SAME BED, DIFFERENT DREAMS
DAVID M. LAMPTON

The Philip E. Lilienthal imprint
honors special books
in commemoration of a man whose work
at the University of California Press from 1954 to 1979
was marked by dedication to young authors
and to high standards in the field of Asian Studies.
Friends, family, authors, and foundations have together
endowed the Lilienthal Fund, which enables the Press
to publish under this imprint selected books
in a way that reflects the taste and judgment
of a great and beloved editor.
**Contents**

*Preface*  
Introduction: The Big Picture  
ix

**PART I. THE FLOW OF EVENTS**

2. Security Issues  
3. Economics and Human Rights  
15  
64  
111

**PART II. THE GLOBAL LEVEL**

5. The Dilemma of Third Parties  
159  
204

**PART III. THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY LEVEL**

6. The Stories We Tell Ourselves: National Myths and the Mass Media  
7. The Seamless Web: Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations  
249  
279

**PART IV. THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**

8. People Count  
9. Of Ends and Means: Conclusions  
313  
356

*Appendix of Tables*  
Notes  
379  
387

*Suggestions for Further Reading*  
Index  
451  
463

*Illustrations follow page 278*
PEOPLE COUNT

I would also like to say in a personal sense—and this to you Mr. Prime Minister [Zhou Enlai]—you do not know me. Since you do not know me, you shouldn’t trust me. You will find I never say something I cannot do. And I always will do more than I can say.

President Richard Nixon, speaking with Chairman Mao Zedong, Zhongnanhai, February 1972

So the question is, what can I do as an individual. So I am back to what can we do—education.... The worst dangers China faces are population and the environment. The worst problem is for China to become a world burden.... We want a moist southern breeze to blow up and help China reform.... If I must choose, economics first, politics later.

Dai Qing, New York City, January 21, 1992

Personalities matter. It matters in the conduct, formulation, and implementation [of foreign policy]—the Foreign Minister [Qian Qichen] is key. Foreign Minister Qian is one of the most capable foreign ministers on the globe today. Firm and intelligent.

White House official, February 1997

One congressman asked: “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.

U.S. Ambassador James Sasser, recounting a 1997 conversation between a U.S. congressman and the Chinese Vice Minister over a banquet in Beijing

I had a talk with my old friend, Mr. Maurice Greenberg. I told him that while I was Mayor of Shanghai, I had permitted AIG [American International Group] to establish a branch in Shanghai, and at the time, I was called a traitor by a certain person in a responsible position. But after AIG came to China, not only did AIG do very well, our Chinese insurance companies also learned a lot about insurance operations and management from AIG, and they developed more rapidly than before.

Premier Zhu Rongji, New York City, April 13, 1999
CONGRESSMAN MEKES: Do you like China?
CHINESE WOMAN: Of course I do. I’m Chinese!

Encounter between young migrant woman from Anhui Province and Congressman Gregory Meeks (D-New York), Spring 2000

INTRODUCTION

Thus far we have examined the U.S.-China relationship from two vantage points: the level of global systems and the national level, particularly institutional arrangements, domestic politics, and beliefs that define both China and America. Each level adds a layer of complexity to management of the bilateral relationship. Consequently, the capacity of a single leader, or small groups of individuals, in either country to fundamentally alter the trajectory of the relationship is circumscribed.

In both the United States and the PRC, the ability of an individual to alone determine the relationship has declined since the 1970s. In China, the system has moved through the eras of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, and Jiang Zemin. Mao’s proclivities were usually determinative, Deng’s inclinations were extremely important, and Jiang Zemin (along with his colleague Premier Zhu Rongji) must spend enormous energy building and maintaining coalitions and support for his policy. As seen in Chapter 4, for example, President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji had to spend nearly seven months rebuilding a consensus on China’s WTO entry offer after the previous consensus was shattered by Premier Zhu’s abortive April 1999 trip to the United States and the subsequent bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade.

The United States also has witnessed a progression toward leaders who are less able to dominate China policy. President Nixon and Henry Kissinger single-handedly negotiated a new relationship with Beijing. Jimmy Carter controlled the U.S. terms of negotiation with Beijing on normalization until he was forced to acquiesce to the congressional version of the Taiwan Relations Act. And their successors have had to manage an increasingly complex bilateral relationship in an atmosphere where national institutions, social forces, and global markets have an increasing impact. Moreover, the disciplining effect of the cold war has vanished. As Robert Sutter put it, “[T]he post-cold war period has seen substantial changes in the way foreign policy is made in the United States. In general, there has been a shift away from the elitism of the past and toward a much greater pluralism.”

Nevertheless, despite the limited capacity of leaders and individuals to determine the course of the relationship, their influence has been, and remains, significant. A subtext throughout this volume has been that leaders and individuals in both China and the United States count. Further, individual leaders in third-party governments (see Chapter 5), people like Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui or Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten, have had an enormous impact on the bilateral relationship. In the final analysis, crisis decisions and circumstances requiring nonroutine decisions often provide the opportunity for individuals to leave the deepest imprint.

There are at least four broad ways in which individuals in both China and the United States have been involved in the development or implementation of foreign policy and in shaping the broader context in which U.S.-China relations have been managed. To start, there is the category of individuals who have been constitutionally empowered to play a leadership role in each society. In China, by “constitutionally empowered” I mean those individuals the Chinese refer to as the “core” and “nuclear core” leaders; in other words, the “supreme leader” and relevant members of the Politburo and its Standing Committee. In the United States one must put in this category not only the president but also the assistant to the president for national security affairs, the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, and other cabinet-level officials who intermittently shape foreign policy (e.g., the secretary of the treasury or the U.S. trade representative).

The second category comprises individuals who control the “strategic passes” of their respective policymaking systems. These individuals may or may not be specifically mandated to play a role in the development and management of the U.S.-China relationship. Nonetheless, by virtue of their strategic position in the larger system they exercise influence should they choose to do so, or should the issue under discussion fall into their domain. Key congressional committee chairmen, for example, fall into this category in the U.S. system.

Third, there are those individuals in each society whose wisdom is sought by the senior leadership and policy community irrespective of their formal position—the informal advisers, the “elders” in China. These are the Clark Cliffords, Henry Kissingers, James Schlesingers, Carla Hills, Leonard Woodcocks, and Wang Daohan’s of their respective systems.

Finally, there are those individuals who have no government position but who employ their distinct power (intellectual, organizational, political, or economic) to shape the bilateral relationship or the broader context in which such management occurs. In the United States, business,
labor, other interest group, think tank, and civic organization leaders fall into this category. In China, emerging civic organization leaders such as Dai Qing and political dissidents such as Wei Jingsheng (who since the late 1990s has been in the United States in effective exile) are two examples.

In this chapter, I have selected a few notable examples of each of these four categories of individuals. In choosing them, I do not intend to convey uncritical moral or policy endorsement. Rather, the criteria for selection were that the individual has had a demonstrable and important impact on the relationship and that I generally have had some rather direct interaction with the individual, however limited. The latter criterion is both a strength and weakness. To the degree that I have met, known, or dealt with either the principal or his or her staff, I at least have the sense of them that can only come through interaction. It is that very interaction and personal investment, however, that can create blind spots—a desire to emphasize the positive, for example. It is for the reader to judge where those blind spots may be, taking into account that most of the people discussed below have acted on a very broad stage and that a total evaluation of each would require a different standard from that applied here.

One more preliminary word—in China and America the skills needed for national leadership in one era are not necessarily those required in another. The era of radio rewarded different skills than the age of television, and the cold war required different skills than the mountier era that has followed it. At the start of the cold war, the United States was fortunate to have a generation of practical, organizationally adept strategists such as Paul Nitze, Clark Clifford, George Marshall, James Forrestal, and George Kennan. These individuals helped America conceptualize the new era and build the structures to pursue a fairly coherent, broad, and durable national security strategy. Once the strategy and apparatus were in place, more modest individuals carried out the process of implementation—persons such as Dean Rusk in one era, and Warren Christopher in another.

With the end of the cold war, strategists who could build organizations and sell their vision to a U.S. Congress, public, and allies searching for a new framework of association were once again needed. This stage was portrayed aptly in the 1997 words of Bill Clinton: "Presidents are the custodians of the time in which they live as well as the instruments of the visions and dreams they have.... So the first thing I had to start with was, you know, we don't have a war, we don't have a depression, we don't have a cold war."
George Bush was of the World War II generation that thought of the world in geostrategic terms, and he selected persons of similar temperament and experience to advise him. Brent Scowcroft, the president's national security adviser, friend, and subsequent coauthor; had been a U.S. Air Force Lieutenant General, an associate of Henry Kissinger in both government and business, President Ford's assistant for national security affairs, and centrally involved in the China initiatives of the early and mid-1970s. Scowcroft too had a personal connection to the U.S.-China relationship.

George Bush's coming of age in the World War II generation facilitated his communication with the Chinese. One Chinese interviewee put it this way in comparing the ease with which George Bush dealt with the Chinese to the later Clinton interaction: "Bush saw Deng less than Clinton sees Jiang. George Bush and Deng both were of the World War II generation, geopolitics, they thought along the same line. I don't know if it is true, but Jiang came back from the United States, then said that he felt there was a generation gap. Clinton is 51 and Jiang is 24 years older."12

These proclivities, personalities, priorities, and work styles came together to create a particular policy context for the Bush administration. The president was interested in, and involved with, China policy. He was in close proximity to a trusted lieutenant (Brent Scowcroft) who shared his views regarding China and who could ride herd on policy in the bureaucracy. The State Department (often a policy competitor to the National Security Council) was headed by a personal friend of the president, James Baker, who had virtually no desire to compete for influence over China policy. To further tighten the White House hold on China policy, James R. Lilley, CIA station chief at the Liaison Office in Beijing during Bush's time as representative there, became ambassador to Beijing. Lilley, born in north China's port city of Qingdao, was raised in China and speaks the language well, served as national intelligence officer for China, worked at the National Security Council, and was ambassador to the Republic of Korea for President Reagan.13 This, therefore, was a setting in which the chances for policy coherence and control were comparatively good.

