beijing displayed some willingness to be flexible and accommodating in the early half of the 1990’s concerning its contentious history with the Nationalist government. Jiang Zemin had put forth the “Eight Points” plan in which he outlined a correlative effort by Taiwan and China towards the termination of hostilities along the lines of the “One China policy.”

In January, Congress began to lobby in favor of Taiwan with the purpose of improving US-Taiwanese ties. The anti-China factions in the U.S. government continued to do so despite the fact that Clinton had made it a priority to avoid unnecessary friction with China. Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich publicly declared that Taiwan had “every right to be in the United Nations.” Then in March, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously voted on a resolution to give Taiwan a seat on the United Nations general assembly. Technically speaking, the United Nations is only comprised of independent, sovereign states and for the United States to officially declare its support for Taiwan in obtaining a seat illustrates a fundamental shift in US-Sino policy that had been established since the Nixon-Kissinger era. That following May, the Congressional
opinion again ran counter to general precedent when the House International Relations Council passed legislation which declared Tibet an official sovereign nation. According to this resolution, Tibet was a country that was being unjustifiably occupied by another nation-state. The majority of nation’s (including the United States) did not have policies recognizing Tibet as an officially independent nation-state. In the same brief Congress proposed to boost arms sales to Taiwan and in a vote of 390 to 0 in the House and 97 to 1 in the Senate (H. Con. Res. 53) called upon Clinton to accord an official visa for Lee Teng-hui to visit Cornell (he is an alumni member of Cornell having graduated from the university with a degree in agricultural economics). The administration and Congress clashed on these issues but Clinton ultimately proved to be sympathetic in one aspect. He and the State Department decided to grant Lee Teng-hui the visa despite advisors warnings that this would ran counter to traditional policy for the last six administrations.

The vote was so overwhelming that Clinton most likely did not want to risk transforming a resolution into official legislation, which would potentially anger officials in China. Not to mention that it was a request on such a personal scale for Lee Teng-hui to simply attend a reunion at his alma mater it was difficult to find a convincing reason to deny the Taiwanese president his visa for this purpose.

The Chinese government interpreted these actions negatively. Conservative critics that had warned Jiang Zemin not to be too accommodating jumped at this opportunity to heighten their criticism. In April 1995, as Lee Teng-hui continued his international tours he publicly repudiated Jiang’s Eight Points plan. The international community implored China and Taiwan to reconcile but Lee rejected all calls for negotiations between the two countries. He demanded that the leadership in Beijing dismiss the threat of force that it has utilized to keep any Taiwanese independence movements in check prior to any talks. Thus, Jiang and the Communist government in Beijing were both highly irritated and felt provoked when President Clinton decided to grant Lee his visa. Lee’s visit to upstate New York subsequently lead to his sentimentally provoking “Always in my Heart” speech (which was prepared for him by an American public relations firm) at Cornell on June 9, 1995. It is fairly easy to see why China was irritated with this last act.
Interestingly, it was rather obvious that this speech was a direct manipulation of the American media by playing on the sympathies of traditional, democratic values. Lee regularly invokes words such as “freedom”, “democracy”, “individual rights”, and likewise rhetoric. These excerpts are followed by implicit comparisons to mainland China by referring to the human rights violations and denial of basic freedoms that have already become familiar notions in American media:

Democracy entails respect for individual freedom, social justice, and a sense of directly participating in the destiny of their nation… Today we are entering a new post-Cold War era, where… Communism is dead or dying, and the peoples of many nations are anxious to try new methods of governing their societies that will better meet the basic needs that every human has… Today, the institutions of democracy are in place in the Republic of China; human rights are respected and protected to a very high degree… No speech or act allowed by law will be subject to any restriction or interference. Different and opposing views are heard every day in the news media, including harsh criticism of the President. The freedom of speech enjoyed by our people is in no way different from that enjoyed by the people in the United States…

Lee also portrayed China as the aggressor that was opposed to peaceful negotiations. According to his words, Taiwan was the party that implicitly approaches mainland China for a peaceful relationship. China is painted as the “big, bad” enemy.

I have repeatedly called on the mainland authorities to end ideological confrontation and to open up a new era of peaceful competition across the Taiwan Straits and reunification…To demonstrate our sincerity and goodwill, I have already indicated… that I would welcome an opportunity for leaders from the mainland to meet their counterparts from Taiwan… and I would not even rule out the possibility of a meeting between Mr. Jiang Zemin and myself…

Lastly, Lee attempts to invoke and revitalize the close bonds that Taiwan had traditionally shared with the United States. He mentions the economic ties that bind the United States to Taiwan. He refers to Taiwan as a sovereign nation consistently through the speech, and discloses his desire to see the evolution of closer US-Taiwanese ties as well as a greater role for his sovereign nation in the international community.
Yet, the Republic of China on Taiwan does not enjoy the diplomatic recognition that is due from the international community… Frankly, our people are not happy with the status accorded our nation by the international community… We stand ready to enhance the mutually beneficial relations between our two nations (United States and Taiwan). It is my sincere hope that this visit will open up new opportunities for cooperation between our two countries.  

It is, therefore, also not hard to see why Jiang Zemin (who was already being pushed by his critics and opponents) subsequently reacted with reserved vehemence in accusing the United States of playing tricks and hurting his own political credibility. Chinese American Bevin Chu has amusingly expressed his personal opinions on the annals of the internet, for Americans to “Ignore the scripted, feel-good speeches high-powered American PR firms like Cassidy & Associates have carefully coached Lee Teng-hui to spoonfeed our congress and mainstream media. Ignore especially his 1996 ‘Always in my Heart’ class reunion speech at Cornell, where he really laid it on with a trowel.”

Beijing felt that this act was a reversal of negotiations that had been previously conducted between Chinese and American representatives. Prior negotiations had implicitly affirmed that the United States would not be accommodating to Taiwanese requests. Chinese leadership began to view the Clinton administration as militarily soft and prone to inaction. The Chinese military went ahead and amplified the pre-scheduled “missile tests” near the Taiwan Strait. Although on paper the Chinese government had declared that these were no more than tests for military training purposes the implicit insinuations towards both the Nationalist regime on Taiwan and its American supporters were clearly warnings. China was inevitably and obviously displaying its displeasure over the recent wake of events between Taiwan and the United States.
On June 16, 1995 Beijing recalled its ambassador, Li Daoyu, from Washington and delayed the approval for the American ambassador, James Sasser, to station himself at Beijing until late September. For a week, starting on July 21st to July 26th, 1995, China launched a series of missiles into strategic oceanic areas and conducted “mock beach landings.” Tests of six missiles took place in an area only 60 kilometers north of Taiwan's Pengchiayu Island. The White House conducted intense series of presidential discourse between Jiang and Clinton. During his visit to Shanghai, Clinton reiterated the promise that the United States would adhere to a One China Policy in an attempt to assuage the tense atmosphere amid both Lee’s speech and the missile tests. Despite these efforts the United States ordered the aircraft carrier, the Nimitz, escorted by four vessels to tread the waters of the Taiwan Strait under the pretense that they were attempting to avoid bad weather.34

From March 8th to March 15th 1996 China launched its second series of missile tests again in waters uncomfortably close to the Taiwanese coast; they also initiated a series of exercises using live ammunition. Most likely this military activity was timed in accordance with the Taiwanese presidential elections held on March 23rd. Previously, the Republic of China was based on a single party system under martial law, namely the founding Nationalist party. The 1996 elections were to be the first time that the president was to be elected. The missile tests and exercises had the desired effect in terms of making a point. Taiwan’s economy was grossly injured and the United States was prompted into action. On March 19, 1996 president Clinton ordered two aircraft carriers to be dispatched into the Taiwanese waters (though not directly into the Taiwan Strait) in a display to deter further acts of Chinese aggression.
The press was giving the Taiwan Strait incident its due coverage. Americans were left in anxious apprehension as things seemingly had gone from bad to worse in a very short period of time. At the time, it seemed that military confrontation between China and the US was not entirely impossible.

Leaders on both sides then mobilized to prevent any further deterioration of relations. Fortunately while the Taiwan Strait missile confrontation was unfolding, the Chinese high level official Liu Huaqiu was already in Washington D.C. On March 7, Secretary of Defense Perry met with Liu, who was the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister and Director of State Council’s Foreign Affairs office. Reports indicate that they both approached the matter candidly for a timely solution; the situation was degenerating at a troubling pace. Fortunately the meeting resulted in an optimistic agreement for the continuation of “strategic dialogue” as the United States walked away from the situation with renewed appreciation for the Taiwan-China conflict. The enormous press coverage also taught the American government that “it needed to be proactive in explaining its China policy to the American people, the mass media, and Capitol Hill.”

Thus Secretary of State Warren Christopher set the tone for US-Sino relations framework for the remainder of the Clinton administrations in a speech given May 17, 1996, hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations, the National Committee on US-China Relations, the Asia Society, and Business Week. After the Lee Teng-hui/Taiwan missile crisis, Christopher’s speech succinctly described where the two nations stood in respect to one another at that point in time.

China has an important and constructive role to play in the coming century -- and we welcome it. The United States and China share many interests that can only be served when our two countries deal constructively and
openly with each other… We do not have any illusions about the difficulty of managing our relations during this period of dramatic change and transition in China. On some critical issues, we have deep differences. Our focus must be on the long term and we must seek to resolve our differences through engagement, not confrontation. We will do our part -- but China, too, must do its part…These changes have opened important new opportunities for U.S.-China cooperation on a broad range of shared interests -- including non-proliferation, peace on the Korean peninsula, and the fight against narcotics trafficking.\(^\text{37}\)

Christopher also reiterated the dangers of perceptual gaps and the ways in which mentally created obstacles have been detrimental to the progression of positive US-Sino relations. The United States and China are so fundamentally divergent from one another that disagreements and conflict are, at times, unavoidable; but that only makes it more important for the leadership as well as the public to be conscious of these perceptual gaps.

But the changes in China have also created serious strains in our relationship. In the wake of China's crackdown following the Tiananmen Square demonstrations, some Americans see China's growing power, and our differences on issues such as trade and human rights, as proof that China represents a fundamental threat to our interests. Some Chinese contend that despite our public assurances, the United States really seeks to contain and weaken China. Both views are fundamentally flawed…Given the range of our interests, and the importance of China to our future security and well-being, I believe the time has come to develop a more regular dialogue between our two countries. Holding periodic cabinet-level consultations in our capitals would facilitate a candid exchange of views, provide a more effective means for managing specific problems, and allow us to approach individual issues within the broader strategic framework of our overall relationship.\(^\text{38}\)

After his 1996 electoral victory, President Clinton and his administration’s second term in office developed fairly cordial relations with China. Sharing Christopher’s sentiments, the last episodes concerning Taiwan had been wearing and the United States decided to ameliorate relations instead of further contention. On November 24, 1996 President Clinton met with President Jiang Zemin at the APEC conference in Manila. In October of 1997 the two leaders met again during a summit meeting in Washington D.C.
President Clinton and first lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, toured China in the summer of 1998. A week prior to Jiang Zemin’s arrival in Washington D.C., President Clinton also expressed his thoughts and sentiments on the nature of evolving US-Sino relations in a speech that took place on October 24, 1997:

At the dawn of the new century, China stands at a crossroads. The direction China takes toward cooperation or conflict will profoundly affect Asia, America, and the world for decades. The emergence of a China as a power that is stable, open, and non-aggressive, that embraces free markets, political pluralism, and the rule of law, that works with us to build a secure international order -- that kind of China, rather than a China turned inward and confrontational, is deeply in the interests of the American people…By working with China and making our differences clear where necessary, we can advance our interests and our values and China's historic transformation into a nation whose greatness is defined as much by its future as its past. 39

In accordance with the speech given by Secretary of state Warren Christopher, the president reaffirmed the necessity of a relationship with China. Throughout his speech he echoed the necessity and importance of avoiding direct conflict with China; the “angry isolation” of such a powerful nation would not only be detrimental to American interests but harmful for global cooperation overall. Generally speaking, the Clinton administration would be remembered by the American public (partially thanks to the reputation created by the media) as “soft” on China, bending to Beijing’s will. However, it is an unfair portrayal as global dynamics were shifting in directions that required the United States to provide more room for flexibility in dealing with China. It was one of the first experiences since the Soviet Union, in which a powerful nation explicitly defies and challenges the will of the American government, the superpower of the world.

The following summit that took place resulted in issuance of a joint statement by Jiang and Clinton with a positive and optimistic overtone. Although diverging interests and conflicting policies were singled out, the conclusion was an auspicious outlook on US-Sino relations. “The United States and China have major differences on the question of human rights. At the same time, they also have great potential for cooperation in
maintaining global and regional peace and stability; promoting world economic growth; preventing the proliferation of weapons or mass destruction; advancing Asia-Pacific regional cooperation; combating narcotics trafficking, international organized crime and terrorism; strengthening bilateral exchanges and cooperation in economic development, trade, law, environmental protection, energy, science and technology, and education and culture; as well as engaging in military exchanges.”

The White House seemed optimistic, and the summit was generally considered a smooth and successful ordeal.

Despite these official releases public sentiment was different. Even at the press conference, Jiang Zemin endured moral lectures on human rights issues. The American press continued to portray the 1997 US-Sino summit meeting as purely for the purpose forming fundamental foundations the future development of lucrative trade relations for “corporate America.”

The state dinner that followed had included the chief executives of Xerox, AT&T, Viacom, Atlantic Richfield, Boeing, United Technologies, Pepsico, Oracle, Eastman Kodak, Motorola, Walt Disney, IBM, Cargill, American International Group, ASEA Brown-Boveri, Apple Computer, Westinghouse, Time Warner, Lucent Technologies, Mobil, Procter & Gamble, General Motors, Bell Atlantic, Miramax and General Electric just to name a few.

The following year was witness to a series of trends and events that provided a clearer definition of what “constructive strategic partnership” encompassed in reality. China was suffering from a small succession of domestic disturbances that lasted into 1999. There trends finally prompted the Chinese leadership into taking some actions that greatly increased the volatility of the human rights issue, bringing it back into the forefront of US-Sino relations.

