

# WHAT CONSTITUTES APPROPRIATE U.S. POLICY TOWARD CHINA? TWO PERSPECTIVES



Smiling faces,difficult issues. The following credits apply, top to bottom.  
President George W. Bush January 26, 2001. Photograph by Larry Downing,  
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President Jiang Zemin. From the *People's Daily* Web site:  
<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/leaders/jzm/jzmhome.htm>.

The Dalai Lama. <http://www.dalailamainfo.com>

Former Chinese political prisoner Wei Jingsheng, May 2000.  
Photograph by Leslie E. Kossoff, © AFP.

Illustration of fictional missile launch by Willa Davis-Held.

Amnesty International demonstration against human-rights abuses in China  
outside Buckingham Palace, Britain, Oct. 1999.  
Photograph by Sinead Lynch, © AFP.

Tibetans protest against China in front of the White House, April 1999. © AFP  
Graphic of upper left corner of the flag of Taiwan.

Kidd-class destroyer , USS John Paul Jones, similar to the 4 that President Bush  
has proposed to sell to Taiwan, without the Aegis weapon system. Source:  
*The United States Navy, Navy Fact File:*  
<http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/factfile/ship/ship-dd.html>.

## Editor's Note

**T**he direction of U.S. policy toward the People's Republic of China is one of the most controversial issues confronting the nation. One of the biggest crises of the relatively new George W. Bush administration involved China. It is simply imperative that high school and university teachers and students in relevant courses explore various aspects of contemporary U.S.-China relations. What follows is an attempt to provide instructors and students with succinct discussions of outstanding U.S.-China issues and several possible U.S. policy options toward the PRC.

The following pair of essays by outstanding political scientists who are China specialists is published in cooperation with the Foreign Policy Research Institute ([www.fpri.org](http://www.fpri.org)) and its Marvin Wachman Fund for International Education, which sponsors professional development programs for secondary school educators. Avery Goldstein is Director of FPRI's Asia Program and a Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. June Dreyer is a Senior Fellow at FPRI and a Professor of Political Science at the University of Miami/Coral Gables. ⇄

# U.S. CHINA POLICY

## Vexing Challenges and Choices

By Avery Goldstein

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**S**tripped of the Cold War considerations that had made China rather clearly either an adversary or an ally, the Sino-American relationship has become inherently more uncertain. Even so, the central consideration that must shape U.S. China policy today is clear: how should the U.S. respond to the prospect of China emerging as a great power, a development that would herald the end of the distinctly advantageous current era of unchallenged American preponderance? Broadly speaking, two contrasting perspectives exist.

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**T**hose who believe that the goal of U.S. foreign policy should be to manage an inevitable transition to a world in which multiple power centers must be accommodated are likely to subscribe to the view that U.S. policy should ensure that China's greater role does not threaten American interests. Economic development and growing networks of international involvement, it is argued, will result in China's emergence as a responsible great power. Such "engagement" is expected to facilitate and perhaps accelerate changes in the way China manages its domestic affairs and pursues its international interests. By contrast, those who believe that the goal of U.S. foreign policy should be to preserve American preponderance are likely to subscribe to a view that U.S. policy ought to prevent or, if that is not possible, at least delay China from emerging as a peer competitor. Concerned that present areas of bilateral disagreement and future competition for influence presage serious challenges to American leadership and interests once China becomes more powerful, this perspective offers a basis for supporting policies emphasizing what is usually dubbed "containment."

This oversimplified depiction indicates that engagement and containment are two endpoints on a policy continuum. Actual

policy usually combines elements of each. Polemics notwithstanding, mainstream debate has rarely argued for either naive engagement nor obstinate containment. Yet, deciding on the balance to be struck between these extremes depends on the extent to which one believes in the logic driving these broad alternatives, regardless of the label one chooses to attach to the policy. There is room for principled disagreement among respected analysts based on differing interpretations of Beijing's present policy as well as informed projections about the ways its policies may change if it grows more powerful. In such circumstances prudence argues for a U.S. China policy that manages rather than exacerbates current problems, avoids creating new problems that can be anticipated, and also hedges against the possibility that some problems may prove intractable. This approach applies to a broad range of issues in Sino-American bilateral relations, including predictable economic disputes that will accompany China's accession to the WTO, persistent disagreements about human rights, and unpredictable incidents such as the U.S. reconnaissance aircraft collision with a Chinese fighter near Hainan. But the two most challenging and vexing issues presently on the bilateral agenda are Taiwan and missile defense.

### **TAIWAN: THE OLD CHALLENGE**

Beijing's determination to achieve political reunification with Taiwan not only reflects longstanding nationalist outrage about foreign interference in China's internal affairs dating to the mid-nineteenth century and frustration about the abortive conclusion to the Civil War of the mid-twentieth century, but also new concerns of the post-Cold War era. Three such concerns stand out—the need for the Chinese Communist Party to rely on its nationalist credentials (rather than discredited Marxism-Leninism) as a source of legitimacy, the fear that the failure of its Taiwan policy might encourage separatism in other peripheral regions of the PRC, and concern that a successful reassertion of American influence on the Taiwan problem will reinforce U.S. "hegemony" that China's leaders view as at least an uncomfortable constraint and often an unacceptable challenge to their rightful role in the region. Thus, when China's analysts assert that the U.S. wants to use Taiwan to "check China," much more is implied than simply that the island poses problems for Chinese naval operations off the eastern seaboard or could serve as a base for military forces that threaten the mainland. China links the Taiwan issue to a host of problems it believes it must address if it is to fulfill its destiny and become a genuine great power.