In terms of China policy, therefore, the Bush administration was in a relatively strong position—it had presidential attention, a capacity to think strategically, an unusually noncompetitive Department of State, and a relatively experienced foreign policy team with many members who felt "ownership" in the U.S.-China relationship.

At the same time, however, the administration and the president were deficient in two key areas. The first difficulty was that the president rarely sought out the role of public educator. Some of his foreign policy aides subsequently spoke of their frustration at their inability to persuade him to deliver a comprehensive explanation of the administration's China policy to the American people until long after the vacuum of public pronouncement had been filled by administration opponents. A second problem stemmed from the president's ardent defense of executive branch primacy in foreign policy. Particularly in the context of the emotionally charged debate over China policy in the wake of Tiananmen, Bush's zealous defense of presidential authority made him appear deaf to congressional and popular outrage. This intensified congressional backlash. Nonetheless, given the mood in Congress at the time, particularly the intense partisanship of Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Maine), the argument could be made that any presidential conciliation simply would have fed more extreme demands from the Hill.

There was another, related problem when it came to dealing with Congress, and in this respect Bill Clinton proved more astute. While George Bush appointed excellent ambassadors to China with genuine China expertise (e.g., James Lilley and Stapleton Roy), these individuals did not interact with Congress extensively, though Lilley was more active in that regard than Roy. When Bill Clinton appointed his emissary to Beijing, it was a former member of Congress, Tennessee Senator James Sasser. While Sasser started with less knowledge about China than many of his predecessors, in times of waning domestic support for China policy, influence on Capitol Hill was probably more important. Here Sasser was comparatively effective. Moreover, the ambassador designate spent a great deal of time studying China even before his posting because of the protracted confirmation process he faced.

Bill Clinton. Turning to President Clinton, there are stark contrasts between his administration's proclivities, personalities, priorities, and work styles and those of George Bush. To a much greater extent in his first term than in his second, Clinton did not see foreign policy as a priority. In contrast to Bush, Bill Clinton moved China policy as far away from himself as he could, calculating that there were no political gains to be made in this policy area, until late in his second term when his attention turned to his legacy and China came to assume importance in that regard. In his first term, however, the president in effect assigned an assistant secretary of state (Winston Lord) to come up with China policy and then implement it. In pushing a policy concern so far away from himself (physically and in hierarchical terms), the president signaled to other powerful political actors that working on that issue was not a priority. This put the subordinate responsible for China policy in the untenable position of trying to shape
the behavior of cabinet superiors who did not agree with that policy. Consequently, discipline broke down, foreign interlocutors became confused and truculent, and domestic political opponents saw cracks into which wedges easily were driven.

A second consequence of the president’s clear preference for domestic issues was that China policy, when addressed, was filtered through the lens of domestic political concerns. For example, whereas George Bush to a considerable extent judged a China policy initiative by whether it advanced strategic interests or specific foreign policy objectives, Bill Clinton’s reflex was to consider domestic reaction and implications, and whether it would receive congressional acceptance. By making congressional approval a principal definition of success Clinton transferred tremendous initiative from the executive branch to Congress and threw China policy into an arena dominated by domestic, often parochial, political concerns. In addition, the issues germane to China policy that most attracted Clinton’s attention were those items that had a domestic resonance—human rights and economics (particularly trade issues).

The new bureaucratic agencies that the president created reflected these concerns as well—the National Economic Council in the White House, a special assistant to the President and senior director for democracy in the National Security Council (Morton H. Halperin), and a substantially strengthened Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs at the Department of State. Predictably, senior administration personnel were quite different than those who had characterized the Bush administration. A college professor specializing in international relations at Mount Holyoke College, Anthony Lake, who had broken with Henry Kissinger over the Cambodia invasion of 1970, was selected as assistant to the president for national security affairs.14 Warren Christopher, a Los Angeles attorney, previously deputy secretary of state in the Carter administration, who had served as law clerk to Justice William O. Douglas in 1949–1950, became secretary of state. To a greater extent than in George Bush’s administration, these men reflected the idealistic thread in the American foreign policy tradition.

Most fundamentally, the fact that the president simultaneously elevated both the economic and human rights priorities on his agenda by building and staffing bureaucracies to reflect those priorities meant that Bill Clinton constantly received conflicting advice. He generally found support for the economic priority among his close friends, Robert Rubin at the NEC and Commerce Secretary Ron Brown. Among his political advisers, the secretary of state, his assistant for national security affairs (until the last part of the first term), and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton he generally found support for the human rights priority. By process of elimination, the relative priority attached to security was reduced, as reflected in real declines in the defense budget every year of his first term.15 That he generally received conflicting advice interacted negatively with Clinton’s own decision style—to defer choice until developments forced it upon him.

The problem with this style of leadership was that on any given policy issue Clinton’s opponents could see his tendency to vacillate and wait until the last moment to make a decision. This invited every domestic and foreign actor to fight policy at each step, believing that if they could be the last to gain the president’s ear and mobilize their constituents, they could prevail. Thus to a remarkable degree the policy experience of the first Clinton administration reflected the character of the president. In interviews with members of the first administration, one State Department official succinctly summed up the frustration that was then felt across the political spectrum within government: “Decisions are never fully made, so the MFN decision does not denote a long-term strategy… There is an inability of the government to sort out domestic needs from foreign needs. So, you get conflict avoidance and a desire for harmony… This is management by miasma, chew the fat, nothing happens, commission papers… Most routine decisions go to big groups, where anyone has a voice. So, by the end, only in a crisis do you get a decision.”16

This feeling was not limited to Washington; it also was found at the most senior levels of the American diplomatic establishment in China, with one senior U.S. diplomatic official remarking to me in 1994: “There is a problem in the administration policy-making process and it starts with the president. There still is no real control in policy making… There is no capacity to decide anything. They can’t get it together. They can’t get it together to lift sanctions and they are way out of synch with both Congress and people, and they can’t decide on a new ambassador.”17

According to his aides, the president had a willingness to allow debates to extend indefinitely. Howard Paster, Clinton’s early first-term congressional liaison, was “amazed at Clinton’s willingness to allow these extended debates where they essentially talked to death the inevitable. Clinton was always trying to pick out a new course.”18 Such meetings generally had an aimless, unstructured, seminar quality about them; one left a gathering as unclear about future action as when one entered.

Such presidential fickleness and procrastination was reflected in several instances: Clinton’s fiddling with his MFN “delinkage” speech up till the
moment of delivery on May 26, 1994; the delivery of a speech on the morning of April 7, 1999, that seemed to signal a determination to move ahead on WTO entry for China,19 then the backing away from that position over the next twenty-four hours; and finally, the reevaluation of the administration’s WTO position yet again as Premier Zhu Rongji mobilized the American business community to support entry for Beijing in the course of the next few days (Chapters 1 and 4).

Leadership in Beijing

In the same way that U.S. presidents set, or fail to set, priorities for the Sino-American relationship, so do PRC leaders. Three Chinese leaders’ commitment to Sino-American ties in the 1989–2000 period molded the course of Beijing’s overall policy: Deng Xiaoping, General Secretary Jiang Zemin, and Premier Zhu Rongji. Deng’s role in keeping the relationship from deteriorating beyond repair from 1989 until his death in early 1997 has been addressed earlier. Here we focus instead on Jiang’s and Zhu’s roles in post–cold war Sino-American ties—their propensity to take risks on behalf of the relationship and their recognition that Beijing needed more effective ways to communicate with the U.S. Congress, the mass media, and the public.

To reiterate, however, this assessment is through the comparatively narrow lens of their impact on the bilateral relationship, not broader issues of whether or not their governance of China meets the moral and practical tests that one might apply. Therefore, an evaluation of Jiang Zemin that examines his deferral of political reform issues and the legitimacy-weakening lurches back into China’s political past with the mass campaign against the quasi-religious group Falun Gong and the Three Emphases Movement (san qiang yundong) in 1999–2000 would lead to a less favorable assessment than that provided in this chapter. Indeed, as the first years of the twenty-first century unfold, the current leadership’s reticence to move ahead with further, deep-going political reform may stand out as its single biggest failing—with the most far-reaching implications.

Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji are much more cosmopolitan, more creatures of the media age, and more willing to consider calibrating their actions to the American milieu than was their immediate predecessor, Deng Xiaoping. These attributes have been reflected in a number of ways, but most importantly in the degree to which Jiang and Zhu have sought to build constituencies in the United States that will support productive U.S.-China relations. Moreover, they have dealt directly with the U.S. Congress and sought to use the U.S. mass media to communicate directly with the American public from the earliest days after the June 4, 1989, tragedy. Both Jiang and Zhu have assumed domestic risks in pursuit of these objectives and have sought to put a human face on the Chinese regime, cultivating bases of support in the U.S. system in a way that would never have occurred to Deng or those of his generation. This is not to say, however, that they have always done so. On issues of Taiwan policy and domestic dissent they often have shown little regard for the U.S. domestic context.

Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji. Early after Jiang’s move from his position as first party secretary in Shanghai to Beijing, where he was designated the “core” leader by the Fourth Plenum of the Thirteenth Central Committee in June 1989, he used Zhu Rongji, then mayor of Shanghai, as a vehicle by which U.S.-China relations could be improved to a limited extent.20 In the months that followed the violence in and around Tiananmen Square, both the Chinese and American governments were looking for a way to restore high-level contact. Both governments were receptive to a suggestion from the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations that Shanghai Mayor Zhu Rongji (accompanied by several other Chinese mayors and former Shanghai Mayor Wang Daohan as senior adviser) make a twenty-day, eight-city/metropolitan area visit to the United States in July 1990. The journey’s purpose was to meet with senior American officials, members of Congress, the mass media, and civic leaders, with the delegation meeting the President’s Adviser for National Security Affairs Brent Scowcroft, the deputy secretaries of State and Commerce, and leading members of Congress.21 This suggestion worked well in light of Bush’s post-Tiananmen ban on all exchanges at or above the ministerial or cabinet level; in the Chinese system the mayor of Shanghai (a provincial-level city) occupies the rank of “minister,” while in the American system a mayor is a mayor. Zhu also was a close associate of General Secretary and Chairman of the Central Military Commission Jiang Zemin.