The Chinese domestic economy was sluggish and suffering from rural unrest and widespread corruption across the board. The domestic banking operations system was fragile and vulnerable to imminent collapse. Along with economic problems, the Communist party was facing the possibility of potentially damaging political unrest and dissidence in the foreseeable future. The anniversary of five very sensitive events including the Tiananmen Square massacre followed the highly visible visit of the
President of the United States to China in 1998 which only added to the central
government’s concerns. Clinton’s presence had encouraged pro-democratic agitators and
gave confidence to dissidents. Two significant dissident groups had emerged in 1998,
which included the China Democratic Party (established on June 25, 1998) and the
religious cult, the Falun Gong. All these factors created a presupposition that social and
political stability was at great risk of collapsing. The government then took action by
initiating another campaign to track down and contain dissidents.

When the United Nations Human Rights Commission convened in Geneva in
April 1999, the United States attempted to push forward another resolution that listed the
human rights grievances of China and likewise, patronizing criticisms and lectures. This
was traditionally an event that took place fairly annually. The result angered many
human rights groups and disappointed many in the American public. The Americans
stood alone in its resolution to condemn China as all other nations present refused to
cosponsor their resolution. The American attempts at a resolution were, without a doubt,
a complete failure. Not only had traditional allies abandoned the US coalition as that
moment but a New York Times report states that those present had applauded when the
United States failed to get any vouchers.42 Disgruntled Americans blamed their
government for only making a half-hearted effort to push the resolution through. To
many people the action seemed only an attempt to quell the growing unrest within
Congress, activist groups and the western media concerning human rights violations in
China, and the apparent indifference that the US government had shown in light of them.
Sensitive relations at the end of the 1990’s were punctuated with frequent cries for human
rights. The human rights issue will be revisited again in another chapter.

From March 24th to June 20th, 1999 the United States joined its European allies in
a NATO lead effort to stop the ethnic cleansing of the Albanians in the Kosovo Province
of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The air attack, made without the consent of the
United Nations, concerned China that the United States and its allies would now be
willing to use human rights as a pretext to interfere in the private affairs of sovereign
states. Thus far actions by both countries had left the other in anxiety over what the near
future may bring.
Jiang Zemin had pushed for many economic concessions as China was then looking to vie for a seat with the World Trade Organization. Membership in this international group would carry huge benefits for the Chinese economy, removing many hurdles that had stood in the way of its development towards being an economic powerhouse. Despite all Jiang’s efforts the Americans turned down the proposition at the time. Although the Clinton administration would like to push through China’s WTO entry it was the opposition in Congress that was too great; permanent Most Favored Nation status would require the support of Congress and the President in order to stand. The “Cox Committee” had also released files, which indicated extensive and intricate information implicating the Chinese for spying on and stealing information from the United States. It was around this time that the Wen Ho Lee espionage accusation surfaced. The media had a very curious relationship with this trend; the New York Times had several misleading and questionable articles pertaining to Lee and the Chinese espionage subject. American media was instilling precepts into the minds of the public.

While Americans were beginning to become increasingly suspicious and skeptical with the Chinese, the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on May 7, 1999 ignited one of the greatest periods of anti-American activity in China. Apparently, according to American sources, the B-2 stealth bomber had mistaken the embassy for a Serbian military target despite the availability of highly-advanced equipment that would have refuted this. The Chinese officials were incredulous with the American insistence that the bombing was a mistake; the location of the embassy was not only fairly well-known and available to anyone but American officials have visited it in the past. The situation got worse as Clinton’s formal apology to the people of China turned into a censure of Milosevic instead.

Violent demonstrations swept the capital of China and the government did not attempt to curtail them nor smother the highly intense anti-American sentiment. The Chinese media also seized upon the opportunity, using the most vitriolic language to condemn the United States. However, according to sources, the Chinese government had withheld certain facets of information from their public so that the bombings had appeared as pure aggressive assault. Apparently the Chinese citizenry was not aware of
Milosevic’s ethnic cleansing in Kosovo; this I find hard to believe. In my personal experience the middle and upper class Chinese, particularly students, are very conscious of global affairs. Not to mention that the government doesn’t stand to gain much from withholding information about the Serbian dictator and since the affair was highly visible it would have been difficult for it to entirely escape the notice of intellectuals and academia. While I was in China, students knew different avenues of obtaining information despite government efforts to restrict access to western media sources. After the Belgrade bombing, US-Sino relations subsequently deteriorated.

 Nonetheless, profitable opportunities were slipping by as they two nations argued; both wanted to resume business activities as soon as possible. In compliance with the four demands that Beijing had listed (to provide enough “cover” to resume regular trade) Washington delivered a personal apology, fired one CIA operative, and paid the PRC $28 million USD for property damage in Belgrade and another $4.5 million USD to the families of the three Chinese killed and twenty injured. This was all carried out through the duration of 1999 into April 2000.

 Lee Teng-hui resurfaced in the public’s eye once again in July 1999. He antagonized the situation by releasing what in what Beijing perceived as another implicitly offensive statement, which suggested an independence movement. The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 came back to haunt the United States again, as officials scrambled to Beijing and Taipei to distill hostile feelings. The White House was becoming frustrated with the Taiwanese attempts to inflame the triangular relationship, particularly as Taiwanese officials began to go directly to sympathetic members of Congress with grievances.\(^45\) Beijing also decided to ignore Lee Teng-hui and his antics while keeping a close eye on the Taiwanese elections in 2000. It appeared that both administrations, in the United States and Beijing, were both irritated with the Taiwanese legacy that they had inherited from their predecessors. Beijing upheld the traditional and prideful stance that the People’s Republic of China was the only official China that needed to be recognized. Any indication of independence on Taiwan’s part would obligate them to take aggressive action. Likewise, Washington inherited the obligations insinuated by previous generations of politicians as well as those written discreetly in the
Throughout the 1990’s, it was the business community in the United States that had consistently placed immense pressures on the White House to preserve at least a semblance of cordial and cooperative relations with China. In 1999, following the wave of incendiary episodes, the United States and China stepped up the negotiations for permanent most favored nation status picking up after the American rejection of China’s bid for WTO entry in April. Finally after nearly 15 years of bartering, bargaining, squabbling, and negotiating China was granted permanent Most Favored Nation status on November 10th, 2001. It became the 143rd member, with a permanent seat in the World Trade Organization, amidst a sea of squabbling press coverage and editorial opinion. The entire process prior to November 10th was overshadowed every step of the way by public opinion, American media and human rights groups; conversely, corporate America and the business community were also urgently pressing the American government to grant the WTO seat as European and Japanese companies gobbled up economic opportunities in China. Business leaders were optimistic, "We're not talking about a small country that is going to be content sitting quietly at the back of the room," said Kenneth Courtis, vice chairman of Goldman Sachs Asia, who predicted that China will rapidly emerge as one of the WTO's most influential members. "China is a big player, and it is going to demand a seat at the front of the table."46

On November 11, 2001 the late edition of the New York Times reported on commingling components, which had made up the process; the article accurately summarized the controversy that came hand in hand with trade concessions.

Trade ministers from the United States, Europe and India referred to the marathon negotiations over China's admission as difficult, acrimonious and politically charged, but the admission ceremony was brief and cordial… Chinese officials have presented the nation’s membership as one of their most significant diplomatic achievements since China displaced Taiwan and took a seat on the United Nations Security Council in
1971…Today's step ensures China equal status for its fast-growing economy, though in return it will have to grant foreign companies access to its 1.3 billion consumers… But many officials say privately that the long-term implications are uncertain. "I believe that as this century unfolds and people look back on this day, they will conclude that in admitting China to the W.T.O. we took a decisive step in shaping a global economic and commercial system," said the American trade representative, Robert B. Zoellick. He added, however, that the changes China would have to make to comply with international trade rules remain a "daunting challenge." American officials have argued for years that trade commitments will force China to open areas of business that have been closed or restricted, like banking services, agriculture and retail chains. Beijing, they say, will ultimately have to improve its legal system and remove government from day-to-day interference in business affairs… Some Western experts predict that open trade and freer investment will act as sea water on a wooden pier, weakening the pillars of the Communist Party's power.47

Many Americans still expressed their doubts. "It's a lose-lose proposition," said Lori Wallach, director of Global Trade Watch, a group founded by Ralph Nader. "For people in China, the moves required by this will cause lost jobs and ruined livelihoods. And in the United States and in other countries around the world, big multinational companies will be using China; this is especially bad for the middle-income countries like Mexico, because all the companies that have relocated to those places are more likely to move to China now."48 Indeed there were many concerns from the international community as well as within Chinese leadership that the implications of the WTO entry may alter the domestic infrastructure in ways that hurt certain groups. For example, the small farmers of China who have to compete with foreign imports now that tariffs will be slashed in accordance with the requirements of membership. Likewise, the imminent influx of foreign-owned companies and private industry will predictably influence the state enterprises (which employ nearly half the working class of the country). They will
most likely resort to lay-offs. Some analysts predict that the repercussions of WTO entry will eventually exacerbate many members of the Chinese citizenry that stand to suffer losses; the front page of the Washington Post on November 11th, 2001 dramatically reads “China’s Ticket into WTO Foreshadows Revolution.”

Human rights groups naturally were embittered with what seemed to be a literal sell out of democratic morality for profit. Critics were everywhere in the media, for example the Washington Post had the biting headline “China Trade Efforts ‘Purely Retail Scut Work,’ Lobbyists say.” Although George W. Bush’s election campaign was built around the notion that Beijing was a “competitor” of the United States he was soon categorized in the same group as Clinton, as “China’s cheerleaders”. Despite a less delicate approach to US-Sino relations maintenance, Bush Jr. is a President who allies with big business and thus pursues a lucrative relationship with China despite his democratic rhetoric.

One of the most dramatic incidents to take place between China and the United States in the 21st century was the emergency landing of a Navy EP-3 surveillance aircraft in Lingshui, on the southern island of Hainan. It had crashed with a Chinese fighter plane and had to make an emergency landing on April 1, 2001. The American crew of 24 was taken into Chinese custody while the Chinese pilot was lost over the South China Sea and presumed dead. Needless to say, the media toyed with the melodramatics and high intensity of this “hostage” situation. The front page of the New York Times on April 2nd, 2001 illustrated the ensuing blame game. Chinese television broadcasts showed an angry foreign ministry spokesman, Zhu Bangzao, vehemently state, “the U.S. side has total responsibility for this event.”

American media responded with reciprocal vehemence. Accusations alleged that the Chinese military were already running aggressive plan tactics in international airspace. Some editorial pieces asserted that the Chinese espionage accusation was total fabrication: “The Chinese lie is a reflexive act of pride.” Americans displayed indignation at the fact that the 24-member crew was being held by Chinese officials; there were great concerns over whether or not their human rights were being respected.
The western media has already implemented preconceived notions of a violently indifferent, oppressive Communist regime, which only exasperated the publics’ imagination. Admiral Dennis Blair, commander in chief of the United States Pacific Command at the time, issued a counterstatement to refute the Chinese allegations that placed fault on Americans. He blamed an overzealous Chinese military policy in air space and excessive aggressiveness for the accident, “It’s not normal practice to play bumper cars in the air.”

Conspiracy theories concerning covert Chinese operations and espionage were already ingrained in the American mindset after the exposure of the Wen Ho Lee accusations in 1999. Security concerns have become an important factor in US-Sino relations, particularly as China becomes increasingly powerful (emerging more in the scope of a potential peer/competitor than a partner). This shadow of old cold war tactics was augmented by American claims that the Chinese were stealing the information on the spy plane, which they now confiscated. Once again, the media began fueling espionage paranoia as the New York Times called the EP-3 surveillance plane a “tempting intelligence bonanza for the Chinese military.” George Washington University professor and expert on the Chinese military, David Shambaugh states, “This has the potential to become a major international incident, especially if the Chinese try to examine what’s on the plane or make the crew get off.” One must take a step back and think that if the roles were reverse, would the United States have treated 24 Chinese pilots, accused of espionage, much differently, not to mention the confiscation of the spy plane? How would the American public pressure the government to retaliate particularly if an American pilot has been fatally killed as a direct result of foreign spy plane encounter? Shambaugh continues to illustrate his loyalties, “This is a sophisticated surveillance aircraft, and the last thing the military wants is the Chinese crawling all over it.”

It is also interesting to note that a similar incident took place at the height of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, in which the role of the U.S. was reversed. In 1976, a defecting Soviet pilot flew a MIG-25 fighter plane onto American bases in Japan. Despite similar allegations of international law and procedure
by Soviet officials, the American intelligence officials had spent nine weeks closely scrutinizing the plane and collecting intelligence before shipping it back to the USSR in pieces. Ironically when the EP-3 was returned, it was also shipped back to the United States, in pieces on board a Russian plane.

The new Bush administration was already faced with a fairly intricate and delicate situation and needed to exercise extreme caution. The U.S “spy plane” had crashed at a very inopportune time. Taiwan had just requested new military aid, indicating that it would like to purchase four destroyers equipped with sophisticated Aegis phased radar systems to undercut small nuclear arsenals, such as the ones utilized by China. Jiang Zemin and his administration (who were in transition out of power) had already sent envoys to the United States in attempts to discourage this sale. The Chinese leadership began to see that the Bush administration demonstrated a more hardened stance towards US-Sino cooperation, “one that views China as a military competitor first and a trade partner second.” Americans feared that the Chinese would attempt to use the spy plane as blackmail in pursuit of their Taiwanese interests.  

Nonetheless the dramatics waned away as the crew was returned safely to the United States without incident and the EP-3 shipped home. The media frenzy did not go unnoticed as a special article in The Washington Times was dedicated to the “Hollywood” theatrics that encompassed press coverage of the Hainan incident, entitled, “Saga of U.S. aircrew analyzed around world; Hainan may be ready for Hollywood.”  