In coming to the United States one year after the Tiananmen bloodshed, Mayor Zhu assumed several risks in his own political system. In eastern Europe, communist regimes were tottering, and the U.S. press was enamored of Mikhail Gorbachev. Zhu, already well known in the United States as a man who could get things done—“one stop chop Zhu”—was widely referred to in the Western mass media as “China’s Gorbachev.” While Americans considered this an approving appellation, it won Zhu no plaudits back home, since Gorbachev was viewed by the Beijing elite as a traitor to the proletarian cause. In a nationally televised interview on The
MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour. Robin MacNeil asked the mayor if he was China's Gorbachev, and Zhu replied, "No, I am China's Zhu Rongji." Further, the fact that no widespread lethal violence had occurred in Shanghai during the spring of 1989 was something to be praised in the United States, yet such comparisons with the tragedy in Beijing, again, would win Zhu few friends in the Chinese central government. Finally, given the hostility of Americans at the time to the Beijing regime as a whole, Zhu could not be sure how he would be received in the United States and how, in turn, this would look to his countrymen upon his return. As it turned out, during his visit to America there was only one rather large and disruptive demonstration. It occurred in San Jose, California, and Zhu ignored it with a studied nonchalance.

While in the United States, in a systematic effort to effectively reach as many Americans as possible, Zhu did what no PRC leader before him had done. First, he almost never read a speech and he often spoke in English—moves that alone awaken[ed] his audiences from their usual somnolence. He was willing to go even further and appear live on the national media and answer unscheduled questions. And finally, Zhu asked to meet as many members of Congress as possible (twenty-four in all), including those most vociferous in their opposition to China's policies; he held a private meeting with Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi. Almost a decade later, Zhu recalled these meetings with members of Congress. In his public appearances, he generally did not wait passively for the uncomfortable human rights question to come to him. Instead, he usually seized the initiative in his opening remarks by saying something along the lines of, "I know you Americans are concerned with human rights—so am I. Let me tell you about my experience of human rights as mayor of Shanghai." Further, Zhu never went into a meeting without knowing with whom he was speaking, attempting to understand that audience's concerns, and having figured out a way to identify with them on a human level.

The response to this 1990 visit was positive, and the reviews he received generally were excellent. This trip by no means transformed the bilateral relationship, but it was part of the process by which it was eventually stabilized, and this was possible only because Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Zhu Rongji were willing to accept personal political risks in pursuit of improved ties.

This brings us to Jiang Zemin. Early on he recognized that China needed to learn more about the American political system and that Beijing had to more effectively deal with the U.S. Congress. Former Political Counselor at the Chinese Embassy in Washington Chen Youwei recounts:

"[W]hen Ambassador Zhu Qiqhen went back to Beijing in December 1990, Jiang Zemin told him that Deng had asked Jiang himself to handle U.S.-China relations. Jiang said he carefully read Embassy cables from Washington and would like to establish direct contact with [the] Embassy. Jiang hoped to know more about the USA. He questioned Zhu [Qiqhen] about American politics... Six months later, when Zhu was going back to Beijing again, he asked me to draft a lengthy analysis with 17 pages about the political system, the power structure of the USA, and submitted it to Jiang. Jiang later said it was helpful for understanding America."

Having a clearer understanding of the United States was helpful to Jiang because he also was willing to assume periodic risks in order to more effectively present China's case to Americans. He made such efforts during his fall 1997 summit trip to the United States; in his decision to allow the live, unedited broadcast to the Chinese and American peoples of a joint news conference he held with Bill Clinton on June 27, 1998, during Clinton's trip to China; and in his early April 1999 decision to proceed with Zhu Rongji's scheduled visit to the United States despite the opposition of several Politburo members and much of the Chinese cognoscenti.

To put such risks in context, some background is necessary. Bill Clinton's May 1995 decision to authorize the issuance of a visa to Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui, coming on the heels of the Republican Party congressional victory in the November 1994 off-year election (see Chapter 7), galvanized Jiang to emphasize research on the U.S. Congress. He became determined to make more contacts with legislators by inviting more of them to visit the PRC. Just one example of this commitment is the fact that in 1996, 83 or 86 members of Congress visited the PRC, while the following year 201 did so, with President Jiang meeting most of them personally. The numbers of congressional visitors China prior to this had been considerably less, though reliable data are scarce. Moreover, the Chinese Embassy's congressional liaison office was strengthened by placing the Oxford-educated Foreign Service Officer Shao Wenguang in charge of a staff that had expanded from four to twelve in 1995-1996. Nonetheless, this operation still remained small in comparison to Taipei's. It was in the context of this increasing sensitivity to Taipei's influence in the United States and the role of the U.S. Congress that alleged efforts to influence American elections may have germinated.

The attempt to influence Congress reveals a fundamental shift in Jiang's approach as compared with that of earlier PRC leaders. Previously, Beijing's assumption was that the executive branch managed and shaped the domestic political environment in America; therefore China would
deal with the executive branch. However, the combination of a more powerful post-cold war Congress and a president who initially was somewhat disengaged from foreign affairs meant that Beijing could no longer rely on the executive branch to manage the American domestic setting—Beijing and Jiang himself would have to become more proactive.

This analysis is nowhere so well evidenced as in Jiang’s own approach to preparing for his fall 1997 trip to the United States and in his behavior while in America. To begin, President Jiang gave a number of print and broadcast interviews (Time and the Washington Post) and held a news conference in the Great Hall of the People prior to his departure—something that previous ranking Chinese officials had not done to any significant extent. Indeed, Jiang had assumed earlier risks by giving U.S. News & World Report and Barbara Walters interviews in the first six months of 1990, which was not an easy period to be subjected to open-ended questioning by the American media, given reaction to the Tiananmen violence. Indeed, some of his early remarks about Tiananmen being “much ado about nothing” did not carry the message of erudition he hoped to convey to the American audience, but rather insensitivity.

Further, in the months leading up to Jiang’s 1997 trip to the United States, a torrent of Chinese scholars visited New York and Washington (many connected with Jiang Zemin) and quizzed Americans concerning the themes Jiang should emphasize, persons he should meet, how he could maximize favorable media coverage, and what progress could be expected in bilateral relations.

Early on, a key question became whether President Jiang should accept an invitation to deliver an address and respond to questions at Harvard University. Much of the advice that these Chinese visitors received (from Henry Kissinger among others) was that a different venue might be less risky, particularly considering the size of the Chinese dissident community in and around Cambridge, Massachusetts. One person solicited for advice referred to Harvard as “the lion’s den.” As the time for the visit drew nearer, the question of whether to go to Harvard kept resurfacing, indicating to me that some of those Chinese giving advice were worried that their counsel to avoid Cambridge was being ignored by Jiang. The president wanted to go to Harvard for many reasons, but one was that he was an intellectual and, in his mind, Harvard was the pinnacle of American academia. That Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui had gone to Cornell University two years earlier may also have given his decision a dimension of one-upmanship.

In the end, Jiang did go to Harvard. Replying to one query about China’s leaders having dialogue with their own people and the Tiananmen bloodshed, he made an oblique statement that won him some credit (perhaps mistakenly) with Americans looking for a softening line on the Tiananmen demonstrators. “It goes without saying that, naturally, we may have shortcomings and even make some mistakes in our work.” The risk paid off, increasing President Jiang’s confidence in his own instincts concerning U.S.–China relations and winning him generally decent mass media reviews.

In two subsequent meetings at which U.S. Ambassador James Sasser and I were present, Jiang made reference to his Harvard appearance—it obviously affected him deeply. In January 1998 he said, looking over to Ambassador Sasser seated to his right, “My success in coming to the United States owes a lot to your ambassador and at the end of the Harvard visit he [Sasser] was relieved.” In a separate meeting, with evident pride and camaraderie, Jiang remarked, “I went to Harvard with [Ambassador] Sasser and many Americans tried to dissuade me—but I went! There was noise, but I raised my voice and it was stronger.”

In another example of risk taking, Jiang forged ahead with his support of the planned visit of Premier Zhu Rongji to the United States in early April 1999 in the face of substantial elite (and some popular) opposition. According to a well-connected Chinese interviewee, “[T]he Standing Committee of the Politburo met and there was a long, tough debate, with many Members of the Standing Committee arguing that Zhu should postpone his trip to the United States because of the bombing of Yugoslavia and [the decision of the United States to seek condemnation of China at] the United Nations Human Rights Commission. The attack was strong and it was only Jiang Zemin weighing in and making the decision to pay attention to overall U.S.-China relations that kept the trip on track.”

This account parallels what Zhu Rongji told a delegation of which I was a member when we met with him in Beijing a few days prior to his departure for America. At that time the premier said, “We have our political problems too. We also have a Congress and public opinion. We have seen the use of force against Yugoslavia and an anti-China resolution at the United Nations and many people here say, ‘don’t go to the United States.’” Subsequently, in his April 8, 1999, joint press conference with President Clinton, Premier Zhu put it this way: “But President Jiang Zemin decided that I should come according to a schedule, and he is number one in China so I had to obey him.”
Once in the United States, Zhu faced a situation in which the hoped-for centerpiece of his visit, the basic completion of an agreement with Washington on the terms of Beijing's accession to the WTO, seemed to be vanishing before his eyes. This was due in part to President Clinton's doubts that the U.S. Congress would provide necessary support (Congress would have to approve permanent NTR for Beijing) and his political advisers' concern about the opposition of American organized labor and some in the human rights community to any likely agreement. With respect to organized labor, the executive branch was loath to estrange unions from Vice President Al Gore who was counting on their muscle for his year 2000 presidential bid. Premier Zhu immediately grasped that he would have to mobilize the U.S. business community, opinion leaders, and members of Congress to create an environment in which Clinton would see conclusion of the WTO accession agreement to be in his own interests.

After the seeming breakdown of negotiations on April 7–8, the Chinese leader hit the hustings—what Beijing media termed the "tour of communications"—where he addressed business and opinion leader groups. The premier argued that China had made unparalleled concessions in its bid to enter the WTO and that countries other than the United States would reap the commercial benefits if this effort failed because of timidity in the White House.

While the WTO accession agreement that finally was worked out in November 1999 required a great deal more than the acumen Zhu demonstrated in the United States, this is a clear example of how a strong, savvy national leader who understands his interlocutor's domestic constraints counts. In this case, Zhu adeptly played to U.S. interest groups and mass politics. As Zhu explained in a CNN interview aired April 13, 1999, "So far I've already been to five cities, including New York, and tomorrow we have still to go to Boston—I've had an opportunity to come into contact with a good array of people in the United States, including members of Congress and people from the business community and members of the press.... And I think that this bodes well for a continuing progressive development in U.S.-China relations. And I feel that all the people we've met certainly would be supportive of China's accession to the WTO."41

Carrying the story forward to its denouement, as seen in Chapter 4, in November 1999 Jiang Zemin once again had to weigh in with a split Politburo to win acceptance for China's final, successful offer to the United States for terms of accession to the WTO.42 In short, while one can certainly say that Jiang has been timid on issues of political reform in China, and indeed repressive in his reaction to the development of independent social and political organizations in the PRC, his record has been one of considerable boldness when it has come to U.S.-China relations.

Li Peng. Senior leaders, by design or chance, can be the lubricant reducing friction and creating possibilities for progress or they can be an obstacle. The case of former Premier Li Peng is instructive in this regard. Concerning the different attitudes that Jiang Zemin and Li Peng had toward the United States, former Embassy Counselor in Washington Chen Youwei reports the following:

Even in the most critical times, Jiang's attitude toward America was more prudent and moderate than Li Peng's. In September 1989, Li made a personal attack on President Bush in an interview with a French correspondent. He said that from Dulles to Bush, the US government has persistently pursued an unchanged policy aimed to overthrow China's socialist system. A few days later, the Guangming Daily carried an article that assailed Nixon by name. Zhu Quishen then was deputy foreign minister in charge of China-US relations. He wondered [whether this signaled] a new tendency in China's US policy. So when he met Jiang the next day, he raised the question. Jiang's answer was not, he didn't know that, personally he disagreed to [sic] attack Nixon publicly.43

To Americans, Premier Li Peng became the incarnation of the regime that had crushed the Tiananmen protesters because his was the voice that declared martial law in Beijing in May 1989. Li Peng's self-image, however, was that of a small potato with respect to the decision to use force.44 Immediately after June 4, Li Peng was the person with whom no American politician and few visiting foreigners wanted their picture taken. Understandable as this reaction may have been, its practical effect was that the senior levels of the U.S. government would not willingly have visible dealings with Premier Li; an invitation for him to visit the United States as an official guest was inconceivable. Washington thus was handicapped in dealing with China's state apparatus run on a daily basis by Premier Li. Furthermore, Li's subordinates did not want to be seen as the darlings of the Americans who were humiliating their boss, so they were reluctant to productively deal with Washington. Finally, Li's willingness to stand up to U.S. pressure, even if many Chinese did not care for him personally, won him a kind of grudging nationalistic admiration in many quarters. Li's natural constituency was of the mind of one agitated Chinese general who in 1990 said to an American group, "Under pressure, China is not dofu [bean curd]. It is stone!"
Li, of course, was resentful of the way he was treated by the Americans, a fact that came out clearly in the tone of conversations he had with U.S. visitors during most of the 1990s. Two Chinese interviewees put it to me in nearly identical terms in completely separate conversations: "With respect to views on the United States, there is a difference between Li Peng and Jiang Zemin, but mostly because of personal treatment rather than more abiding differences. Li Peng knew he would never be invited to the United States and that he was unfairly in his view blamed for the Tiananmen violence. Jiang, on the other hand, was relatively well treated by the United States. This was mostly a matter of difference in personal treatment." My notes of a conversation with another Chinese scholar recount the following acidic observations about Americans in the context of their relationship with Li Peng and Chinese more generally: "The Americans are unsophisticated and arrogant, and ignorant, both leaders and the populace. Al Gore was late to a meeting with Li Peng in Copenhagen. Li Peng left. Then Gore had to come to Li Peng's hotel to apologize... The Americans have a bad habit of being late." The effects of this strained relationship between the premier and the United States reached beyond sentiment to policy. Li Peng held the position of head of the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group until at least late 1997. In this position, as explained in the preceding chapter, Premier Li could influence foreign policy in ways that General Secretary Jiang Zemin and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen found difficult to control. It was no accident, therefore, that Jiang could not embark on a more affirmative tack toward the United States until he had wrested control of the foreign policy apparatus from Li. My notes of a conversation with a Chinese official recount: "Li and Liu [Huaqu of the State Council Foreign Affairs Office, who reported to Li Peng] could order someone in the [Foreign Affairs Ministry's] office of North America and Oceania Affairs to do something and [Minister of Foreign Affairs] Qian might, or might not know about it and in any case the emphasis of what Li/Liu might direct the Bureau to do might be different from what Qian [and Jiang] would prefer. It was not that the line was entirely different, but simply that the tone, emphasis might be different—"Li was more rigid." But these things matter, because relations with the US are important."

In contrasting Li Peng with Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji, one sees how others' perception of an individual leader translates into tangible influence in foreign affairs. When Jiang and Zhu visited the United States (1997, and 1999), American opinion leaders, government officials, and local leaders tripped over themselves to be seen with them; Li Peng, on the other hand, couldn't even get an invitation to America, much less exercise any influence over such groups or individuals publicly. Nonetheless, American perceptions and sentiments were disconnected from Li's true power at home. Indeed, Americans' visceral dislike of Li blinded them to his considerable power base in China, his skills at domestic policy, and his reputation within China's bureaucracy as an ardent defender of subordinates, China's interests, and the mainland's national dignity. Until his move to the National People's Congress chairmanship in March 1998, Li Peng remained a potent force in Beijing's relations with Washington and, although his power was possibly further diminished in early 1999, he lived to fight another battle.

Li Peng's day came again in the wake of Premier Zhu Rongji's April 1999 visit to the United States, during which the premier had unveiled the earlier-mentioned striking concessions to Washington in the attempt to secure China's accession to the WTO, and with the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, on the heels of Zhu's visit. In the wake of that tragedy, Li Peng and other senior leaders (e.g., Qiao Shi and Ding Guan'gen), some of whom had lost out to the Jiang Zemin–Zhu Rongji leadership in 1997 and 1998, sought to enhance their power and policy priorities. They continued to oppose broad concessions to Washington in the ongoing WTO accession negotiations until Jiang Zemin decisively spoke in November 1999. This conservative faction argued that the United States wanted to keep China weak, that its asking price for WTO entry was too high, that Washington had hegemonic ambitions, that China's military needed more money, and that the U.S. engagement strategy was designed to produce political change on the mainland. This view resonated with many in China's leadership and populace, and though Jiang and Zhu were able to persist in their basic U.S. policy after a period of adjustment, Li Peng's view of America continues to strike responsive chords in China. In this case as in so many others, the skeptics in each society derive political life from the rhetoric, behavior, and missteps of counterparts in the other society. Put crisply, the Patrick Buchanans of America gain life from the Li Pengers of China, and vice versa.

This brings us to the second category of persons who count in the bilateral relationship, namely, those who control the strategic passes of the two policymaking systems.
GUARDIANS OF THE STRATEGIC PASSES

In the preceding pages we looked at a few examples of members of the two nations' governing elites who have had demonstrable effects on the bilateral relationship since 1989. Part of the purpose in so doing was to debunk the notion that in an age of global systems, enormous information and financial flows, and huge national bureaucracies, people don't count. However, in providing one corrective, we may introduce another distortion by implying that only a chosen few people in each system matter. The pages that follow are an antidote to this misconception, though the policy-relevant circle in Beijing is much smaller than that in the United States.

While the importance of a few top policymakers is most evident in both Beijing and Washington during periods of tumult and crisis, the percentage of decisions in the bilateral relationship that are routine, recurrent, and incremental in character has grown. Consequently, previously peripheral players in each system increasingly play significant roles. This category of person is most evident in the U.S. system because of its federal structure, checks-and-balances architecture, dynamic civic society, and transparency. If the Chinese system were more transparent, however, one would doubtless see many more fascinating Chinese counterparts to the Americans mentioned here.

The American system is like a croquet game, inasmuch as to be a winner (to get a policy adopted, bill passed, or policy implemented) you must hit your ball through all the wickets in the course. Getting through every wicket but one does not count. In every game of croquet, therefore, there are always one or more players who seek to prevent you from completing the course. Defensive players can marshal their resources to defend a single strategic location. America's political topography has many such strategic locations, and there are organizations and individuals that use that terrain advantageously.

Jesse Helms. Senator Jesse Helms (R-North Carolina) is a classic example of a player who occupies a strategic place in the system and is highly skilled at taking advantage of that location. Helms uses his tactical skills, seniority (elected to the Senate in 1972), chairmanship of a pivotal committee (the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, since 1995), the rules of the Senate (among which are the right to unlimited debate and the right to place anonymous "holds" on Senate business), the prodigious generation of legislative initiatives, and a tireless staff to play the game of foreign policy politics in a very effective manner. Helms has had a significant effect on U.S.-China relations across a broad range of issues, including: trade, arms control, Taiwan, Hong Kong, executive branch agency structure, human rights, and personnel appointments (including assistant secretaries of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs and ambassadors to China). We will underscore the impact of this man sometimes known as "Senator No" before moving on to a less well known, but important, figure in U.S.-China relations in the U.S. House of Representatives, Christopher H. Smith (R-New Jersey).

A few examples of Helms's influence are illustrative. Indeed, Helms's priorities are so well known that he often has to do nothing to exercise influence—others simply decide not to challenge him, knowing his views. For example, during the 1999 search for a replacement for Ambassador to China James Sasser, several persons were considered by President Clinton for nomination. However, some names were simply ruled out because it was presumed they would be unacceptable to Senator Helms. If the senator was displeased he could refuse to schedule (or delay) a confirmation hearing. Even potential nominees about whom there was some uncertainty in this regard were problematic. The administration had less than two years left in office and a long, drawn-out confirmation process would mean that the candidate, even if eventually confirmed, would have no time left on post when the process was completed.