This article also notes that while the American and Chinese media took turns discrediting one another in a diplomatic blame game, inciting feelings of nationalism, pride, ethics, and the like, the rest of the world had simply noted that in the end it was business interests that again rubbed out possibilities of confrontation. Italian paper, La Repubblica reports that, “The reality of business has won over the rituals of war...
wallet has stopped the hand of extremists and allowed everyone to save face.” 62 American press agencies praised the fledgling Bush administration for their pragmatic handling of the situation, calling the Hainan incident Bush’s first lesson in US-Sino politics, his “Baptism of Fire,” as the New York Post had deemed it. 63 While the American media continued to applause, the world consensus seemed to be that there was nothing particularly special to praise 64 , the level-headed approach should naturally be expected from such a high-level relationship. The London Times used metaphorical comparison to illustrate the way in which the Hainan spy plane incident appeared and then disappeared from the stage US-Sino relations, “It was not even a crisis. Beijing never panicked… Chinese foreign policy is in many ways a machine, dedicated to the pursuit of long-term goals. Unexpected events are simply fed into the machine and used accordingly.” 65 Was this just another episode of US-Sino melodramatics? It seems that the media was thoroughly entertained with this particular episode, with little notice to the fact that a Chinese pilot had lost his life.
A CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll indicated a general strain in US-Sino relations particularly among American citizens. Poll results showed that the Hainan spy plane incident affected public opinion. In 2000, 43% of American adults saw China as either an enemy or threat. The figure jumped to 69% in 2001 after the Hainan incident.\textsuperscript{67}

In light of current events, it is a known fact that foreign policy may not be President Bush’s forte. In 2001, Bush conducted a personal meeting with the exiled Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama and agreed for the newly elected Taiwanese president, Chen She-bian to take a tour of the United States. The United States, by policy and tradition, has not recognized either Taiwan or Tibet as sovereign states since the establishment of modern US-Sino relations under the Nixon administration. Although Time magazine may have deciphered these acts as “symbolic gestures”\textsuperscript{68} through which Washington may defiantly stand up against Beijing, less than tactful diplomacy seems like a more appropriate title. Bush further antagonized the Chinese government by stating in a public broadcast on ABC television that the United States would “do whatever it takes” to defend Taiwan in the face of Chinese aggression. Bush again broke from traditional precepts by specifically outlining the line of action that the United States would take including the deployment of troops; previous administrations had intentionally illustrated their Taiwan obligations in vague and ambiguous terms. Bush’s advisors immediately devised a statement in which he retracted the statements and realigned White House policy with that of Clinton and Bush Senior before him. Many considered this a “rhetorical slip, given his hurried efforts immediately afterwards to reassure Beijing and worried U.S. allies that there had been no departure from Washington's longstanding "One China" policy.”\textsuperscript{69} Despite the retractions and reaffirmation of the one China policy, the presidential comments had raised many international eyebrows including American allies.\textsuperscript{70}

During the Bush administration the Middle East absorbed the vast majority of the government’s attention as well as the press, media and general public as a result of the Al Qaida linked terrorist attacks on September 11\textsuperscript{th}. A large part of US-Sino relations then consisted of the international response to terrorism, summarized as cooperative commitment against the proliferation of arms and weapons of mass destruction. The
United States not only sought Chinese support in its so-called “War on Terrorism”, but particularly sought its aid concerning the North Korean nuclear threat, as China holds heavy strategic importance in the area.

In March 2003, the SARS epidemic broke headlines and the press resumed the negative coverage of China. Beijing was accused of cover-ups that resulted in the aggravation of the highly contagious flu-like disease. In all likelihood the accusations stand to be accurate; I base this assumption on personal experience as I was in Beijing from August 2002 to the end of April 2003. Reports in the press indicated that the government in Beijing undertook extensive measures to hide the SARS epidemic (which likely began in November) from WHO officials including hiding patients. A Western medical researcher said that this type of behavior is common in China. While researching drug-resistant tuberculosis in another province, she said, she discovered patients being kept in an elevator because the hospital did not want her to have an accurate picture of the problem. The government was portrayed as irresponsible, and indifferent to human suffering; they were apparently, according to certain reports, more concerned about how such an epidemic would hurt foreign investment and particularly the tourist industry. “Jiang (Zemin)’s unusual public criticism of the government followed an ongoing media campaign to encourage domestic tourism, telling citizens that SARS is under control. The campaign says China is safe for investment and travel, despite the WHO advisory. State-run media outlets have produced a series of reports interviewing victims who have recovered from the disease. And a state-run publishing house on April 3, published a book titled, “SARS is Nothing to be Afraid of” which reports that the disease is “almost under control and that most patients have been cured.”

SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) soon had the inklings of a worldwide epidemic. In April of 2003, the World Health Organization reported that more than 200 “infections” existed in Canada, the USA, Britain, Ireland, France, Germany, Romania, Italy, Australia and Switzerland, (although the only deaths outside Asia occurred in Canada). An international concern, coupled with the smaller outbreaks of the bird flu in Southeast Asia, caused a small spiral in the Asian market. The tourist
industry virtually dried up, Hong Kong suffering severely, as the WHO issued official
statements discouraging travel to Asia overall. Business liaisons were frozen as foreign
businesses cancelled meetings, and the finalization of contracts. Nonetheless, China
rebounded splendidly as an Asian anomaly, with a GDP real growth rate of an insane
9.1% in 2003.\textsuperscript{74}

As economic growth continuously pushes China into the forefront of international
powers, the United States has recently engaged China in its nonproliferation and anti-
terrorism campaign. Without a doubt, China has been a key character in the North Korea
nuclear crisis, often serving as middleman between the United States the DPRK. China
has also promised, amid controversy and skepticism, to curtail arms sales to nations that
can be construed as possible adversaries of the United States. The Chinese membership
in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (formally the Shanghai Six) is a testimony to
its ongoing dedication to repressing terrorist organizations in Asia. Unbeknownst to
many American college students, the SCO was established to promote economic
cooperation and regional security in Central Asia, which includes battling terrorist
activities. Membership includes China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and
Uzbekistan. The organization has also been, not surprisingly, the target of many western
human rights groups. These groups claim that in their anti-terrorist efforts they disregard
human rights, citing the human rights records of the individual countries that make up the
SCO as evidence. The SCO membership list reads like, to put it bluntly, what would
represent something equivalent of right-wing America’s worst nightmare.

Nonetheless the overall consensus seems to be fairly positive and optimistic.
“After a rocky beginning, U.S.-Chinese relations have warmed considerably under Mr.
Bush. U.S. officials have been pleased by China's help against terrorism since the
September 11 attacks and have been effusive in praise of China's role, particularly its
attempts to defuse the North Korean nuclear crisis. ‘The general trend of Sino-U.S.
relations, it must be said, is generally good,’ Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu
Jianchao told reporters… citing increased trade and investment and joint efforts on
terrorism and nonproliferation…While trade disputes and Taiwan may make for some
difficult moments … Sino-American relations have been bolstered by cooperation against terrorism and a Chinese economic and diplomatic charm offensive in East Asia.”

The most recent source of controversy has been the reemergence of human rights issues. Under intense pressure from groups such as Amnesty International as well as Congressional bodies, the U.S. government released a bitter critique of what was deemed a retrogressive year for human rights in China. The United States released their outline in Geneva at an annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher, said, “We are concerned about backsliding on key human rights issues that has occurred in a variety of areas since that time (2002).” China retaliated with their own version of a human rights critique for the United States. The report seems rather exaggerated as accounts of racism, homophobia and sexism in American society, as well as high crime rates were cited as examples of human rights violations.

It is a glaring and undeniable fact that China will continue on the successful trajectory it is currently on. Unfortunately, the global role that the United States will play in the oncoming decades is clouded. In my opinion, it is the pediculous decision-making of the Bush administration that has entirely discredited an already controversial United States in the eyes of the international community. Alliances are hanging on a thread, especially in light of the Madrid terrorist attacks and the Japanese hostage situation; traditional friends are more vocal than ever. It is no secret that the American people are likewise taking notice, and expressing their concerns.

The emptiness of Mr. Bush's Asian agenda, beyond terrorism and Iraq, is sadly representative of his foreign policy two years after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Mr. Bush's trip this year to Africa, a continent struggling with a nearly unprecedented confluence of crises, was equally content-free; his promise of help to war-torn Liberia proved hollow. The president who pledged to make Latin America a top priority has spent a total of five days in the region and so neglected its affairs that even Mexican President Vicente Fox, a onetime friend, has been alienated. Mr. Bush's meeting with Mr. Fox at the summit in Bangkok will be their first in a year. Mr. Bush vowed to dedicate himself to the war on terrorism, and his steadfastness in that cause has been admirable. But the United States did more than counter the Soviet Union during the Cold
War; it also had distinct policies to promote democracy and development and cultivate alliances in regions around the world. In an area as important as Asia, Mr. Bush ought to be able to offer more substance.  

Despite expert testimonies asserting the opposite, China still stands as the one country most likely to emerge as the next global superpower. There also exists enough professional and expert attestation supporting this theory for Americans to take it seriously. The November 2004 presidential elections will be, without a doubt, vigilantly followed by the entire world. The United States is at an international crossroads, pending on the results of the next election and the subsequent actions of the administration in office. The future of US-Sino relations will be an interesting and curious spectacle to watch, as it unfolds in the impending years.
It is no mystery that we are currently living at the height of the information age, in which we are bombarded daily by concoctions of the media blitz: images, advertisements, and 24-hour news tickers. The image is a particularly potent vehicle by which the average American absorbs his daily allowance of information each day, from television to magazines, and now the World Wide Web as well. In this information age, the American media has an unparalleled influence as it tends to dominate the networks of global information not only through formal print and press, but also through the globalization of American culture. The capacity of the American media to influence international affairs should not be underestimated. Thus, if its power is so great, a disturbing question arises as to how this weapon may be wielded as a means to influence diplomacy and policy-making. This notion particularly concerns nation-states that have been regarded as possible opponents of the United States, and all that it stands for. This notion has also been dutifully noted by China, and all those who concern themselves with US-Sino relations.

According to David Shambaugh, who has written extensive work pertaining to US-Sino relations, “(We) find that perceptions on both sides have hardened and become increasingly negative during the latter half of the 1990s and into the early twenty-first century. Given the importance of US-China relations in world affairs, this trend is of concern. Mutual images have not always been so negative.”

Give the complexity of such an important relationship its important to understand if and how the media could possibly alter the means along which American foreign policy is formulated, particularly concerning US-Sino relations. Why does the media portray China in these lights, and what sort of rationale motivates it? Rather than concentrating on the minute details of media content, this analysis will focus on the bigger framework of media contribution to
US-Sino relations, whether these contributions are confounding or constructive. Note that this chapter focuses on the American media; the Chinese media is created around yet another completely infrastructure in and of itself.

**Mechanisms of the Media**

The media is a fickle instrument. It has been already argued that the media is fundamentally is a reflection of the perceptual gaps that exist in US-Sino relations, as well as a creator of perception. Given the power it wields, it is necessary to understand some of the fundamental and scientific components that comprise the media. This is requisite in order to fully comprehend the nature by which media affects US-Sino relations. Since subjectivity, personal interpretation, and cognizant interpretation are ultimately subjects that fall within the realm of a psychology thesis, only the basics will be discussed here. Furthermore, arguments do exist which discredit the influence that the American media exerts on the U.S. government; for this thesis we will not attempt to prove whether the media does or does not exert a significant influence on policy but assume that it does already.

Within the basic analysis of the American media’s relationship with US-Sino relations (in terms of its effects on public opinion and foreign policy) there are three principal antagonists: the public, the media, and the government itself. There are different ways in which these factors will interact with one another. Notice that the differences among these interactions are subtle and have cyclical, and reciprocal influences on one another as well. For certain events the people themselves are the catalyst for media coverage. They are thus also the catalyst for imposing pressures on the government to act. The actions of the media and the government in turn, continue to affect the remainder of the public that may not have been highly conscious of the issue at hand. This is typically referred to a “Liberal Democratic Model”79. An illustrative example could be when wildlife activists and environmentalists (an arguably smaller,
collective group within the public) manage to obtain some exposure through the media revealing the Chinese habit of harvesting endangered species of shark for making shark fin soup. This will in turn draw the attention of public policy makers and high level officials. Most likely, exposure will also create awareness among the greater population, augmenting the pressure for action.

The government is a powerful catalyst for the creation of material that the American media will dedicate coverage time to. This happens to be the rule in China as the Communist Party strictly controls nearly all media outlets and prescribes the material to be covered. This “manipulation model” can also be utilized in the United States. The origin of public opinion can be traced to the materials given to the media to disclose. The Iraqi War waged by the Bush administration is a decent example of how the government may utilize media to their own benefit, although recently excessive negative coverage has hurt their cause. Initially the Bush administration had very adeptly used the media to stir public opinion; such as releasing a deck of cards to represent the most wanted terrorists. “Manipulation model” is best illustrated by the Hollywood movie, “Wag the Dog”. It is interesting to note, however, that because the Chinese media is structured around this model, the unique relationship that foreign reporters have with the Chinese government is often contradictory and frustrating for both parties. This also influences the American media’s coverage of US-Sino affairs. This will be explained in further detail later on.

It is also possible for the media and the nature of its coverage to be the catalyst for government action and policy. Often times media sources will “uncover” a startling revelation or piece of information was previously overlooked by important officials. The release of the Cox report had a similar affect; although Chinese espionage was always present in the American conscience it was the release of these reports, prompting government action that created a semi-frantic reaction from the general public. The governments’ pursuance of ingraining the concept of stolen nuclear secrets sold to a potentially dangerous and aggressive government in Beijing, inspired old Cold-War type perceptions in the public. The misguided, and perverted federal prosecution of Wen Ho Lee was possibly spurred by the media’s coverage of Chinese spies; the government
needed to look as if it were on top of matters and taking responsibility for these disclosed problems. They subsequently used Lee as a scapegoat, and the American media followed suite. The media further propagated the issue by distorting the facts and creating a dramatic story for the public. The New York Times has acknowledged its mishandling of the Wen Ho Lee incident and subsequently removed many back issues on the subject from Lexis Nexis as a result of their unprofessional coverage. Finally, in turn, the American public’s perception of Chinese spies was reinforced.