Helms is also a master of introducing legislation that, even if it does not become law, affects policy. For example, in March 1999, just before the Clinton administration was coming to the table to discuss possible arms sales with representatives of Taiwan, Senators Helms and Torricelli (D-New Jersey) introduced a piece of legislation (S. 693, the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act) that constituted a shot across the administration's bow as it went into the talks. The bill "authorized" (not required) the administration to sell Taiwan almost every military item Taipei had on its most extravagant wish list and required the administration to report to Congress on all aspects of the Taiwan weapons sales relationship on a regular basis and develop a plan "for the enhancement of programs and arrangements for operational training and exchanges of personnel between the armed forces of the United States and Taiwan." Some senior officials in the Clinton administration believed that this bill was drawn up with the encouragement of some in Taiwan. In any event, the bill (introduced two months later in the House as H.R. 1838, with Christopher Smith as a cosponsor) helped create an environment in which it became harder for the executive branch to reject some of Taipei's arms purchase requests, including early warning air defense radar. Subsequently, the bill also was discussed as a possible amendment (or piece of companion legislation) to
the extension of permanent NTR to China in connection with Beijing's accession to the WTO.

In Beijing, the bill became just one more indication of Washington's true intentions vis-à-vis Taiwan. There are many forces in Beijing that have no incentive to acknowledge the distinction between a "bill" and a "law" in the U.S. legislative process or the difference between legislative branch rhetoric and executive branch policy. In Beijing, beyond the bureaucratic and political calculations that create an incentive to see the worst-case scenario, there is a deeper cultural predisposition to pay the most attention to an interlocutor's intentions. The Taiwan Security Enhancement Act bill became yet another important data point in Beijing's ongoing assessment of U.S. "intentions."

Another example of Senator Helms's influence comes as a result of an agreement between the Reagan administration and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Committee on International Relations. Those committees of jurisdiction have a period of time to review grants made by what was then the United States Information Agency (and is now a part of the Department of State) to nongovernmental organizations for cultural and educational exchanges, including those involving the PRC. During those review periods, Senator Helms and Christopher Smith on the House International Relations Committee were able to influence the shape and content of some federally funded exchanges with the PRC, particularly with regard to exchanges with China's military, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Influence was exercised through specific suggestions in the course of raising questions about grants, by asking questions until Helms's and Smith's priorities were accommodated, by directly intervening in an already-approved program, or by threatening a cutoff of funding altogether.

The latter instance involved the visit to the United States of a federally funded delegation of legislators from Hong Kong's Legislative Council (LEGCO). This group was composed entirely of individuals elected by the people of Hong Kong in 1995. Two of these individuals were subsequently named to the Provisional Legislative Council that would replace the previous LEGCO immediately after Hong Kong's retrocession to the PRC on July 1, 1997. Because the two had been appointed to the Provisional Legislative Council through a process widely viewed in the West and many quarters of Hong Kong as undemocratic, Senator Helms (and Senator Craig Thomas, as well as Representative Christopher Smith's office) made it clear to the United States Information Agency (USIA) that this exchange should not proceed with federal money if the two provisional legislators were included in the group. In his April 22, 1997, letter to the director of USIA, Helms wrote, "I wish to make clear that I am unalterably opposed to the use of U.S. taxpayer funds for visits by members of [sic] provisional legislature, a body whose creation was engineered by China to take the place of the elected Legislative Council (Legco). I strongly recommend that the provisional legislators be dropped from the program."57

In the end, the group came, with the two legislators in question, but was supported by private-sector monies instead of federal funds.

Christopher Smith. New Jersey member of the U.S. House of Representatives Christopher H. Smith often is described as a "blue-collar Republican" (sometimes endorsed by the AFL-CIO)58—he is the son of a dairy employee who lost his job when Chris was in grade school.59 He was first elected to the House in 1980 after leaving his family-owned sporting goods business and after having been director of the New Jersey Right to Life Committee (1976–1978). His district in South Jersey is middle class and racially diverse (12 percent Black, 2 percent Asian, and 5 percent Hispanic origin). Smith is known as a representative with great constituent services, and he wins elections handily (usually with over 60 percent). His voting record (as measured by the National Journal ratings) displays a pattern of moderate to slightly "liberal" on "economic" issues, fairly "conservative" on "social" issues, and more "conservative" still on foreign policy matters, although such terms have less meaning than usual in his case.60 Megan Rosenfeld describes Smith's voting record saying, "He confounds GOP free-market colleagues with his insistence on tying human rights to trade favors, and has opposed many of the welfare cuts that his party wanted to impose on programs for mothers and children, as well as cuts in Medicare."

In trying to explain Smith's policy and voting preferences, The Almanac of American Politics, 1998 quotes him as saying, "Christ said it in Matthew 25: 'Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren, you do likewise to me.' That was my motivating scripture through all my years in Right to Life, and it continues to be."61 It is his Christian religion that analysts assert "is the root of his identity as a man and as a politician."62 His core commitments are to human rights (including opposition to abortion, which sometimes puts him at odds with other elements of the broad human rights coalition and persons who support the United Nations), freedom of religion, women's and children's rights, and opposition to the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities. Smith, for instance, was part of a congressional effort that directed the U.S. Department of State to issue a report on religious freedom around the world and then used the negative findings to place the spotlight even more brightly on issues of religious freedom in the
Chinese religious affairs officials declined to come to Washington for hearings he was planning. To this refusal Smith replied, "I seriously hope the Clinton administration will do a little more than talk tough on paper when dealing with Beijing. The time has come for firm, decisive action. Religious freedom does not exist in Communist China." In the second case, Smith invited the relatively new Chinese ambassador to Washington, Li Zhaoxing (posted in March 1998), to come to a "meeting" (not a hearing) with members of his subcommittee. After the ambassador first accepted and then, upon further reflection, declined to attend (and with Congressional Quarterly reporting that Li would appear as a "witness" at a "hearing"), Smith again publicized what he viewed as an absence of cooperation from China. The Washington Post described the incident as follows:

C-SPAN’S camera was rolling live yesterday to broadcast an unusual event on Capitol Hill: the scheduled appearance before a House International Relations subcommittee of Chinese Ambassador Li Zhao Xing [sic]. Ambassadors rarely testify before Congress; nobody could recall that a Chinese ambassador had ever done so. But those expecting a lively exchange between Li and subcommittee Chairman Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) ... had to settle for a different drama: an angry outburst from Smith when Li canceled at the last minute. "It is very troubling and very, very disturbing that this has happened... In my 18 years as a congressman, this is the first time I have ever had a no-show at a public meeting." 66

Smith has been particularly active in the movement to oppose abortion and sterilization in America and around the world. Even as a very junior member of Congress, in 1985 he advocated cutting off contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) because of the organization’s operation in China, which was implementing the one-child policy. As Harry Harding explains, "[I]n August 1985 Congress adopted a somewhat looser amendment [than the total ban on U.S. funds for UNFPA Smith was advocating] jointly sponsored by Representative Jack Kemp (R-New York), Senator Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), and Senator Jesse Helms (R-North Carolina), which barred U.S. funds from any organization that, as determined by the president, ‘supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization.’" 67 Subsequently, Congressman Smith almost single-handedly held up funding for the UN until he extracted a 1999 pledge from the Clinton administration to curtail providing funds to UN agencies that promoted abortions.

In the realm of legislation, in addition to passing laws, members of Congress can flood the legislative in-box with bills until the administration is
exhausted. Even if most of the proposed bills stand little chance of becoming law, the administration must devote so much scarce human resources and leadership attention to putting out the brushfires that in its exhaustion it gives in somewhere simply to extinguish the most damaging proposals. In the 105th Congress (1997–1998), for example, the Congressional Research Service had to issue a sixteen-page report just to identify the principal pieces of China-related legislation working their way through Congress.68

One example of this strategy occurred in July 1997, in the midst of the annual debate over MFN status and preparations for Chinese President Jiang Zemin’s summit with President Clinton. When Chairman Christopher Cox (R-California) of the House Policy Committee announced an eleven-point legislative initiative on “U.S.-East Asia Policy.” Of the eleven separate pieces of legislation (concerning sanctions on PLA enterprises, slave labor products, Radio Free Asia (RFA), PRC intelligence activities, “subsidies” for the PRC through international financial institutions, theater missile defense sales to Taiwan, WTO accession for the PRC, Chinese proliferation to Iran, freedom for the clergy, forced abortion, and political prisoners), Smith introduced one piece and cosponsored nine others.69 Concerning the one piece for which he was listed as neither an “introducer” nor “cosponsor” (The Radio Free Asia Act of 1997), "Congressman Smith offered an amendment to the Foreign Policy Reform Act. This authorized $20 million in increased funds for RFA and $10 million for VOA, as well as $10 million for the Broadcasting Board of Governors to complete construction of a transmitter on Tinian Island."70 Of this batch of proposed legislation, the Clinton administration decided that the price for getting MFN status renewed and killing the most unwelcome of the eleven legislative proposals would be increasing the RFA budget and stationing more diplomats in U.S. posts in the PRC to monitor human rights. The administration chose the options that seemed least damaging.

In the cases of both Helms and Smith, their influence is not felt simply through the legislation they have supported or that bears their names (though each sponsored an above-average volume of legislation in the 1989–1999 decade).71 Their clout also is felt in their ability to force those who do wish to pass legislation, make an appointment, or spend federal funds to take their positions into account—either preemptively or after a long struggle. In speaking of Helms’s clout with the political establishment, former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole put it simply, "They’re afraid of him."72 The influence of legislators like Helms and Smith often is measured as much by what did not happen as by the legislation they eventually shepherd into law.

Helms and Smith frequently have expended their power in shaping how executive branch bureaucrats and recipients of federal funds implement existing law or expend federal monies. When combined with the ability to stall legislation or approvals through parliamentary maneuver, all this has great influence on U.S.-China relations.