The model that will pertain the most to this thesis’ analysis of the American media’s relationship with US-Sino relations policy is the infamous “CNN Effect.” Within this theory the media is a very powerful catalyst for both public opinion and policy. The CNN effect is a notion that is among the most discussed among journalist circles and media debates. “This term captures a complex reality in which powerful, real-time images of unfolding human events and tragedy are potentially directed into every electrified home in the world, setting off demands for a policy response by governments, markets, and multinational organizations globally.”81 The “CNN Effect” often drives the human rights agenda not only through the official press or news media, but also through avenues of popular culture. It happens to be the media model that most neatly fits with the western conception of the media’s role: objective truth-seekers who seek to deliver as much information as soon as possible to the public. “In the West, particularly in the United States, the journalist’s job is to inform the public, as objectively as possible, without any particular agenda. While this standard may not always be achieved, it is the professional’s definition of the goal.”82

CNN Effect (also known as the “CNN Curve” or “CNN factor”) has been enhanced by the onset of modern technology. The internet and modern satellites have created “real-time” news in which information can now circulated the globe in a fraction of the time that it took before. People can watch the news unfold in front of them as it happens in “real-time.” Similarly, politicians and policy makers also receive their news in real-time creating an urgency and immediacy for action. The timeframe for decision-making has significantly shrunk. Furthermore, the availability of information also heightens public conscience of certain events, further pressuring the government for
action. Altogether this means that policy and opinion are formulated rapidly as events occur.

When considering the CNN effect there are other factors to keep in mind, among which, include the selection of provocative images and the amount of time that the western news networks will dedicate to their coverage. Both of these factors will play major roles in determining the public reaction, and successive government reactions based on the pressure that mounts. More than just a poetic cliché, a picture is indeed worth a thousand words. Imagery is able to deliver an entire concept, idea, or message to us in the sphere of a moment. It has the ability to create a human identification that crosses cultural and geographical borders, which is simply not possible in print. Moreover images leave deeper impressions upon the human mind, especially under event-driven media coverage. The best example would be the aforementioned “Unknown Rebel” footage during the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989. These types of visuals tend to persist until an equally captivating and engrossing image displaces it. Currently, there has been no image powerful enough to supplant the Tiananmen portrayal of China despite the Clinton administrations “self-conscious” attempts to “create visual records during the 1997 and 1998 summits and the 1999 visit of Premier Zhu Rongji to the United States.”

Equally important is the time that networks dedicate to certain events. The general correlation in the public mind is that the importance of an event parallels the amount of coverage that is dedicated to it. Generally the American public pays little attention to news coverage regarding China. Only Tiananmen and the Hainan “hostage” situation was seen to break this mold. Even heightened periods of tension in the Taiwan Strait received little attention from the general public. “China received just 64 minutes of airtime the year before (1988), while in 1989, the year of Tiananmen, news on China totaled 881 minutes.”

Coverage time also coincides with two different divisions of news: “event-driven” or “trend stories”. Trend stories are evolving subjects that are typically more complex and involve more debate; along the lines of the CNN Effect, trend stories take a
longer time to affect government policy. Thus, the time dedicated to these trend stories is often brief, characterized as punctuations within the more provocative event-driven ones. On the other hand, a significant amount of coverage time is dedicated to these event-driven stories because its dramatic and exciting nature draws in audiences. Another reason that they garner so much airtime is because event-driven stories, such as Tiananmen, are pervaded with powerful visuals. Television news coverage is pervaded with event-driven stories, and American news networks generally overlook many developing trend stories taking place abroad. Instead, the coverage of China-related topics is mostly dedicated to the event-driven stories. Unfortunately the majority of Americans still get their news information from television sources, and thus are susceptible to seeing China in what James Mann has called narrow “frames.” The television media presents a fragmented, and incomplete picture of China to the American audience. “…News coverage of the PRC tends to be superficial, simplistic, and to ignore many central subjects. In short, it is hard to get good coverage of a trend story (as the gradual transformation of china) in an event-driven medium, and in a medium in which the length of the average sound bite has dropped from about twenty seconds to seven or eight seconds in the last twenty years.”

In addition to provocative imagery, time and saturation of media coverage, Stephen Livingston has categorized and defined the “conceptual variations of the CNN Effect,” illustrating three possible means by which the media exerts its influence as the catalyst. The media can be the accelerant, impediment, or “agenda setting agency.” As an accelerant, the media would put heavy pressure on the government for action, often delimiting the amount of time available to officials to make a decision. As an impediment the media can hinder the progression of official government policy. This is possible through the degradation of government morale, altering the decision-making process through pessimistic, negative, or slanderous coverage. At times negative press coverage will also hurt the morale of the general citizenry, thus taking away popular support from government action; an example is the highly covered rebel activity taking place in Iraq which leads many Americans to question the lingering presence of American soldiers. Another avenue by which the media acts as an impediment is when
the exposure of certain materials is a direct threat to operational strategy. One last note on media’s role as an impediment, the flood of excessive information may also inhibit the decision making process of officials.

As an agenda setting agency the media essentially acts as a party directly involved with the formation of government policy’ or it spurs action from the politicians by raising the issue at hand into the highest realms of society’s consciousness. For example, it seems to be the case that the media acts as a third party compelling the government to take initiative on China’s human rights violations. For whatever reason that this thesis will not speculate upon, the American media has taken upon itself to serve as an agent out to tarnish the reputation of China. The next chapter will approach the subject with deeper analysis and illustrations.

**Perceptions and Misperceptions**

The substantial meat and foundations of American media’s portrayal of US-Sino relations can be traced to subjective interpretation and perception. Cutting out the finer details, essentially negative media portrayal is a rough sketch of the historical, cultural and ideological “gaps in perception”. Misguided perceptions and misinterpretation are thus, dangerous impediments that preclude the genuine facets of US-Sino cooperation. “Misperceptions do contribute to serious mutual miscalculations… miscalculations of intentions and capabilities by either or both countries can play a critical role in precipitating confrontation.”88 The perceptions of national leadership, the roles of fear, desire, and their effects on international relations are elaborated upon in the studies conducted by Robert Jervis89 and Jack Levy90.

At the most fundamental level it can be affirmed that the average Chinese mindset and American mindset are inherently divergent. Western theology adopts a very focalized and narrow point of view, putting heavy emphasis on individualism, independence, and an ordered world that makes sense as created by one, singular, omnipotent Supreme Being (a “single-ordered world”). The Western mind is most
comfortable perceiving a stable world with degrees of permanence rather than one that is in constant renewal, changing and unpredictable. If there is change the Western mind looks immediately for accountability, or a reason as to why it occurred. This has been called “Western causal and linear thinking.”

The Chinese mindset is a neat contradiction in many ways, a culmination of 5,000 years of history and culture. One direct product of this is the tendency to perceive the world in a very broad, wide, peripheral scope stretching across an infinite perception of time. Change is something that comes hand in hand with time, there is little permanence in the world; “… the American tendency to be impatient for change often clashes with the seemingly eternal patience of the Chinese.”

Chinese culture also is fairly synonymous with Confucian principles no matter how diluted by globalization. As a result the Chinese still have an emphasis on the greater good of the people, the family, and the group over individualism. Too many personal grievances are often misconstrued as selfishness or disloyalty. Chinese relationships are often guided along the intangible aspects of personal relations rather than the Western preference for written and decreed rules and laws, with a preoccupation for “saving face”. The Chinese absorb diverging ideas and diverse cultures so long as it does not threaten the stability of the greater nation as a whole.

Philosophy and religion are good examples as China has encountered nearly every religion in its history and dually absorbed it, yet never adopting an official national religion. Often times foreign religions are combined with Confucian elements and Chinese traditions, which are not viewed as unorthodox by the Chinese people. Those who cite the repression of the Falun Gong as clear evidence of China’s lack of religious freedom are simplifying the situation. Falun Gong is singled out as an anti-government group, revolutionary and thus a threat to national stability.

Inevitably, both cultures have absorbed certain aspects of the other (especially in China’s case) due to the globalization of culture in this modern age. Nevertheless, the deep cultural traditions that infuse both mindsets and create altering perceptions should never be underestimated. As anyone who has frequently interacted with the Chinese can understand, ancient traditions still run very strongly despite foreign influences.
With the risk of over-generalizing, modern US-Sino relational perceptions can be divided as thus: There is an American tendency to impose democratic values universally in a patronizing manner, tendency to take global responsibility and feel entitled to intervene in China’s affairs, all with munificent, good intentions. Chinese have often countered this, perceiving their nation as a humiliated “victim” nation still infused with fierce pride from a glorious historical past, seeing the United States as an arrogant nation keen on interfering with domestic affairs and recreating China in its own image through “peaceful evolution” and “neo-imperialism”, and entitled to regain its former status through self-determination.

I’ve seen the book “The Coming Conflict with China” and Samuel Huntington’s “The Clash of Civilizations.” It’s ridiculous. For more than 150 years, China has been subjected to foreign aggression and we have suffered egregiously. China’s still got a long way to go to become a developed country. Even when China becomes strong and developed, China will never get involved in aggression against other countries or interfere in other countries’ internal affairs. –Vice Premier Zhu Rongji, interviewed May 1997

Americans have alternated fairly between two state of minds; viewing China as “benign”, “constructive”, and full of “potential” or as “faceless”, “threatening”, and “aggressive.”

America, as a nation, tends to be self-righteous in asserting its influence often where it is not wanted. There is a tendency to impose its own democratic morals universally, supporting its actions with magnimonious crusades in the protection of freedom and truths.

If the last few decades teach anything, it is that American influence—our ability to change the actions and nature of other governments – is magnified by our ideological assertiveness. –Gary L. Bauer, president, Family Research Council, October 1997

There is a blurred line between what is good for the United States is also good for the rest of the world, which on many occasions is false (i.e. American involvement in Guatemala and Brazil during the twentieth century). No example stands clearer than the current Bush administration. Not only has the administration repeatedly announced
America’s unique obligation as a world power to intervene on behalf of freedom and democracy wherever its interests seem challenged, but is currently engaged in a tumultuous war involving numerous international interests. This sentiment does not strictly adhere to the administration but is also prevalent among the American population; throughout the Iraq ordeal and the recent coup d’état in Haiti, Americans were often split evenly as to whether or not their government is obliged to intervene. “Americans’ understanding of twentieth-century history is that when their values or interests were under assault in the far corners of the globe, the conflicts often grew until the United States was drawn into them from the sidelines. Thus Americans are predisposed to conclude that it is better to intervene early rather than to be drawn into large-scale conflict later, under more disadvantageous circumstances… Nonetheless, what Americans may view as prudent involvement may be viewed by others as unwarranted and unwise intrusion.”

Misperception thus can dangerously lead to miscalculation concerning other nation states. Thus is the danger in misperception as fostered by the story that the Americans tend to tell themselves. Thus we can now see how the media is a reflection of perceptions and also a nation’s own self-perceived vision of itself, which does not always run parallel to international perception. “Mass media are critical in that they reflect the underlying social values, historical lessons, and social and political organization of each nation. They mirror and reinforce the national experience and interpret events through the prism of that experience.” Media not only creates powerful images to affirm and motivate American purpose abroad, but in a cyclical relationship, both reflects and creates general public opinion.

Stories in the American media tend to be governed at any given time by a single story, image or concept. In the 1950s and the 1960s, the “frame” was of China as little blue ants or automatons. In the 1970s, following the Nixon administration’s opening, the frame was of the virtuous (entertaining, cute) Chinese... In the 1980s, the frame was that China was “going capitalist.” And for most of the 1990s, the frame was of a repressive China. The reduction of China to a one-dimensional frame affects coverage of China in many ways, both direct and indirect… The problem for media coverage is that China itself changes far less than do the one-dimensional American frames of it. –Jim Mann
The American Media and China

Brief Analysis

As this thesis has already established, few would continue to contend that productive and cooperative relations with China are not relevant for the general, long-term welfare and prosperity of the United States. China and the US are deeply intertwined in matters concerning the preservation of stability and mutual interests in Asia, combating terrorism, cooperative non-proliferation, environmental issues, international crime, cultural and academic exchange, and most significantly international trade. As David Shambaugh had indicated, the overall media coverage of China in recent years has been overwhelming negative in nature.

Jim Mann, as a professional journalist himself, has expressed his own opinion as to how the America press habitually covers China in narrow “frames”, conveying an incomplete picture of a complex nation to the general American public. However, it is to have an understanding of the nature of the relationship that members of the American press have with the Chinese government. The complexity of the Chinese media system also fosters perceptual gaps and misunderstandings. Essentially the Chinese press is living in a highly constrained and restricted environment, which has recurrently been the target of western criticism. Within the confines of this “manipulation model”, the government essentially dictates what is covered, the time dedicated to coverage, the saturation of the subject, and the imagery that is utilized. Ultimately the Chinese operative concept of the press is to provide information on a need to know basis, along
the lines of a service-oriented industry. The priority of Chinese media is the preservation of national stability, and promoting the welfare of the state as a whole. This concept can be traced to the fundamental gaps in theological and cultural perceptions that were discussed earlier.

Cultural gaps have also lead to secondary side effects. Chinese officials have traditionally viewed information as a privilege more than a right, thus when granting foreign journalists the advantage of covering current events in China they assume the right to control facets of coverage. The news industry is another service industry within the Chinese social system. Actions on the part of Chinese officials have varied in the last two decades from bugging hotel rooms, harassment, interrogation, removal of press privilege and credentials, being followed, and on occasion even expulsion. This behavior alienates and frustrates western journalists, many of whom already have a superficial understanding of Chinese culture and society.

A harmful characteristic that is endemic to Chinese media is the tendency for officials to withhold information, not only from local media but especially from foreign journalists of whom they already possess negative stereotypes. This is further complicated by the fact that when event-driven stories occur, news interest is at its highest, but the Chinese government becomes even more adamant about compressing information; it becomes highly sensitive to the “free flow of information” during periods of crisis and instability. Chinese officials also make themselves inaccessible for comment during these periods, which inevitably forces the western media into delivering incomplete stories.
They also have a tendency to first convene and discuss the situation before releasing an official “position” to the media. The Communist government consciously attempts to present itself in the most positive and professional light as possible. “Chinese officials simply assume (sometimes with good reason) that their views will be put in the worst possible light by western media… (and) the price a Chinese official might pay for a serious misstep is greater than the price to be paid by officials in many other systems.”

Unfortunately in modern real-time news coverage this subsequent time lag has detrimental effects, which result in the biased and incomplete presentation of events. Where the government makes itself unavailable, the western media will seek other sources from which they can generate their coverage. More often that not, these are the dissidents, disaffected, and unhappy individuals who are very eager to express their moral outrage and frustrations. Consequently, the “frames” that are presented to the American public are from these groups. Lastly, the structure of the Chinese media system makes news coverage a difficult task, which will only discourage them from getting the accurate, and complete picture; it is similar to an uphill battle at times.