What are the practical effects that committed individuals such as Senator Helms and Representative Smith can have on policy and behavior? Most important, to be a powerful legislator one does not necessarily need to be the progenitor of landmark law. Rather, one can simply attach amendments to the legislation of others (or to regular authorization and appropriation bills) that the president finds inconvenient, or impossible, to veto. Moreover, in politics as in life, fear can be a powerful force; simply being tough and dedicated deters both the executive branch and other legislators from even attempting to pursue certain courses of action. On the House Committee on International Relations, for example, it was well known that Representative Smith’s colleagues did not like to go up against him unless the issue involved a core interest of their constituency—it was simply too time consuming and too acrimonious a process. Similarly, as Jesse Helms’s colleague, Joseph Biden, described the senator, “He’s prepared to be mean. He’s prepared to be disliked. He’s prepared to be ostracized.”73

The above tactics aside, however, perhaps the most powerful policy tool wielded by legislators is the oversight function. Through their oversight and budgetary responsibilities, highly motivated legislators can deeply affect policy implementation without writing a single piece of legislation. And further, in addition to the federal bureaucracy’s behavior being affected by such oversight, the behavior of recipients of federal funds—private sector contractors—is shaped. If a legislator is willing to threaten the funding agency with retaliation if certain priorities (no matter how worthy or inappropriate they may be) are not pursued, it is likely that those concerns will be addressed. Moreover, in some cases agencies and contractors may not be certain if such pressure represents the views of the member of Congress or those of overzealous staff acting in the member’s name. The end result is not only to alter the content of policy on the ground, but circumscribe what bureaucrats even define as feasible. It also sets a broader tone for the bilateral relationship in the media, the public, and with those in Beijing who are monitoring American “intentions.”
Americans often point out to Beijing that policymakers in the PRC should recognize that Congress actually has generated relatively little law that is highly inimical to PRC interests, despite the numerous activities that head in that direction. The Chinese acknowledge this but nevertheless maintain their, sometimes justifiable, concerns. A prime example of the latter was President Clinton's decision to authorize Lee Teng-hui's visa in May 1995 (following overwhelming, nonbinding congressional votes). In that situation, Clinton knew (or feared) that if he did not authorize the visa for Lee Congress might pass veto-proof legislation that would be more troublesome still.

Thus we return to the croquet game analogy. One or two players that are willing to be tough and keep hitting your ball away from the wicket can be exceedingly powerful in the U.S.-China relationship.

**THE ROLE OF THE SAGE**

Beyond those individuals constitutionally empowered to exercise influence over policy and those persons who occupy strategic positions that periodically make them central players in U.S.-China relations, there are the "wise men" or "elders" of each society who periodically exercise influence. Such people are often former officeholders or mentors of those who have subsequently risen to great heights. In the post-cold war United States, Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, and former Clinton Secretary of Defense William Perry come to mind.24 Luminaries aside, there are scores of lesser-known individuals whose advice is sought out in particular circumstances and by a wide variety of policymakers. In post-cold war China, one key elder adviser has been the former mayor of Shanghai, Wang Daohan. Wang was the mayor who preceded Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji in Shanghai and who has remained Jiang's informal, trusted adviser on issues related to both the United States and Taiwan policy since Jiang moved to Beijing in 1989.

**Richard Nixon.** We begin with Richard Nixon, a former policy principal who, after his resignation in 1974, came to play an exceptional role as an elder in the American system until his death about two decades later. Nixon, by virtue of his national interest-based foreign policy framework, his centrality to the rapprochement with the PRC in 1972–1972, and the esteem with which the Beijing leadership held him thereafter, played a unique role in the 1989–1994 period. Interestingly, he played an elder role for both George Bush and Bill Clinton, although Clinton drew the most advice from him in connection with Russia. As Clinton said at Nixon’s April 27, 1994, funeral in Yorba Linda, California: "For the past year, even in the final weeks of his life, he gave me his wise counsel, especially with regard to Russia."

It was George Bush, however, who drew most often on President Nixon’s advice concerning China, though Bush had strong, independent views himself. On Monday morning, June 5, 1989, the first business day after the Tiananmen violence, George Bush records in his diary the following:

I talked to Nixon at 8:00 AM, and he was saying, “don’t disrupt the relationship. What’s happened has been handled badly and is deplorable, but take a look at the long haul.” I told him I was not going to recall [Ambassador] Lilley, and he thought that was good. He doesn’t think we should stop our trade [and should do] something symbolic, but we must have a good relationship in the long run ... and that is what I will try to do while denouncing the violence and abuse of power ... The reports from China are still crazy ... There are rumors that “Li Peng has been shot,” and rumors that “Deng was dead.” All of this tells me to be cautious, and be calm.26

Based on Bush’s subsequent actions, Nixon’s advice obviously corresponded with his own predisposition. Often advice is sought not so much to generate new ideas as to reinforce the proclivities of the person who is asking for counsel.

Nixon did more than advise following the Tiananmen tragedy; he traveled to Beijing the following fall (late October to early November) and, in so doing, became a bridge in a situation where high-level official exchanges were nominally not possible (the Scowcroft-Eagleburger trip notwithstanding). Indeed, it was Nixon’s October 31 meeting with Deng Xiaoping and other top Chinese leaders that helped convince President Bush to send Scowcroft and Eagleburger on their second trip, thinking that they could draw up and implement a road map back to more productive bilateral relations.

In his diary entry of November 5, 1989, Bush recorded that “Nixon came to dinner at the Residence tonight... Interesting on China—he feels we ought to make some move towards the Chinese... He thinks the best thing to do is to send [Treasury Secretary Nicholas F.] Brady over there. I’m not sure. I still think that we ought to put it in the context of my meeting with Gorbachev, and making clear to China that we’re not overlooking their views or their positions.”27 In his subsequent narrative about this period, Bush wrote, "Based on what I heard from Nixon, I wrote another letter to
Deng suggesting that I send an emissary to Beijing after Malta, to brief him on the discussions with Gorbachev… If there was some way to start on the road back before there was serious and lasting damage to the relationship, we should try.” While Bush agreed with Nixon on the need to send an emissary to Beijing, he wanted to put it in a more strategic context than the former president was suggesting.

A little more than a week after Bush met with Nixon, Henry Kissinger delivered to the president a letter from Deng Xiaoping proposing a “package solution” to some existing problems (which included Fang Lizhi, the dissident scientist who was still living in U.S. Embassy facilities in Beijing). After his meeting with Kissinger, in which the former secretary of state also suggested sending an emissary to Beijing, Bush concluded, “It was reassuring that Nixon and Kissinger had returned from their separate trips to China with the same analysis of the situation.”

Wang Daohan. The variety of individuals who may be consulted by China’s senior leadership in various circumstances is veiled in secrecy. Nonetheless, we are able to discern the exceptional role played by one elder, Wang Daohan, the former mayor and party secretary of Shanghai. Though Wang is by no means the only person upon whom President Jiang Zemin relies for advice, Zeng Qinghong being another, Wang’s counsel is often solicited and heeded.

Wang Daohan is a courtly gentleman, with a bright smile and gentle voice. He listens carefully to people, likes to be surrounded by intelligent individuals who keep him abreast of the latest currents sweeping the world in fields as diverse as history, biography, literary criticism, philosophy, political science, music, and economic management. His favorite pastime is to go from bookstore to bookstore, whether it is in New York or Shanghai. Born in Anhui Province in 1915, he joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1938; he became known as one of the “four Anhui province prodigies.” Wang’s post-1949 experience was in economic development (the First Ministry of Machine Building in the early 1950s) and foreign trade (deputy minister of the State Commission for Foreign Economic Relations with Foreign Countries, 1965–1979, and vice chairman of the State Foreign Investment Commission 1979–1980). In the words of the National Committee on U.S.–China Relations, “Thus he was present at the creation of China’s open door policy, development of Special Economic Zones, and a host of other critical policy innovations that set the stage for China’s phenomenal economic growth of the last fifteen years.”

It was in his position as mayor of Shanghai (1981–1985), however, that Wang became more widely known abroad. As mayor he actively solicited outside investment and played a role in bringing in some of the biggest and most advanced foreign projects, including a joint venture between Shanghai Aviation Industry Corporation, the China Aviation Supplies Corporation, and McDonnell Douglas to build modern commercial aircraft (MD-80) in the PRC. In succession, Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji followed Wang as mayor of Shanghai.

Jiang and Wang’s association dates back to the preliberation period, when Jiang’s uncle and foster father (Jiang Shangqing) was an associate of Wang’s in northern Jiangsu Province. In about mid-1939, Jiang Shangqing was killed, and thereafter Wang helped the younger Jiang, including sponsoring his studies in Nanjing Central University starting in 1943. In the early-post-1949 era, Jiang started benefiting from Wang’s advice and help at key career junctures. Early in the communist era, for instance, Jiang found himself as first deputy director of the China Soap Factory in Shanghai, a position that brought him into contact “with Wang Daohan, the 36-year-old head of the East China Industrial Department, to which the newly nationalized soap factory belonged.” Bruce Gilley further reports, “It appears that Wang saw something he liked in Jiang very early. Whether because of their historical ties or because Jiang simply impressed him, Wang staked his claim to Jiang right away. It turned out to be Jiang’s ticket out of the state factory ghetto. The moment he was made vice-minister of the newly created First Machine-Building Ministry in Beijing in 1952, Wang sent Jiang to the ministry’s Number Two Design Bureau in Shanghai as head of a new electrical power equipment department…. It was the beginning of a patronage that would last for four decades.”

Skipping ahead to 1989, Jiang sought Wang’s advice as he was considering Deng Xiaoping’s May offer to become party general secretary. Gilley reports, “As at many times in the past, it fell to Jiang’s longtime mentor, Wang Daohan, to dispel Jiang’s doubts and unburden his brooding protégé. Jiang telephoned Wang, who was in Beijing at the time…. Wang’s response was immediate and unequivocal. The nation was in crisis, he said, and Jiang should take up the baton. Wang was reminded of Lin Zexu, an imperial commissioner appointed by the Qing emperor in 1838 to halt the opium trade in Guangzhou.” While Lin Zexu is a paragon of nationalistic virtue and upright service in China, Jiang might also have recalled at this moment that Lin had found it impossible to control the foreign “barbarians” and had been, in his own words, “punished” for his failures.
In the period since 1989, Wang Daohan has overcome substantial health problems and maintained a busy schedule of attending meetings in Beijing, making trips abroad in his role as adviser to Jiang Zemin on both U.S. and Taiwan affairs and as chairman of the nominally nongovernmental Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), founded in 1991. In April 1993 Wang's role in ARATS took him to Singapore to meet with Taiwan's Koo Chen-fu (chairman of the Straits Exchange Foundation, Taiwan's nominally nongovernmental counterpart to ARATS) in the first high-level, open contact between the PRC and Taipei since 1949. Thereafter, in mid-October 1998 Wang again met with Koo, this time on the mainland. Their third meeting was to occur in Taiwan in the fall of 1999, but did not take place due to mainland outrage with Lee Teng-hui's July 9, 1999, statement asserting that dealings between the PRC and Taiwan are of a "special state-to-state" character. This was a "two Chinas" formula totally unacceptable to the PRC (Chapters 1 and 5).