It is not only naturally inherent for western media to expose dark, dirty secrets but there is also a very conscious desire to do so. This type of news creates intense public interest, as can be illustrated by the excessive coverage of presidential sex scandals. “In the PRC, exposing the dark side of Chinese society is not traditionally seen as compatible with the promotion of social solidarity whereas U.S. news organizations reserve their highest accolades for those who bring light to the dark corners of politics and society—at home and abroad.”

American media is a business, and like all businesses there is a need to generate and retain client pools. Typically the press will saturate coverage with
both event-driven and highly provocative (which is most likely negative) news.

According to David Lampton, one member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was quoted to have said, “Good news is bad news. Complicated news is no news. Bad news is good news. The best news is simple bad news!” At times the line dividing news coverage and entertainment blurs. Danny Schechter, a producer that has worked with CNN and ABC’s 20/20, states: “It started with the Gulf War--the packaging of news, the graphics, the music, the classification of stories . . . Everybody benefited by saturation coverage. The more channels, the more a sedated public will respond to this . . . If you can get an audience hooked, breathlessly awaiting every fresh disclosure with a recognizable cast of characters they can either love or hate, with a dramatic arc and a certain coming down to a deadline, you have a winner in terms of building audience.”

Fortunately, the new “Fourth Generation” of “technocrat” leaders, led by Hu Jintao, are becoming increasingly adept at public relations. Beijing is learning (slowly but surely) how it can now interact with western media to its advantage. This illustrates an attempt by the Chinese to narrow the perceptual gap, which is better than nothing as the “gulf between the Chinese and American conceptions of the role of the media is very wide and probably will remain so for a long time.” Nonetheless, with each new generation of leaders, mutual understanding increases.

There is no doubt that an inherent perceptual gap between Western media and Chinese media exists. Their contending beliefs about the roles that media has in society. Ultimately these perceptions create perceptions that conflict with one another. This fomenting an adversarial and unhealthy relationship. However, there is substantial
debate concerning the nature and manner in which American media coverage is affecting
US-Sino relations. The nature of western media has been already detailed; thus the
question arises as to whether or not, and if so how, it influences public opinion and the
policy-making process.

It is likely, as many observers assess, that the influence is significantly great and
more often that not plays the role of an irritant in the relationship. Negative media
coverage inculcates a stereotype in the minds of the public, or even more dangerously so,
possibly in the minds of the politicians. Thus, it is plausible to deem western media an
obstacle for the American administrations that desire to create a mutually beneficial
relationship with a country that could potentially be the next major superpower. In the
same breath, the media also aggravates the Chinese government (which continues to view
western media portrayal as means by which China is again victimized). It is also not
interested in lectures about freedom of the press.

Once an exotic, and mysterious obscurity to the American public, China has
recently emerged in modern history as a familiar (although not always celebrated or
approved) fixture in national, regional, and even local media. China has also become a
common reoccurrence amongst mainstream pop culture. In an episode of The Simpsons,
one of the most successful and most watched television shows in the United States, Bart
Simpson receives a “Krusty Toy” that was “Made in China.” The camera zooms into the
Great Wall of China and a sweatshop owned by foreign company, “KrustCo”, where
lines of laborers assemble toys under the frowning face of Krusty the Clown reminiscent
of Mao Zedong. The speaker drones, “Questions are decadent,” and “Fast hands means less whipping.”

With all issues considered, some question the excessive blame that is laid upon the shoulders of the American media. Do we exaggerate the amount of influence that western media holds over public opinion and policy-making procedures? The National Committee on United States-China Relations (NCUSCR), American University and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University hosted a conference in 1998 to specifically discuss American media coverage of China. The conference was a collection of American, Chinese, Australian, and British editors, as well as, journalists, academics and policy-makers. Their purpose was to analyze and discuss the U.S. media’s coverage of China. The following is a sample of the official report that was subsequently released:

Western participants acknowledged that U.S. coverage of China contains mistakes and inaccuracies and is sometimes based on inadequate sources. However, they said, given the high level of attention that China receives in the U.S. press, errors are bound to occur. Furthermore, they pointed out, no people, in any country, are ever satisfied with how others portray them… American journalists are genuinely most interested in "the story." The U.S. press does not have an independent agenda to damage U.S.-China relations, nor does it want to use its valuable access time prescribing what the Sino-American relationship should be…

More frequent than specific charges of inaccuracy were complaints that U.S. coverage of China is unbalanced, overlooking in large part China's progress over the last two decades. Chinese participants pointed to U.S. coverage that portrays China as a tightly-run, brutal dictatorship with prison-like conditions without any stories about Chinese progress in a variety of areas that might serve to balance the equation… Several Chinese participants expressed their belief that American journalists try to prove that everything Washington does is right and that all of the problems lie with Beijing. Even if there is no conspiracy to demonize China, they claimed, the effect of coverage which likens China to a prison by consistently focusing on human rights problems and the issue of Tibet has
the same result. It was their sense that American reporters want drama and they want to be part of that drama…

Many instances of one-sided reporting on the part of U.S. journalists were offered over the course of the conference: On the subject of religion, a conferee asserted that China has 100 million believers in five major religious groups, but U.S. reports tend to focus only on the "underground" churches, stereotypically labeling China as "authoritarian" or "totalitarian" in its policies on religious tolerance. In July 1997, the depiction in the Western press of a democratic Hong Kong under a communist takeover discounted China's view of the handover as the end of colonial rule and the repatriation of Hong Kong to the motherland. Western reporting referred to Tung Chee-hwa, appointed by China to be the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, as "hand-picked" by the Chinese government; this terminology was never used, however, for departing Governor Chris Patten or his British predecessors, although it would have been equally appropriate. Finally, one Chinese conferee suggested that there have in fact been annual U.S. "media campaigns" against China in the last three years: stories on Harry Wu in 1995, Shanghai orphanages in 1996, and campaign finance in 1997. U.S. media, he said, seem excessively and inappropriately concerned with human rights, disorder in minority regions such as Tibet, political dissidents, and arms sales.

In general, Chinese participants were especially concerned with the recurring images of Tiananmen in the American press. One Chinese charged that the media "never let the U.S. public forget." Moreover, he claimed, the U.S. press has made no attempt to investigate and report on current Chinese public opinion regarding the incident.104

As evident from this conference and also from popular Chinese books such as “China That Can Say No,” and “Behind the Demonization of China,” the Chinese are highly critical of western media. However, the western accounts for disparities and what seems to be biased coverage are only rationale; these reasons and explanations nevertheless still affirm the existence of negative imagery and skewed coverage.105 Despite the varying opinions on the degree of influence American media exerts on US-Sino relations and policy, it seems safe to assume that a correlation exists. The strength
of that correlation will vary on a number of contributing factors (such as the administration in power, the image content, simultaneous domestic issues, etc.).

Lampton notes, “Although the goal of journalists in the United States may be to tell a story of importance with objectivity to large numbers of people, the U.S. mass media nevertheless provides an arena wherein domestic policy and power contenders wage their battles. The weapons are selective, distorted leaks and carefully scripted, contrived events. Media becomes the vehicle by which policy agendas are formed and articulated, coalitions are built, and power struggles are waged.”106 American professionals present at the NCUSCR conference have also conceded that the media is taken into serious consideration by the government on an assortment of matters. As mentioned in the first introductory chapter, the American government is internally divided and competitive on US-Sino relations issues; it would not be a surprise if one faction manipulated the power of western media for its own gain, to edge out another. Lampton reports that politicians have been known to leak information from a “variety of sources in Washington’s bureaucracy and Capitol Hill.”107 Lampton also notes that from 1990-2000, as the Clinton administration and Congress battled over MFN status, the “U.S. national security community hemorrhaged information every time.”108

Along similar lines, some of the recorded examples given by these participants testify to the following:

…Speakers countered that the media have a significant impact on policy, citing examples such as government leaks to the press intended to direct attention to a particular issue, and situations where government officials considered the official analyses "so overcooked and hedged" that they were not useful and chose instead to rely on information from trusted journalists. One American also noted that when he was in government, the
first thing he read each morning were the press summaries, not the intelligence reports…

…An American stressed that it was not journalistic analysis that influenced policy, but visual images. Such occasions, he said, included both the Bush decision to go into Somalia and the Clinton decision to withdraw; similarly, pictures of the Berlin Wall coming down prompted immediate attention to revisions in U.S. policy.

A Chinese participant commented that American media coverage of China informs the thinking of the U.S. government and the American policy elite by setting the agenda for debate. Press reports have become increasingly important to members of Congress as they try to assert control over the debate on China policy. American media also affect policy-making indirectly, since politicians heed polls and adjust policies accordingly. Furthermore, interest groups such as Human Rights Watch, religious organizations, and pro-independence groups for Taiwan and Tibet increasingly use the press to influence policy-making.

From the conference we can establish that the American media is a vehicle by which the CNN Effect can efficaciously alter public opinion and government policy, whether it is consciously or unconsciously. As a reflection of deeper psychological mechanisms, the media illustrates that the United States and China are still deeply locked in their respective perceptions of each other. The two governments still diverge on the definition of what US-Sino relations should look like and what is proper policy. There is little doubt that the media has had an impact on these matters for extended misconstrued coverage ingrains unconscious stereotypes, and misperceptions in the minds of the public, and policy-makers are, unfortunately, just as susceptible. “Televised images
quickly become a central part of the foreign policy debate. They affect which crises we
decide to pay attention to and which we ignore. They affect how we think about these
crises, and I have little doubt these televised pictures ultimately affect what we do about
these problems.”

Trends in the American Press

The first introductory chapter had briefly hinted as to the nature in which the
American media has catered to US-Sino relations. The following is a succinct summary
of these trends to create a more stable foundation upon which the next chapter will
divulge into the finer details relevant to western media coverage of human rights versus
trade incentives.

One aspect that must be pointed out is that despite all the issues concerning the
media, the American public may not be paying that much attention to foreign policy
issues in the first place. Americans present at the NCUSCR conference have ascertained
that overall Americans “broadly disengage from foreign policy news of all kinds.”
Both Lampton and conference attendees site these statistics to support the fact: recent
events garner only 10-15% of the public’s attention such as Jiang Zemin’s 1997 visit to
the United States (10%), the return of Hong Kong to the mainland (14%), and our
concern, the MFN debate (10%). As a basis for comparison, the Tiananmen crackdown
of 1989 had nearly half the nation following the unfolding events closely with 47%.\textsuperscript{111} Keep in mind that this was a highly provocative, event-driven story saturated with imagery.

Secondly, American television does not dedicate a significant amount of coverage to China. The majority of media coverage concerning China and US-Sino relations is in print media. Because the vast majority of television news is event-driven, as a result TV coverage of China is overwhelmingly negative in tone. Furthermore, since the majority of Americans still receive their news from the television; the inevitable consequences are thus, the skewed and biased pictures of China. Furthermore, even professionals in the business can be prone to racist and prejudice inclinations. After the Hainan spy plane incident, this was reported to have taken place:

"Ching ching chong chong."—comedy troupe Capitol Steps in a skit at the April 3 opening reception of the American Society of Newspaper Editors convention. Hundreds of editors laughed as a white man, dressed in a black wig and thick glasses, conversed in a made-up version of Chinese.

That is not to say that print media counterbalances this by any means. Print media is also negative in tone and presentation. A good amount of China media coverage is conveyed through the opinion and editorial pages of newspapers. There is hardly a week when A.M. Rosenthal doesn’t renew his anti-Chinese epithet on the pages of the New York Times. The main ideas propelled by this sort of print media would have the public believe that the Chinese Communist party still runs a totalitarian dictatorship, simultaneously oppressing its own helpless citizenry and threatening global stability with expansionism. There is also substantial literature that is dedicated to tarnishing US-Sino relations such as, Edward Timperlake and William Triplett’s right wing piece: \textit{Year of
the Rat: How Bill Clinton and Al Gore Compromised U.S. Security for Chinese Cash and Ross Munro and Richard Bernstein’s The Coming Conflict with China. Chinese nationalism becomes a threat, as it garners momentum for China to take an active international role. Modernization threatens the United States directly as China creeps closer to higher technological and military standards, augmenting its martial capacity.

The re-emergence of China threatens to replace the United States as the dominant power in Asia, both economically and militarily. With every new ally that China creates, the US feels a psychological threat to its authority. Right wing writer Bill Gertz lists the meeting between leaders of Ireland’s Worker’s Party and the bureau Director-General of the central Committee as evidence of a left-wing network lead by Communist China. Others voice their concern over the wide Chinese Diaspora, particularly in Southeast Asia. The Chinese in these regions tend to be significantly wealthy and powerful, making conspiracy theorists fearful that they could possibly form a “fifth column” or extension of the Chinese Communist Party. For example, in Indonesia, the ethnic Chinese only composite 5% of the overall population but make up 75% of the nation’s wealth. Even in the United States, the Chinese are the most successful entrepreneurial group with profits that even outstrip Whites. However, China has only attempted to exert its influence in territories that have traditionally been under their dominion for centuries. It is United States that has an international reputation for officiating “regime changes” in other nations.

Consequently the remedy that is implicitly proposed by western Media falls along the lines of “peaceful evolution” and “soft containment.” American interests have
consisting be characterized by a desire to remake other countries in their own vision. There are basically three tenets by which these campaigns follow and are constantly repeated by politicians ad nauseam: democracy, capitalism, and Christianity (as evidenced by the first presence of Americans in China with missionary intentions). U.S. Ambassador James Sasser recounts a banquet that took place in Beijing in 1997, where a U.S. congressman approached the Chinese Vice Minister asking, “I just want to know, if you’ve accepted Jesus Christ as your personal savior.’ The (Chinese Deputy Foreign minister) looked stunned, and he said, ‘no.’ The whole table almost fell on the floor. The congressman was quite serious. That was his litmus test.” Although the congressman’s statements are not a mirror reflection of the media’s sentiments, they are consistent with the notion that China’s “improvement” is based on how much is resembles traditional American values; in this case, adherence to Christianity.

“Americans really understand little about Chinese society and tradition and they readily pass judgment on China according to their own history an culture, and their prejudice against communism.”

A 2003 study by Alexander Liss examined the content of four major newspapers from 2000 to 2002: the Washington Post, the New York Times, the Lost Angeles Times, and the Wall Street Journal. His conclusion was although with varying degrees in reporting style, the consensus of these highly respectable newspapers was to portray China in a negative light. The New York Times and the Washington Post have the strongest predilections for denouncing China, the Los Angeles Times “provides a somewhat more balanced perspective. Articles that deal with China as a threat also present the more nuanced aspects of China’s development into a world power.”
attributes the Wall Street Journal’s positive overtones to its role as primarily a business newspaper; thus the majority of articles focus on China’s economic potential and modernization programs.

Liss categorizes the main, reoccurring, themes: (1) the inevitable conflict between the United States and the PRC, (2) Chinese aggression towards Taiwan, (3) the PRC’s human rights violations and “repressive political system,” and (4) the internal instability, breakdown of social order, backwardness and corruption. It is reasonable to conclude that despite all the progress that China has witnessed, the majority of western media has decided to interpret this growth as a threat against Americans interests as well as a harbinger of conflict. With the concepts discussed in mind, the next chapter will begin to analyze the third theme. What sort of relationship does the American media have with human rights violations in China, as well as the economic sanctions that are being used to blackmail China? Does the media affect public opinion and/or government policy? What kind of conclusions can we thus come to?

However, American perceptions of China are somewhat difficult to interpret, as they have been very inconsistent throughout history, alternating in cycles, punctuated by crisis and friendship. According to David Shambaugh, “…previous research posited that the United States and China held ambivalent and contradictory mutual perceptions and images of each other. That is, Americans and Chinese held fundamentally contradictory cognitive stereotypes of the other.”¹¹⁹ Warren Cohen succinctly divides the American periods of perception into five simplified stages: (1784-1841) the Americans perceive China with deference, (1841-1900) perceptions turn contemptuous, (1900-1950) America

During periods of euphoric engagement, China becomes a charming anomaly in foreign policy. During what is generally dubbed “Second Age of Admiration,” and “Second Age of Benevolence,” China was portrayed as actively progressing on the road towards modernism. When bilateral discussions first began, the optimism that pervaded the White House was carried over into the media. The following is a chronological series of Time magazine covers. The reader will notice that the fluctuation of tone is evident as US-Sino relations slipped in and out of cordiality as well as disillusionment. There is a 1971 cover of Time magazine, which depicts the American table tennis team that had been invited to tour Beijing. Happy faces, and easy stances as well as the words “China: a Whole New Game” suggest that positive changes had created a potential ally. Ping-pong diplomacy was an early example of positive coverage of China in modern US-Sino relations. Compare the charming 1971 cover to the previous 1963 cover illustration. Angry Chinese leaders navigate an overloaded ship through chaotic waters in an evident negative portrayal of the Communist party.

Ping pong diplomacy and the Nixon visit are followed by an ominous cover against the Communist bloc in Asia. Strangely, the 1986 cover exhibits a scrapbook collage of Deng Xiaoping. The late 1980’s (prior to Tiananmen in 1989) was
characterized by another period of US-Sino engagement. The western media especially made efforts to paint Deng Xiaoping as the visionary leader who would take China there, next to the side of the democratic United States of America. Ironically, when this issue of Time magazine went to press in 1986, Deng Xiaoping was actually losing his grip on central leadership which would ultimately contribute to the increased visibility of demonstrations prior to 1989.
Time Magazine Cover, April 26, 1971

Time Magazine Cover, March 6, 1972.
Time Magazine Cover, March 5, 1979

“Deng Xiaoping: Man of the Year”
Time Magazine Cover, June 8, 1987

Cover of Time Magazine, June 12, 1989.
For the majority of the 1990’s US-Sino media coverage entered another period of negative press. Politicians and mainstream pop culture echoed negative sentiments within western media as well; the public stereotype was being fully enforced by the media outlets around them. The following two political cartoons mock the US-China-Taiwan triangular relationship that persistently reared its head throughout the 1990’s.

“If we dig deep enough, they say, we can go all the way to China or Hong Kong but not, at this point, to Taiwan.” (One small boy digging a hole in the sand to another, on the beach.) Published in August 18, 1997 issue of the New Yorker.

This cartoon mocks American foreign policy because the boy cannot officially recognize Taiwan as a sovereign state. The latter cartoon also takes a stab at the hypocrisy in foreign policy. Generally speaking, the American public as well as American media still retained their loyalties to the democratic government on Taiwan. Ideological sympathies created a sense of outrage that their government was dismissing cooperative relations with its traditional ally in favor of the largest Communist nation in the world, after the collapse of the USSR. The father in the second political cartoon professes his love for his son but he must nonetheless still turn him over to mainland China; similarly government rhetoric may sympathize greatly with Taiwan but actions do not follow so closely.
“Your mother and I love you, Nick, but we’ll soon be turning you over to mainland China.” (Father to little boy at dinner table.) Published in July 7, 1997 issue of the New Yorker.

The following cartoons continue to mock the “soft on China” policy that the latest three presidential administrations have adopted.
“Frankly, it sucks. On the other hand, there’s nothing in it to offend China.”
(Publisher speaks to writer about his book. Refers to a book by the former Governor of Hong Kong, Christopher Patten. The manuscript was deemed offensive to the Chinese regime and not published.) Published in March 16, 1998 issue of the New Yorker.

“Now, Clinton—there’s a man who knew how to apologize.” (One man at a bar to another.) Published in September 10, 2001 issue of the New Yorker.
Mr. Bush and Congress should put the Chinese leadership on notice that the Most-Favored-Nation status doesn’t come free. Kowtowing to Beijing had little effect on Chinese repression, but money talks. –Holly Burkhalter, Director of the Washington office of Human Rights Watch.122

The Hainan plane crash incident has generated huge amounts of media. The melodramatics of the “hostage” situation created great avenues for entertaining press coverage. The following are a series of examples:

“I don’t pretend to know who these Chinese people are. I know they’re small, maybe one or two feet high. I know they sound funny when they talk. I know the womenfolk have sideways vaginas. But underneath their scales, they’re just like you and me.” – Saturday Night Live sketch April 7, 2001, in which Alec Baldwin plays an American marine held hostage on Hainan island attempting to incite a takeover of the entire nation.

"I will be in favor of apologizing [to the Chinese] the moment they apologize for all those menus they keep leaving outside my front door. . . . I've got considerable sympathy for the Red Chinese—despite the fact that if my dog were a member of the American crew, Jiang Zemin would have eaten him by now." —National Review Online editor Jonah Goldberg in his April 4 column.

“If I were president of the United States, I would declare war on the Chinese, but not just because they held 24 of our folks on Hainan Island for 11 days. . . . We should unload the big ham on China because of all the annoying artsy-craftsy crapola they manufacture and send over here. . . . Real men wouldn't have to waste their afternoons slogging through craft emporiums looking at faux leopard-skin hat boxes if it weren't for the Chinese slapping together all of this garbage and unloading it over here.” —Austin American-Statesman staff writer John Kelso in his April 15 column.

The last quotation also made a reference to another substantial matter that pervaded US-Sino relations in the 1990’s. Trade with China had increased by volumes and the effects thereafter were increasingly visible among all sectors of American
society. While the business community could clearly see the benefits of this developing relationship, many other Americans such as the western press, were highly critical.

“I’m as aware of the evils of Communism as anyone, but good God, when you think of eight hundred million Chinese in terms of franchises...” (One man to another as they look out over a pier.) Published in August 5, 1972 New Yorker.

A majority of the criticism was rooted in the human rights violations that marred trade relations. The governments foreign policy retained elements of hypocrisy as it continued to banter about higher moral principles while still rewarding China with trade incentives throughout the end of the twentieth century into the present.
‘Human-rights issues aside, you will soon enjoy the benefits of trade with China.’ (Man’s fortune cookie at a Chinese restaurant.) Published in July 18, 1994 issue of the New Yorker.

“My government is very concerned about your government’s torture and maiming of potential consumers.” (One government negotiator to another, possibly oriental negotiator, as they sit in armchairs. May refer to China trade policies.) Published in July 21, 1997 issue of the New Yorker.
“We saw the Great Wall and lots of pagodas, and I have a transplanted stomach.” (Man on talking on phone.) Published in January 7, 2002 issue of the New Yorker.

The 14th Party Congress comes up with the formula: "Socialist Market Economy", to be inscribed in the Constitution the following year. Meaning: from now on, making profit is OK, as long as you use the word "socialist". 1992
Under Jiang Zemin's leadership, the 15th Party Congress reveals its plan to sell most state-owned industries. In a word: privatization!

Tens of millions of workers are to be laid off with no social protection.

Is this socialism - or capitalism? It might be the worst of both worlds for the average Chinese... Sept. 1997

Bill Clinton pays a visit to China..., June 1998.
September 2000.

BEIJING 2008


The 1990’s also witnessed the increasing concerns of Chinese espionage and military confrontation.

“To be completely frank, we have now discovered all your country’s secrets, except how to make a million dollars in one’s spare time at home with no personal investment.” (Chinese diplomat talking to U.S. diplomat.) Published in May 31, 1999 issue of The New Yorker.
‘Nuclear Secrets with Snow Peas’ (Sign behind Chinese take out counter reads; ‘Today’s Special—Nuclear Secrets With Snow Peas $7.95.) Published in May 17, 1999 issue of the New Yorker.

“China now says it will withdraw its opposition to the missile-defense shield if the F.B.I. builds it.” (Man watching the news.) Published in May 28, 2001 issue of the New Yorker.
Finally, in 2003 SARS became an increasing concern of the international community. There was a human rights twist in that the western press consistently demonstrated the central government’s apathy to curtailing the virus. Many also took this opportunity to reveal the backwardness and inhumane conditions of Chinese hospitals.

Appeared first in Guandong province, a mysterious new respiratory disease spreads through Asia. The planet is worried about SARS. Not the Chinese Communist Party, which is only afraid of transparency. «Everything is just fine!» they say. March 2003.
April 2003.

The instructions of the party were not able to stop the epidemic.

...Let's try medicine then.

April 2003.
The initial allure that had attracted foreigners to China was fueled by economic interests. Early relations with the United States were shaped when imperialist powers delectably carved out their “spheres of influence,” and force-fed international trade. After China’s unsuccessful courtship with self-imposed isolation, the inception of formal bipartisan relations had further fueled the onset of globalization in China. Undeniably the Chinese then began to take personal initiative to augment their role within the international economic network. As illustrated in previous chapters, since Deng Xiaoping’s prominent reforms China’s modest and weak market grew stronger as it was further enveloped within globalization. For China the definition of globalization can be understood to be the expansion and enrichment of access that non-national competitors have to national markets. The definition of “market” is further elaborated upon to include the broad range of all possible, existing markets such as social, cultural, recreational, intellectual property, literature, film, music, sports, merchandise, commercial service, etc. The potential of US-Sino trade relations has almost always been apparent to the American government, ever since Nixon’s first attempts to open bilateral talks. However when the internationalization of the Chinese economy finally began to take swing, their expectation was not only met but the outstanding and
profitable results only demonstrated that there was an enormous amount of potential yet
to be tapped.

In 1977, China ranked 30th among the world’s trading nations with an
international net trade worth of merely $15 billion a year.\textsuperscript{124} It was highly introverted
with virtually no international role. By 1982, the GDP had risen to $221.5 billion; by
1992 it had more than doubled into $454.6 billion and by 2002 more than quadrupled to
$1,232.7 billion. Between 1982 and 1992 the GDP growth rate grew at 9.7%. After the
Asian economic crisis, China’s GDP had slowed to 7.5% in 2001. As aforementioned,
2003 had exceeded analysts’ expectations by demonstrating a GDP growth rate of 9.1%
(rebounding after a potentially dangerous fiscal year due to the SARS epidemic).
According to Emma Broomfield, “At a growth rate of 8%, an economy doubles it seize
every 21 years.”\textsuperscript{125} With these phenomenal numbers there are whispers from many that
China is now situated to meet or surpass the United States in economic competence and
ability. However, there are those analysts who predict that the rate will begin to ebb,
estimating a projected 7.5% into 2006.\textsuperscript{126}

In order for a more thorough assessment of the economic situation a basis for
comparison is required. To put things in perspective the following are some of the World
Bank’s statistics for the Untied States of America: the United States GDP was $10,416.8
billion in 2002 (nearly ten times larger than China’s 2002 GDP worth). However the
United States’ 2002 GDP growth rate was 2.3%, and currently struggling in the face of a
small economic depression.\textsuperscript{127} Faced with huge unemployment prospects and the threat
of outsourcing entry-level jobs, the psychological impact and significance that China’s
growth has on Americans should not but underestimated.
In 2003, with its 1.3 billion people but a GDP of just $5,000 per capita, China had emerged as the second-largest economy in the world after the US (measured on a purchasing power parity basis). It is no wonder why these sorts of statistics may have psychologically shook American professionals and politicians. Inevitably the nature of economic interdependency has created certain unavoidable issues for both the United States as well as China. Trade sanctions have evolved into a dangerous tool for one nation to use against another for diplomatic maneuvering and/or political gains. The most dominant issue within the American mindset, which justifies trade and economic sanctions against the PRC, today is the human rights record of the PRC. Debates have punctuated US-Sino relations for the past two decades. Foreign policy and trade policy are directly associated with another. The business community is recurrently pressing for free trade with the most populated nation in the world, while human rights groups and many concerned American citizens believe that the United States has an obligatory role to commit itself to the democratic moral principles that the nation was built upon. It is not an easy matter to settle. Not only does “a trading partner that imposes sanctions hurts it own economy” but also the sacrifice that either side asks for carries another basket of implications and consequences.