Parenthetically, Koo Chen-fu, also in his eighties, is a dignified gentleman of similar disposition to Wang. By all accounts both men respect one another and enjoy each other's company, whether in negotiations or at the Beijing Opera.

With respect to Taiwan policy, Jiang Zemin apparently has found it useful to use Wang as a vehicle to loft trial balloons, particularly on the nettlesome definition of "one China." For example, in January 1998 the Chinese president told a group headed by former Defense Secretary William Perry that he was glad the delegation was going to Shanghai to speak with Wang about the issue. Jiang suggested that the group pay careful attention to what the former mayor had to say. When we subsequently met with Wang, we understood him to say that Beijing had flexibility concerning the conditions under which it would resume the discussions with Taiwan that had been broken off in the wake of the 1995 Lee Teng-hui visit to Cornell University. The definition of "one China" (sovereignty) was at the core of the dispute. While we had indications that Wang's intervention was not welcome by elements of the Foreign Ministry and others in Beijing, Wang's meeting with Perry was a modest part of a complex process that ultimately led to the second Wang-Koo talks in the fall of 1998.

Turning to United States-China relations, Wang accompanied Zhu Rongji to the United States as an adviser during his sensitive July 1990 visit. Wang led another group to the United States on a private trip in January 1997. Wang's purpose was to meet key people in the government and private sector and to return to Beijing to provide counsel to Jiang about how to proceed in building the U.S.-China relationship after the Lee Teng-hui visa and missile exercise imbroglio. While in the United States he met with senior NSC, State Department, and Department of Defense officials, and Senator Robb on Capitol Hill. Subsequently, in preparation for his late-1997 summit visit to the United States, Jiang spent about one week in Shanghai running through an hour-by-hour preparation for the U.S. trip. Although Wang was not in Shanghai for the dress rehearsal, he did have associates attend, armed with materials Wang had directed be prepared for the president. Jiang not only worked on his English but also received advice about how to be effective in the United States, rehearsed important speeches, and drilled questions and answers.

In addition to his other roles, Wang also has been designated by Jiang as the nongovernmental interlocutor with former Defense Secretary William Perry in "track two" discussions that focus primarily on issues related to overall U.S.-China relations, military-to-military dialogue, and cross-strait relations.

I have been told by Chinese interviewees that Wang has the privilege of direct communication with Jiang; he often goes to Jiang's Zhongnanhai residence when he is in Beijing. He periodically speaks on the phone with Jiang and keeps a steady flow of information going to the president. One event I witnessed indicates the dimensions of this unique relationship. In March 1997 I was staying at a PRC government guesthouse called Tizhuyuan near the Beijing Capital Airport. I was participating in a conference cochaired by Wang Daohan and former Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye. One morning I observed that security around the compound had been strengthened considerably and the parking lot was crowded with black limousines. I subsequently learned that Wang had not been feeling as chipper as usual and that the meeting of the Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group (composed of Jiang Zemin, Wang Zhaoguo, Qian Qichen, and General Xiong Guangkai) had been convened where Wang was rather than in downtown Beijing at a location presumably more convenient for the other leaders.

Jiang's own description of his relationship with Wang suggests an intimate relationship as well. My notes of a January 1998 meeting with the president recount Jiang saying, "Wang Daohan is eleven years older than me but he is still chairman of ARATS and, like me, he also is a graduate of Jiaotong University and I used to be his boss. At Liberation he was 30 years old, but he was a minister of industry in the East China Government and I was a director of a factory. So he is better informed about historical facts than me and I am glad you are going to Shanghai to see him. He was my predecessor as mayor of Shanghai. He is [Jiang searches for the English word] 'Elegant!' [in English] 'Elegant!' [in English]."
In speaking with one well-connected adviser in Shanghai, I gained fascinating insight into how people in Shanghai view the Wang-Jiang relationship. My June 1998 interview notes recount the following:

Deng Xiaoping always had a big strategic picture in his mind and didn’t need to consult with anyone except his bridge partners. Jiang has a different style of listening to advice. Rather broad, and not just in Beijing. … Wang Daohan has a “special hot line” so to speak [to Jiang]. … Another important point is that when Deng was there, it was not easy to reach him. So think tanks had only indirect influence. Deng was much more remote. Very few people could approach him. Jiang is more willing to meet more different people. … He has good people. … Jiang relies on Qian Qichen and Wang Daohan. He is clever, he turns to people in Beijing but also gets ideas from other places. This gives him options. We very often say that Shanghai scholars have different views from Beijing. In Beijing when the top leader says something, the departments try to explain why the top leader is correct. But in Shanghai we don’t know what the leader says, so we make our own judgement, so we have different ideas. This is good for Jiang.97

The primary impact of the wise men or elders in China and the United States has been to broaden the information flowing to senior leaders, multiply the leaders’ perceived options, provide conduits through which to discuss possible policy options with the other side without becoming governmentally committed, and sometimes to simply strengthen senior leaders in their initial beliefs.

Nonetheless, the fact that the elder role is by definition outside regular bureaucratic channels frequently generates opposition among bureaucrats in both societies—often in the foreign affairs and national security establishments. These bureaucracies inherently distrust the delivery of messages they do not control and view them as creating static in the regular channels of communication; moreover, each side fears that such informal communication can reveal internal divisions that the other side will exploit. Thus those individuals and organizations who play the elder and intermediary roles in both China and the United States often find that not only do they have opponents in the other society, but they also often face suspicion in their own.

**Plain, Private Citizens**

The United States is known for its highly articulated civic society, active middle class, aggressive press, assertive business community, well-developed philanthropic and nongovernmental organization structures, involved academic community, and broad range of interest groups, and it is not difficult to identify private citizens in each of these realms who have significantly shaped America’s interaction with Beijing. In academia, people such as A. Doak Barnett, John King Fairbank, Lucian Pye, Robert Scalapino, and Richard L. “Dixie” Walker, who straddled the cold and post-cold war worlds, come to mind, and they have been succeeded by two generations of involved academics too numerous to mention. In the philanthropic and nonprofit organization worlds, figures such as Houghton “Buck” Freeman, Hank Luce, David Rockefeller, Barber Conable Jr., Jan Berris, Mary Brown Bullock, Chou Wen-chung, Peter Geithner, Sidney Jones, Robert Kapp, Terry Lautz, June Mei, Douglas Murray, Robert Oxnam, Arthur Rosen, and Governor Raymond F. Shafer have played key roles. These and many other individuals have exerted their influence through the written and spoken word, the organizations they have built and nurtured, the students they have trained, and the specific issues to which they have devoted their time, money, and energy.

On the Chinese side, the list is more difficult to compile, although private citizens have had an impact, and their impact is likely to grow and broaden as private businesses and civic organizations multiply and expand. In the meantime, dissidents such as Wei Jingsheng, Fang Lizhi, Wang Dan, Liu Binyan, and a few others have had a tremendous effect on the bilateral relationship, although they often are better known abroad than at home. Indeed, many of these individuals not only became causes célèbres in Washington’s interaction with Beijing at various points throughout the 1990s, but once they came to the United States they continued to speak out, thereby aggravating Beijing while shaping American views of China.

Those individuals who have served as China’s ambassador to the United States (as well as to Britain, Canada, and the United Nations) not only were influential during their ambassadorships, but often have returned to their country to play significant roles before and after their retirements from public service. In late 1998, for example, Jiang Zemin created a group of about twenty-five such individuals whose foreign policy counsel he seeks on a regular basis. Also important have been some intellectuals in China’s institutions of higher education, notably Peking and Fudan universities, and in PRC research institutes such as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, other think tanks in Beijing, and institutes in Shanghai.

These examples notwithstanding, the role of private Chinese citizens has been greatly circumscribed up to this point because foreign policy has
been tightly controlled by the central elite, autonomous centers of economic power have been exceedingly limited, and civil society is only gradually developing. For now the most obvious influence of private citizens on the bilateral relationship is to be found in the United States. We will, however, look at one remarkable Chinese citizen, Dai Qing, who is a harbinger of things to come in the PRC.

Maurice R. Greenberg. Given the increasing importance of finance and trade in U.S.-China relations in the 1989–2000 period, it is appropriate to look briefly at an individual who has had an enormous impact on bilateral ties—Maurice R. Greenberg, chairman and chief executive officer of the American International Group, the world’s leading international insurance organization. Greenberg has had such impact by providing counsel to sitting and former presidents and policymakers in both nations; offering leadership to a broad range of internationally involved nongovernmental organizations in the United States; bringing modern insurance practices, business and management methods, and capital to the PRC; and his key role in lobbying Congress in protracted battles such as the effort to win permanent normal trade relations status for Beijing in May 2000.

Greenberg is perceived, particularly by bruised competitors in the realms of policy dispute or business competition, as a single-minded businessman motivated by a corporate bottom line that has expanded enormously under his stewardship. But the truth is more complex. The drive and focus we see today are the same that motivated him as a seventeen-year-old to enlist in the army, storm Omaha Beach on D-Day, fight in Europe, muster out of the active military, finish his basic education, attend law school, and then (still in the Army Reserve) help quell a prison camp insurrection of Chinese and North Korean prisoners on the island of Kojedo during the Korean War. Greenberg, like many in his generation, wanted to make America both stronger and more successful. In his particular case, however, the Korean experience led him to conclude that “[o]ur understanding of Asia at the time was very bad…. Americans viewed Asians as little brown brothers and as subhuman, and in return we were not loved.” It was this experience of American ignorance of Asia, fused with the twin senses of opportunity and danger in the region, that has made him a dynamo in China policy, at least as much as the narrow corporate interest often ascribed to him.