Key issues arising from US-Sino economic relations include the enormous deficit, American job loss, intellectual property rights, Prison Labor exports, undervalued currency, unfair double standards for foreign companies in China, inadequate business laws, etc. To fully explore all of these problems would exhaust the thesis. However there are certain elements that need to be analyze in order for a more thorough comprehension of how human rights affect economic relations.
One implication of the growing economic interdependency was the more influential role that the American Congress finally began to take. As always, the domestic political framework of the United States greatly affects US-Sino relations from one administration to the next, from one era into another. Traditionally, security and regional stability are concerns that the President and his administration assume greater responsibility for. However, economic relations and trade laws are within the realm of Congressional offices. The most important piece of legislation that had given Congress significant weight in US-Sino economic transactions is the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which became Title IV of the Trade Act in 1974. Sponsored by Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson of Washington and Representative Charles Vanik of Ohio (both Democrats), the Jackson-Vanik Amendment is a key element in the normalization of US commercial relations with China. The amendment establishes the requirements for any “non-market” (read: Communist) country to meet in order to first access US Government financial facilities and subsequently to receive Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status. This prohibition also encompasses financial credits from the various organs of the American government (such as the Export-Import Bank, the Commodity Credit Corporation, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation).

Essentially the criteria is based upon the country’s emigration policies; chiefly the right to emigrate freely and without unrealistic financial burdens. Implicitly, the criteria cover all facets of basic human rights, and prohibit the United States from establishing economic relations with any country that does not comply with these requirements. A country’s compliance with the Jackson-Vanik Amendment requirements must either exist, or if not, the President may waive the requirements under specific conditions. It by
using this Amendment as a vehicle through which US-Sino relations was able to finally achieved “normalization” through economic avenues, rather that political ones. In 1979 President Carter established an Agreement on Trade Relations with the PRC, which was approved by Congress January of 1980. The great significance in this amendment lies in the fact that it provided an annual occasion in which Congressional members vied with the administration and State Department over granting MFN status to China. It is over this status that the majority of the early human rights and trade debates will center on. “Trade and international economics have joined the foreign-policy table. Clinton is the fist President to really make trade the bridge between foreign and domestic policy.”

Throughout the majority of the 1990’s the MFN debate receive a substantial amount of public attention, particularly due to the consistent coverage of the matter by the American media. Human rights groups (as well as organized labor rights groups) have stressed presidential administrations to link human rights improvements directly with economic sanctions since the establishment of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment with China. For the purpose of this thesis we will limit press samples to those published after 1989.

It can be argued that human rights have been a prominent concern for the United States since the short period that predates the Tiananmen crackdown. Although both parties used the term frequently prior to that date the current stigma was born during the 1980’s; the Chinese equated “human rights” with the self-sovereignty of oppressed nations. Beginning in 1979 China attended the United Nations Human Rights Commission summits as a cautious “observer”. It officially became a member of the
Human rights Commission in 1982. The United States and China were then courting one another during another phase of good relations; it was during this time that Deng Xiaoping had been named Time magazine’s “Man of the Year” for his “left-wing” reforms. American journalists and reporters had been welcomed to China as a token of this flourishing relationship. Members of the Western press were on hand to cover Gorbachev’s tour of China. Concurrent to Gorbachev’s presence was the unique surge in pro-democratic protests. Reporters obviously saw the potential in reporting on the large student demonstrations that were taking place at the time, many pieces which became front page news. A significant amount of students were interviewed, expressing both their pro-democracy sentiments as well as their demands for the Communist government. The Chinese that were interviewed were vehement in their reports revealing gross human rights violations and the denial of basic freedoms at the hands of the oppressive Chinese government. The message was rammed home when the visual stream of unarmed demonstrators being plowed down by Communist tanks near Tiananmen reached households in the United States. From then on, the New York Times, the Washington Post, and other prominent members of the media dedicated substantial amounts of coverage, nearly daily, to political prisoners, arrests, abuses, etc. The human rights violations and China link also evolved into an accepted norm within American pop culture. Human rights groups fueled their sense of moral outrage by pushing the American government to open their eyes to the oppression of the Tibetan people as well as the Uighurs of Xinjiang province (two ethnic nationalities traditionally dominated by China living on “autonomous regions”).
Both the Communist government in China and the administration in the United States began to view their economic relationship as leverage against the other. Both of these countries saw their respective advantages as a form of economic enticement for the other. For the American government, especially the Congress, China’s dependency on Western technology, its dependent export economy, and overwhelming desire to modernize could be utilized as a form of blackmail to reform Chinese policy and jurisdiction according to their own vision. Or at the very least the lifting of certain economic sanctions imposed since Tiananmen in 1989 could be served a means of reward for good behavior. On the other hand, the Chinese had interpreted the temptation of its economic potential as its own personal means of leverage. Indeed, there is truth in the Chinese perspective as well as the American one. There was significantly enough pressure on corporate America created by the increasing presence of the Europeans and Japanese reaping benefits from trade with China that the American business community feared that they were not only were in early getting left out but that their competitors would getting a “bigger piece of cake”. They pushed adamantly for free trade with China. The Boeing Company is illustrative of this development. Immediately after Tiananmen and the ensuing trade sanctions, the State Department had given Boeing permission to circumvent these sanctions and sell four commercial 757-200 jetliners to China, with a total value of $200 million.\(^{133}\)

Therefore it is immediately after Tiananmen that we already begin to see a conflict of interest and the emergence of American hypocrisy. Although this particular Boeing deal had been organized and well-planned previous to the Tiananmen incident, President Bush and the State Department did not feel that the crackdown should merit a
complete retraction of it. Officials representing the State Department insisted that these waivers did not represent a “softening” of President Bush’s sanctions, but the move was nonetheless met by criticism both from the public, media and internal members of the government. Then Californian Democrat and member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Tom Lantos lamented, “My concern is that there are powerful forces in this country that are ready to do business with China irrespective of what Chinese human rights are… these people have many spokesman within the Administration.”134 The economic attraction is pervasive in the State Department’s reasoning, which claimed that they were thinking of the long-term implications that the decision would have for a “potentially lucrative market for civilian aircraft”.135 The State Department then subsequently granted Honeywell Inc. waivers to provide the requisite navigation systems for the Boeing aircrafts. The New York Times reported that, “A State department official said it would be a mistake to block American companies from selling planes to China, allowing airplane manufacturers from other countries to make the sales.”136 In direct contrast, Republican Representative from NY, Gerald B.H. Solomon, retorted, “We ought to be going to our allies to get them to join us in putting our foot down with the Chinese, instead of just saying that if we do not sell airliners to the Chinese somebody else will.”137

The Boeing case that immediately followed after the most explosive display of Human Rights oppression is a perfect example of the forces at battle in this human rights vs. trade debate. In hindsight, with a few scattered exceptions, the corporations and business community have been more victorious. Although the United States was successful in getting their allies to follow suite with large economic sanctions on China
including ostracizing China from global institutions like the World Bank, the same rhetoric from corporate America was augmented as time passed. Eventually, the American domestic economy became increasingly intertwined with the health of US-Sino trade relations. During the first Bush administration in the early 1990’s estimates place about 100,000 American jobs dependent on the America export economy going to China (this is not including “service goods” exported). This number increased by 50% under the Clinton administration. The charms and attractions of such a lucrative market proved, indeed, to be China’s leverage.

After the Boeing sales, Bush voided the sales of certain airplane components to the CATIC (the China National Aero-Technology Import and Export Corporation), which although deals with commercial aircrafts also conducts some research and development for military aircraft parts and engines. An article in the times was quick to point out that CATIC has a questionable history, using the word “steal” to describe its research of foreign developed technology. In a following article that describes China’s “bitter protests” to these actions, the reporter implies that China should therefore consider the release of the pro-democratic dissident Fang Lizhi if they want the U.S. government to consider lifting sanctions. Likewise the majority of publications create a highly suspicious and negative picture of arms and technology trade with China. Press coverage not only tarnishes the PRC’s reputation but any pro-China government officials that support these actions as well, such as Bush and Clinton. Although the threat of economic sanctions has been demonstrably effective in matters concerning security and nonproliferation, the human rights story is vastly different.
Sanctions have proven to have limited effect on the human rights issue however. While China has been ready to cooperate on the United States demands on issues such as non-proliferation and arms sales, they continue to aggravate American officials and the public with human rights violations. Despite big business interests and the White House’s demonstrated desire to increase open trade between the two nations, human rights stands as an unsightly bulwark before them due to both the grievances of Congress, human interest groups, some members of the public, and the media. As Shuxun Chen remarks concerning American interests in China, “In the United States, generally speaking the Administration is more realistic and advocates taking the ‘engagement’ policy toward China, and the Congress and the media are concerned about values and ideologies, and they prefer to take the ‘containment’ policy toward China. When the relation is going on smoothly, the ‘engagement’ and the ‘partnership’ win advantage, but whenever something happened, the ‘containment’ is in the lead.”

Thus the trend has become since the 1980’s. The white house pressured heavily by public sentiment, media and activist into threatening China, and for the most part, China would call the bluff. Under both Bush and Clinton they were granted the renewable “most Favored Nation” status, despite the fact that China had not met the human rights conditions that were issued by the US government. Bush and Clinton were both criticized for their lackadaisical efforts to push China for human rights reforms, and both deemed “soft on China” administrations. Despite domestic protests, the Chinese have often viewed the excessive coverage over Chinese human rights violations as attempt to undermine the authority of the Communist government, or rather another subversive attempt at “soft evolution.” All American attempts to further publicize
accounts of human rights violations within international diplomatic channels, such as through the annual U.N summit in Geneva, further aggravate Chinese officials. The Chinese are also usually careful to point out that the United States also has a history of human rights violations itself. This year the Chinese retaliated by releasing an account of the human rights violations that take place within the United States. As Harry Harding puts it succinctly, “ ‘American support for protest, American espousal of political liberalization, and American sanctions against the suppression of dissent were regarded as evidence of a concerted American campaign to subvert the socialist system in China and to encourage its evolution into a capitalist order.’ ”

However the Chinese began to take America’s human rights threats into serious consideration after the Kosovo incident of 1999. Against the wishes of the United Nations, the United States and its NATO allies used military force to remove Milosevic and his Yugoslavian government from power. Technically the members of the United Nations must adhere to council rules; one of which states that member nations are not to conduct such large-scale military maneuvers against another country prior to the entire council’s approval. The NATO allies had personally assessed the human rights situation and came to the conclusion that circumstances warranted immediate, interventional action. Observers noted that this was the reemergence of a fairly recycled diplomatic strategy, which now dubbed “New Strategic Concept” but falls along similar lines with “white man’s burden.” Within the context of this new strategy, countries such as the United States and/or Britain may subjectively judge the situation in other foreign countries and decide whether internal crises justified the intervention of more powerful nation-states (can be read to mean the United States and its European allies). Not
surprisingly, Beijing became very apprehensive and disturbed after Kosovo; the United States had demonstrated its disregard for state sovereignty. Beijing interpreted these actions as a possible threat in the near future, particularly concerning Taiwan and/or Tibet.

A study of four major American newspapers in America by Alexander Liss discovers that “articles within this theme (human rights) were th emost, numerous group of the study sample.” Numerous articles dedicate coverage to specific individuals who are victims of oppression at the hands of the PRC, not just the key figures such as Fang Lizhi and Wang Dan either. In a fairly recent February 2003 article, the New York Times briefly mentions the progress in dissident expression that has taken place in China within its introductory paragraphs, “…China has edged toward more pluralism and openness in recent years, that much celebrated and persecuted class -- dissidents -- has struggled to redefine its role in a society where once radical ideas are increasingly mainstream.” However the remainder of the article continues to criticize the continued violations; whatever progress takes place is never quite good enough. Attention is dedicated to the individual dissidents, whose names most likely disappear from the reader’s memory as soon as the put down the article. For example:

"It's a big change that they are willing to have activities with us and are very sympathetic," said Liu Xiaobo, who still lives under police surveillance.

"Even officials now say they want democracy, but they still oppress us, arrest us and exile us," said Ren Wanding, 58, who has spent his adult life as a dissident, in prison or under the eye of the police.
Dr. Hu Shigen, a physician, is halfway through a 20-year prison term for suggesting that China permit press freedom and trade unions. Jampel Changchub was sentenced to 19 years in prison in 1989 for translating United Nations human rights documents into Tibetan.

Liu Di, 22, a Beijing university student and chat room organizer, charged this year with subverting state power for posting satirical essays on the Internet. 146

This is a common technique used by journalists. Articles published in many newspapers will specific the identity of victims in intimate detail for dramatic effect. The writer thus creates a significant human bond between the reader and the people being described within the context of the article, generating more sympathy and/or outrage. It is by illustrating the conditions described in the article with human faces that the Chinese government appears even more apathetic and oppressive towards basic human rights. The persistence of these small articles only ingrains this image into the minds of the American citizenry. For example, nearly fifteen years after the Tiananmen crackdown the New York Times prints this small article in its April 15, 2004 issue:

A former leader of the 1989 Beijing pro-democracy protests is in critical condition after an extended hunger strike in a Chinese prison, a human rights group said. Human Rights in China said the former leader, Zhang Ming, was sentenced in September to seven years in prison on economic charges related to his Shanghai business. He started a hunger strike in November to protest what he described as bogus charges and harsh prison conditions. He has been "reduced to a skeletal condition," the group said. 147
The Associated Press & Local Wire, which is publicized in various newspapers also utilizes this effective technique.\textsuperscript{148} Another trend is the unfair incarceration of dissident groups and individuals. Recently the most visually discernible is the Falun Gong religious cult. “Articles which detail the arrest, torture, or expulsion of the members of this sect do not give the average, uninformed reader a pleasant image of life in the PRC—and such articles are many. Other stories show a government that imprisons its citizens in mental institutions for political dissent or holds mock elections only to provide a rubber-stamp legitimization process to its own unshakeable rule.”\textsuperscript{149} Falun Gong reserves reverence from many Eastern-minded Americans who practice the religion themselves and likewise consistently contributing anti-Chinese editorials.\textsuperscript{150} American supporters even incite trouble on the mainland and are, as a result, detained like other members.\textsuperscript{151}

Falun Gong coverage not only creates the impression of unjust incarceration but the oppression of religious freedoms, something that Americans hold as a natural right. Articles illustrate brutal tactics within Chinese jails that force members to recant their beliefs and “brainwashing” individuals in the process.\textsuperscript{152} Also widely publicized by human rights groups and the media is the oppression by the Chinese government of Christian sects on the mainland; reports indicate that many Christian churches suspected of loyalty to the Pope rather than the government are driven underground. Needless to say that the aggressive tactics of a Communist entity against Christianity will most definitely fuel the sense of outrage within the American public. A report by the New York Times illustrates these facts, with the title, “2 Christians Ordered to Die As China Acts Against Sect.”\textsuperscript{153}
Police brutally is also illustrated by Western media to envelope the common Chinese citizenry as well as the dissidents. Articles illustrate the brutal tactics and harassment of local people at the hands of a “brutal” police force. According to reports, the citizenry lives in fear; they dare not report all offenses and crimes as many protestors are “embarrassing” for the government and immediately repressed or put under house arrest. Crime prevention tactics of the Chinese police force are portrayed in a medieval tone, vilely corrupt, violent and biased. A Washington Post article describes the tax collection technique of officials almost as if they were seizing money unjustifiably from the innocent poor.

For a significant portion of the 1980’s the American media and likewise, the public, concerned itself over the ethnic oppression of the Tibetan people. Negative coverage of the Chinese presence in the Tibetan Autonomous Region also infiltrates major media outlets, whether it’s the newspapers, magazines, or movies. The Tibetan phenomenon has surprisingly charmed the American public in ways that give it a degree of potency. “The Dalai Lama… is extraordinarily popular in America. The political and spiritual leader of Tibet gets far greater access to the people of America and the corridors of power than the president of Taiwan. While in Washington, the Dalai Lama met President Bush and members of Congress, while Taiwan’s president is barely allowed into America.” Western press coverage insists that any improvements within Tibetan-Chinese relations is purely cosmetic and continues to illustrate the terrible oppression of a peace-loving group at the hands of a brutal regime. The youth of the United States takes a great interest in Tibetan freedom. Popular musicians stage “Free Tibet” concerts that are highly publicized, and every lecture given by the Dalai Lama is attended by
thousands of fascinated young Americans yearning to embrace Tibetan culture. “Free Tibet” organizations are scattered across universities across the country.

Many concerned citizens call for their government to take action as it becomes apparent that “America fails to endorse political rights for Tibet's people.” Likewise there is also recent activity by human rights activist groups on behalf of the Turkish, Islamic Uighurs that live in Xinjiang. Oddly enough, in a post-9/11 article published in the Boston Globe, the Chinese government and the Chinese culture is criticized for its unfair “stereotyping” and treatment of the Muslim groups within its country.

The dispute between Beijing and the Muslim Uighurs dates to 1949, when the region was annexed by China. But since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, China has cast the conflict as one driven by Islamic fundamentalism.

"Since 9/11, people's perception of us [Muslims] has changed," Abdul Qadeer, 20, a migrant in Beijing, said recently as he set tables at the West Wind cafe. "We were always the outsiders; now we are the enemy." At Beijing's Central University for Nationalities, Muslim students seemed exasperated with what they called China's cold war against Islam. In Xinjiang, "we were not allowed to grow beards or fast during Ramadan. If you did, you were expelled from school," said Yaseen Mohammad, 22. "Even now, I would like to grow a beard, but I worry it will become more difficult to get a job." He paused then added, "And no Chinese girl will look at me."… Zheng Hufeng, 49, a retail store manager in Beijing, is one of those who admits to having antipathy toward Muslims. "These people
only want to fight. They are dangerous." Such knee-jerk, stereotypical responses that brand the entire Muslim community are alienating ordinary Muslims, Khader and other Muslims in Beijing say.  

However true these reports may be, the article seems slightly ironic, as the United States has also been stigmatized as nation, which grossly stereotypes and ostracizes the Muslim population after 9/11. The public that reads this article hopefully catches that the accusations thrown at the Communist government in China, stands pretty parallel to the gross violations of human rights that the Bush administration has conducted in the United States after the 9/11 terrorist attacks (such as the unwarranted arrest and detention of suspected terrorists in Guantánamo Bay, Hate crimes against people of Middle Eastern and even South Asian descent, etc.). The questionability of this article is further illustrated by a correctional note added stating, “BECAUSE OF A REPORTING ERROR, AN ARTICLE JAN.17 IN THE FOREIGN NEWS SECTION ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF CHINESE MUSLIMS ERRONEOUSLY SAID CHINA ANNEXED THE XINJIANG REGION IN 1949. THE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT REASSERTED AUTHORITY OVER THE AREA THAT YEAR. XINJIANG HAD LONG BEEN PART OF CHINA.”  

The complexity of Chinese relations with the ethnic nationalities within its borders is something that is too often overlooked by the uneducated Western observer. While it is not to contend with reports certifying the existence of unfair treatment of ethnic minorities, the issue is not so simple as elementary oppression and dictatorship by a heartless Communist regime. “By and large, the focus remains on those glaring examples of government repression which, taken out of context and not examined
in balance, paint a picture of a brutal and repressive regime.” This is an example of “simple bad news is the best news.”

With exceedingly few exceptions, the only positive coverage of China by the western press focuses on the economic progress and reforms that it has achieved in recent years. The Wall Street Journal often dedicates portions of its coverage to illustrate the wonderful progress that China has achieved, even running advertisements about Chinese trade and prosperity. A Morgan Stanley advertisement covers an entire page with descriptions of Chinese economic progress such as, “Yu Shi Ju Jin (That’s Chinese for, ‘Look out world, here we come.” … The economy doubles every decade, exports every five years. Within a decade, China promises to become the world’s largest trading nation, etc.” and illustrated with pictures of a dragon resting atop of the globe and a hand grabbing noodles from a bowl with chopsticks. An interesting trend among western media though, is to continue to portray the indifference of the Communist government for the suffering of its people even in light of such optimistic progress. The New York Times and Washington Post favors negative coverage of the aftermath and consequences of modernization and the transition into a market economy, such as increased corruption, wealth disparity, and migrant workers.

There is an excessively negative tone and manner in which the western media covers matters pertaining to China. Although it is evident that the government has opted for a more diplomatic relationship with the Chinese government the press and the public are still highly sensitized to the oppression and violations enacted by the Chinese government. With only a small number of Americans following US-Sino relations developments closely, it can be assumed that these major papers and media outlets serve
as the sole guide for American’s general knowledge. With that in mind, the highly negative nature threatens to create a biased and unbalanced view. “By depicting China as a country that aims to challenge US power abroad, as well as refuting those principles and values that compose the American way of life, these papers are gradually persuading their readers to view China as a threat. Perceiving a country as one’s enemy will affect a government’s behavior accordingly: it is a dangerous mistake, which can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.”
US-Sino relations have come a long way since 1972 but as illustrated is far from maturing in the near future. Relations have been tumultuous and cyclical, jumping back and forth between enchantment and disillusionment. Perceptual gaps have made US-Sino relations difficult to manage at best and at times hostile. The curious relationship that the western media has with US-Sino relations has only augmented these perceptual gaps, fueling negative sentiments and misconstrued stereotypes from different eras, creating obstacles for a productive and cooperative relationship. While the role of the media is not immense in foreign policy making (since the administrations have often not echoed the sentiments of the public and media in matters of human rights and trade sanctions), it has an underlying effect in sculpting not only the American public’s opinion on China but the mindset of individuals who may become future leaders in government.

US-Sino relations have changed since the post-Cold War era. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, US-Sino relations could no longer depend on strategic security balance as a crutch upon which they form their relationship. As administrations struggled to find a substitute the modernization of China under Deng Xiaoping ushered in economic trade relations, which inevitably replaced bygone Cold War fears as the rationale for relations. Undoubtedly China is in the process of constant re-evolution, and internationalization of the economic system (such as WTO entry) is having an enormous impact on this process. The reemergence of China as an economic powerhouse carried with it many consequences, which included a volatile relationship with the Bush and
Clinton administration. Chinese officials looked on anxiously as the White House and Capitol Hill jostled with one another to formulate their priorities in US-Sino relations. In hindsight the path that the Clinton administration had chosen to take towards active engagement and cooperation was the wisest choice to make. The highlight of this administration was, first, the official linkage of human rights and trade sanctions and then afterwards, the reversal of this decree. The lesson to be learned from this, as Lampton puts it, “pertains to unilateral American sanctions a stools of foreign policy. Unilaterally imposed U.S. sanctions aimed at the PRC have been most effective in the economic area, sporadically effective with respect to proliferation concerns, and generally ineffective in the human rights domain… using economic threats to achieve human rights objectives can create so much collateral damage to allies and nationalistic backlash among those you are seeking to assist that sanctions become demonstrably counterproductive.”

If these allegations stand to be correct then the western media may have more of an elaborate role in US-Sino relations than it seems to. Although the effects are not immediate nor are they readily apparent, inculcating biased and unbalanced values into the minds of the public will ultimately jeopardize peaceful US-Sino relations whether its to a minute degree or a significant one. The American national experience has perpetually interlocked the nation with its democratic morals and principles. This is understood. Likewise, the Chinese national experience has engendered a completely different set of beliefs and traditions. It is from these historical, cultural, and ideological disparities that the trouble with perceptual gaps arises. There are dangers inherent in the media’s narrow, incomplete coverage of China. As Lampton had illustrated, it is like looking at China through a “straw tube” with little or no peripheral vision.
Although it may be overshooting to require the general public to possess a general knowledge of Chinese history, cultural and ideological differences, as well as the unique mass media systems that the United States and China possess, it is not too much to ask leaders to have a sophisticated comprehension of this. Media coverage may continue to be an eternal source of friction, creating tension within US-Sino relations but it is necessary to understand that the media only provides half the story. Consistent negative portrayals of the next superpower will only hinder progress. “The narrow focus of China reporting… and the concentration on negative news have an inherently distorting effect.”\textsuperscript{165}

While media can be a powerful median by which policy agendas and personal campaigns are won, it does not facilitate responsible leadership or decision-making. As US-Sino relations enters a new dimension in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, we can only hope that western media will take heed and be consciously aware of the weight it carries. China has already demonstrated its potency and the United States is currently at an international crossroads after a highly controversial administration took office in 2001. A healthy relationship with China can only help the United States step forward.

“The importance of history does not lie in what happened, but in what people think happened and in the significance they ascribe to that image of past events.” -- Dennison I. Rusinow\textsuperscript{166}

“Mr. Nixon has made an act of faith in rationality. He believes that the long run it is better to engage China in a civilized dialogue than to maintain a fixed posture of hostility… everyone hopes that events will justify his act of faith.”\textsuperscript{167}
“We have at times in the past been enemies. We have great differences…
As we discuss our differences, neither of us will compromise our
principles. But while we cannot close the gulf between us, we can try to
bridge it so that we may be able to talk across it… What legacy shall we
leave our children? Are they destined to die for the hatreds which have
plagued the old world, or are they destined to live because we had the
vision to build a new world?” --Richard Nixon\textsuperscript{168}

“All Nations live by myths. That is, they paint a picture of the past that
satisfies their present needs but does violence to the historic record. Some
myths are beneficial. They are those that strengthen a nation’s confidence
in having been, and being, able to do what the tasks of the moment
demand of it… Other myths are pernicious. They draw from a distorted
reality lessons for the understanding of the past and the charting of future
action which please collective emotions but lead judgment and action
astray.”\textsuperscript{169}

-Hans J. Morgenthau

“The experience of China means that you will never again see singly; the
contrary of every idea in your life and culture looks as sane and reasonable
as the idea itself. Your consciousness is bifurcated once and for all…the
every old truth is half a new lie, every perception half a deception.” --Bill
Holm\textsuperscript{170}


http://www.time.com/time/time100/leaders/profile/rebel.html
21 Ibid.  http://www.time.com/time/time100/leaders/profile/rebel4.html
http://www.time.com/time/archive/preview/from_search/0,10987,1101890605-151969,00.html
http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe...5=cfc3a3f3b6e50a2e896da965d659043, Central News Agency.
“Gingrich Says Taiwan Deserves UN Membership.”
30 http://www.news.cornell.edu/campus/Lee/Lee_Speech.html
31 http://www.news.cornell.edu/campus/Lee/Lee_Speech.html
32 http://www.news.cornell.edu/campus/Lee/Lee_Speech.html
33 http://journeyeast.tripod.com/taiwan_independence.html
36 David Lampton, Same Bed, Different Dreams, p. 54.
37 http://www.asiasociety.org/speeches/christopher.html
38 http://www.asiasociety.org/speeches/christopher.html
39 http://www.asiasociety.org/speeches/clinton-speech.html
40 http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/uschina/joint29.htm
45 David Lampton, Same Bed, Different Dreams, p. 62 (will add additional references, other notes…).
51 David Lampton, Same Bed, Different Dreams, p. 63.
54 Elizabeth Rosenthal and David E. Sanger, “U.S. Plane in China after it Collides with Chinese Jet.”
59 Jim Hoagland, “Regarding China, Is It Getting Personal?”
80 Ibid.
81 David Lampton, Same Bed Different Dreams, p.264.
82 David Lampton, Same Bed Different Dreams, p.271.
83 David Lampton, Same Bed Different Dreams, p.267.
84 David Lampton, Same Bed Different Dreams, p.267.
85 David Lampton, Same Bed Different Dreams, p.265.
86 David Lampton, *Same Bed Different Dreams*, p.267
93 As quoted by David Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dream*.
94 As quoted by David Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dream*.
98 David Lampton, *Same Bed Different Dreams*, p.268
99 David Lampton, *Same Bed Different Dreams*, p.269
100 David Lampton, *Same Bed Different Dreams*, p.272
102 David Lampton, *Same Bed Different Dreams*, p.275
104 Ibid.
105 David Lampton, *Same Bed Different Dreams*, p.275
106 David Lampton, *Same Bed Different Dreams*, p.275
107 David Lampton, *Same Bed Different Dreams*, p.275
114 Quoted by David Lampton, *Same Bed Different Dreams*, p.313
120 Referenced by Susan Puska.
130 David Lampton, Same Bed Different Dreams, p. 118
132 url: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-7410%28199409%290%3A139%3C622%3AHRICFP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-9
138 David Lampton, Same Bed Different Dreams, p. 113
142 Harry Harding, A Fragile Relationship, p. 15
Alexander Liss, “Images of China in the American Print Media.”
David Lampton, Same Bed Different Dreams, p. 154
David Lampton, Same Bed Different Dreams, p. 278