Greenberg’s story, however, did not start in the United States or even with Greenberg, but rather with a young American entrepreneur, C. V. Starr, who in 1919 opened an agency in Shanghai called American Asiatic Underwriters that sold fire and marine insurance. Shortly thereafter, Starr entered the life insurance market by founding the Asia Life Insurance Company, a firm that soon was training local people to sell life policies to the Chinese population. Within a decade Starr had “established offices and agencies across China and in Hong Kong, Indochina, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and the Philippines.” It was only in 1926 that Starr had an office in the United States.

As a result of domestic unrest and foreign invasion in China and the region, company headquarters were moved to New York in 1939. After World War II, however, “American International was, in fact, the first foreign company to resume business in Shanghai, where operations continued until 1950 when the office was closed. The regional headquarters had been transferred to Hong Kong a year earlier.” In 1951 Asia Life became American Life Insurance Company, concentrating much of its effort in the Middle East, Africa, and Japan. By 1962 the company had grown substantially, and its new president, Maurice R. “Hank” Greenberg, restructured the company so that its profitability grew mightily thereafter. In 1967 AIG was formed, going public two years later.

It was only in 1980 that AIG returned to its roots in China, forming a fifty-fifty joint venture with the People’s Insurance Company of China (with Greenberg saying at the time, “This is historic. It’s never been done before.”). It was not until a decade later, however, that AIG could operate in a stand-alone capacity, and only in 1992 did the firm become the first foreign insurer to obtain a license to sell life and general insurance in Shanghai. By 2000, AIG had general insurance operations in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Foshan, employing 1,100 Chinese citizens and having an agency force of 10,000. And with the November 1999 bilateral U.S.-China agreement on PRC accession to the WTO, and the subsequent May 2000 U.S. House of Representatives approval of permanent normal trade relations for Beijing, there was the prospect that AIG and other American insurers would be able to operate throughout China early in the new millennium.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Greenberg and his colleagues moved simultaneously along three fronts that helped shape U.S.-China relations. The first was the business front. Along this dimension, AIG sought to develop the essential relations of trust with the Chinese and to assist China as it developed a business and investment environment that would make it an attractive partner for foreigners and a rising domestic middle class. Just one part of this effort was Greenberg’s work with Shanghai to bring the city the best global business advice; in 1990 then Mayor of Shanghai Zhu Rongji appointed Greenberg chairman of an International Business Advisory Council—a first-of-its-kind body in the PRC. Over the years since its
Finally, as chairman of the Starr Foundation, Greenberg has supported philanthropic activity through "the distribution of major financial support to academic, medical, cultural and public policy institutions... On its resources to help train young people as area specialists in some of America's premier medical schools, in China...". On another front, and with respect to China and Chinese policy institutions... On another front, and with respect to China and Chinese policy institutions... On another front, and with respect to China and Chinese policy institutions... On another front, and with respect to China and Chinese policy institutions...
state of mind and reality in which the individual assumes responsibility for his or her own future. An excerpt from a Washington Post story is illustrative: “In China under the welfare benefits system in the past, everything was provided by the country,” says Karen X.Q. Hu, a former railroad industry employee who is now deputy manager of AIG’s Shanghai office. “Only with the reforms do people think they need the type of security of insurance... People have to understand that there is risk if you set up your own factory, for example,” said Ron Clarke, whose previous post for AIG was in Eastern Europe. “So this education process is part of China’s economic reform process.”

Dai Qing. While business has provided one among many bases from which private Americans have exerted influence over the U.S.-China relationship, far fewer independent platforms exist in the PRC. Nonetheless, as pluralization of Chinese society proceeds, new power bases will emerge in business and in the arena of civic organizations. Indeed, as the subject of this section, Mme. Dai Qing said to me in 1992, “Economic pluralization is the most important to break down the authoritarian system. Besides economics, there are other dimensions of pluralization—cultural.”

Given China’s Confucian past that places such importance on “intellectuals” (zhishi fenzi), writers, academics, and dissidents have been notable influences on the Sino-American relationship. Sometimes Chinese intellectuals exert their influence within the Communist Party elite through the careful cultivation of personal relationships. Others make their cases and exert their influence by reaching outside the elite to the broader public and, upon occasion, outside China to the world beyond the communist system. Dissidents like Wei Jingsheng, Wang Dan, Fang Lizhi, and Dai Qing (who does not consider herself a dissident, per se) have influenced the U.S.-China relationship. They have done so by appealing to constituencies and organizations outside China, constituencies often found in the U.S. Congress, the Western mass media, and among international non-governmental organizations and academics.

In the preceding chapter I briefly mentioned Dai Qing in connection with the nascent environmental and NGO movements in the PRC. Nonetheless, her role in the post-cold war period merits additional comment. Her influence has been evident in two complementary and reinforcing directions. First, as China’s most well known female journalist, Dai Qing has been an outspoken critic of the PRC’s political system, saying in 1999, “Ultimately, all who use their power to hurt freedom of expression will be on the losing side of history.” Second, she has been one of the motive forces behind the development of a still weak environmental movement in China and the emergence of nongovernmental forces to promote environmental education and knowledge. More particularly, she has become the human face of opposition to the biggest construction project under way in the world at century’s end, the Three Gorges Dam project.

Born in western China, trained in engineering, and a former reporter for the official Guangming Daily, Dai Qing is a writer of what the scholar Perry Link terms “literary reportage,” a genre that resembles investigative reporting in the West.” Having started this aspect of her career in earnest in the late 1970s, the heady period in which Democracy Wall and the dissident Wei Jingsheng came to world attention, Dai Qing has written a variety of daring pieces dealing with sensitive issues (often historical topics of contemporary relevance) germane to individual and group freedom. Though an extraordinarily brave and frank person, Dai Qing’s background as an adopted child who grew up in the privileged setting of Marshal Ye Jianying’s home gave her insight into the inner workings of the Chinese Communist Party, as it provided her a certain protection from what otherwise might have been the consequences of her writings. Even with this insulation, however, she spent ten months in Qincheng Prison in the wake of her involvement in the events of June 4, 1989, and after publishing her book Yangtze! Yangtze! Debate over the Three Gorges Project in 1989. As Link put it, “Hard facts, reported from her own memory as well as from documentary sources in her possession, would not be easy to refute, and to try to muzzle Dai Qing might only anger her into making more public revelations.”

When asked how she visualized what she was doing, Dai told Professor Perry Link, “[Y]ou should imagine living in a dark room with all the shades drawn. If one shade goes up—just a crack—the light that enters is suddenly very interesting. Everyone will rush to look... Or think of an emperor who has hundreds of concubines, and thus has lost interest in promiscuous sex, and compare him with a deprived man who rushes eagerly when a single opportunity arises.”

With this kind of self-defined mission, “to open the shades,” Dai Qing has since 1989 taken particular aim at the Three Gorges Dam project, writing and editing two books—Yangtze! Yangtze! and The River Dragon Has Come—on the subject. The latter volume also lifts the public lid on a huge 1975 series of dam failures in Henan Province that led to between 26,000 and 230,000 deaths (obviously a huge range of estimates,
with the first referring to immediate deaths and the latter to all fatalities with any connection to the disaster). These volumes attack the Three Gorges Dam project from a variety of angles—ecological, safety, relocation, and the way in which the decision to proceed with the project was made in the first place. They have had a notable impact among environmental groups, international funding agencies that have decided to eschew controversy by staying away from the project, and those members of the U.S. Congress most concerned with environmental and human rights issues.

Illustrative of the emerging linkage between critics of Chinese policy within the PRC and constituencies abroad, it is no accident that three international NGOs have been particularly vigorous in distributing Dai Qing’s work and using it as one part of an intense effort to halt the Three Gorges project. The first organization, Probe International, “is a Toronto-based independent environmental advocacy organization that monitors and exposes the effects of Canadian aid and trade in the Third World.” Another NGO, International Rivers Network (IRN), describes itself as “dedicated to developing and assisting a global grassroots movement to protect rivers and watersheds for people and ecosystems dependent upon them. Through research into alternative energy generation, irrigation and flood management schemes, pressure for policy reform at international finance institutions such as the World Bank, and active media and educational campaigns directed at projects around the world, IRN discourages investment in destructive large-scale river development.” Finally, Human Rights Watch/Asia has published a widely circulated and critical report on the resettlement aspects of the Three Gorges project.

Dai Qing’s work and the outreach capacity of these international NGOs have had an effect. Other environmental organizations, such as Defenders of Wildlife, as well as critics in the U.S. Congress, have used this information to justify their own opposition to the approximately $25 billion project scheduled to be completed in 2009. In turn, this accumulation of opposition contributed to decisions by both the U.S. Export-Import Bank and the World Bank to decline to become directly or indirectly involved in financing the project.

The point here is not that Dai Qing and her international allies have provided a fully balanced assessment of the project’s costs and benefits. It is to argue, however, that Dai Qing is a private Chinese citizen who has made a difference in one corner of the U.S.-China relationship.

CONCLUSIONS

Just as in every other human endeavor, individuals count in the United States-China relationship. People count because of the values they hold, the priorities they pursue, their propensity to take risks, and their tenacity or lack thereof. Individuals also count, especially in America, because money, the ability to mobilize talent, and vision are not monopolized by the government. As Amintai Erzioni said, power has its “normative” (ideas and symbolic rewards), “coercive” (physical and psychological force), and “remunerative” (material reward) dimensions, and each of these three types of power is widely dispersed in the United States, and increasingly so in the PRC. Arguably, American academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and businesses have been more effective in many realms of dealing with the PRC than has the U.S. government. The Rockefellers used their private wealth to exert enormous impact on U.S.-China relations at the start of the twentieth century, and Hank Greenberg has had a large impact at the close of the century. Decades from now, when the definitive history of China’s relations with the United States is written, the roles of China’s intellectuals and dissidents will be prominent as well.