**W**ashington's determination to ensure that any change in the current relationship between Taiwan and the mainland is accomplished peacefully and with the consent of the parties involved also has historical and contemporary roots. The American decision to freeze the Taiwan Strait after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 (in order to reduce the chances of having to fight on a second front in East Asia) re-introduced the U.S. into a Chinese civil war from which it had just disengaged. Thereafter the growing U.S. commitment to Taiwan's security, in the context of our Cold War strategy of containing the Soviet-led communist bloc, prevented China from using military force to bring Taiwan under Beijing's jurisdiction and provided Taiwan with the opportunity to pursue economic development and eventually democratizing political reforms. Our decades-long commitment to Taiwan's security was always contestable under international law, but especially after we abandoned the fiction that the island's regime was the real government of China. After the 1950s, the commitment also lost much of its military-strategic rationale. To contain China, the U.S. had bases throughout East Asia that sufficed; after 1972, we no longer sought to contain China.

So why has the U.S. interest in the evolution of cross-Strait relations endured? First, regardless of the original justification for our policy, the U.S. has acquired a moral commitment to the people of Taiwan. Because we are largely responsible for creating the situation that now prevails, the U.S. would pay a stiff price in terms of its international stature if it attempted to wash its hands of the problem, even if it were possible to justify such an approach as consistent with international law and not harmful to our military disposition in the western Pacific. Second, for those who believe that advancing the cause of democracy is a worthwhile goal for U.S. foreign policy, Taiwan serves as an exemplar of the peaceful, if sometimes difficult, transition from authoritarian to democratic rule and as evidence contradicting claims that Chinese culture is inherently inconsistent with liberal democracy.

As others have argued, Taiwan's role as a potential model for political change

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on the mainland may be important not just because it is consistent with our values, but also because many believe that such change would give rise to a China with which it would be easier to peacefully coexist. Third, regardless of the path by which we have reached this point, during the 1990s the U.S. concern about Taiwan's security has been expressed with increasing clarity—both by members of the U.S. Congress who justify their advocacy by reference to U.S. law (the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act) as well as presidential actions (including continued arms sales to Taiwan and the U.S. reaction to China's military actions in the Taiwan Strait during 1995–6). As a consequence, we now have a reputational interest in ensuring that others not interpret our policy as abandoning a significant commitment. Our principal reputational interest is to ensure that potential adversaries do not infer from our Taiwan policy that we lack the resolve to stand up to them if they challenge important commitments elsewhere; our secondary reputational interest is to ensure that allies as well as formally nonaligned, but friendly, states maintain sufficient confidence in us.

Beginning with the premise that a peaceful resolution acceptable to the people of Taiwan best preserves our moral, political, and reputational interests, the question is what U.S. policies are most likely to enhance the prospects for such an outcome? First, the U.S. must maintain the present belief in Beijing that American intervention in response to China's unprovoked use of military force against Taiwan is nearly certain, and the belief in Taipei that American intervention in response to Chinese military action that Taiwan provokes cannot be presumed. The U.S. response to China's missile coercion in 1995–6 as well as our handling of the uproar over former Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui's "two-states" thesis in 1999,

have clearly established these expectations, despite the fact that the formal U.S. policy is often termed "strategic ambiguity." Maintaining this posture does not require, and most likely would be unnecessarily complicated by, approving legislation such as the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act. This is a situation where actions have already spoken louder than unnecessarily provocative words.

**S**econd, the U.S. must carefully manage our unusual military relationship with Taiwan, especially the sale of military arms. Such arms sales are undertaken in light of a *mélange* of laws and understandings (the Taiwan Relations Act, the 1982 Sino-American communiqué conditionally promising a gradual reduction in U.S. arms transfers to Taiwan, the "six assurances" President Reagan offered Taiwan to soften the blow of that communiqué) that offers no universally accepted formula about quantity and quality. In the past few years, some American analysts have pointed to improving Chinese air, naval, and especially ballistic missile capabilities arrayed opposite Taiwan to argue for the sale of more advanced U.S. arms to which Beijing strenuously objects—most notably destroyers suitable for deploying sophisticated missile defenses. Whether the U.S. should be more forthcoming when Taiwan submits requests for arms transfers is a matter on which the Clinton administration did not reach closure. It now falls to the Bush administration. If Taiwan requests, and the Pentagon recommends approval of, so-called "red-line" items whose transfer China has ominously insisted would lead to "serious consequences," what is the advisable course for the president?

Because the present military balance does not demand immediate redress, because the introduction of major weapons systems is a process that will in any event unfold over several years, because the ulti-

Beijing is unpersuaded by Washington's assurances and unconvinced when it is told that the system is only meant to address the dangers that states like North Korea represent, dangers they assert recent events suggest can better be addressed by diplomacy.

mate military consideration for China is the belief that any significant military action against Taiwan will mean also confronting American military power, and especially because recently there are signs that both Beijing and Taipei may be probing each other's flexibility in a search for a way to reopen talks, approval of provocative military packages for Taiwan at this time is neither necessary nor wise. Instead, the Bush administration should steer clear of "red-line" items while also plainly indicating that we have not precluded a different decision in the future, depending on the evolution of the situation in the Taiwan Strait. Such an approach, perhaps best labeled "attentive restraint," provides an opportunity to test the sincerity of Beijing's asserted preference for a peaceful resolution, and also an opportunity to test Taipei's willingness to engage in dialogue.

In April 2001, President Bush leaned in the direction of restraint insofar as he decided not to sell Taiwan destroyers equipped with the most advanced Aegis battle management systems. At the same time, however, he surprised many (and disturbed Beijing) by deciding to approve the sale of submarines that Washington had long refused Taipei on the grounds that they constitute an offensive rather than a useful defensive potential. Because China had not recently focused on the possibility of submarine sales and, perhaps, because it is unclear whether the subs can ever be delivered (the U.S. must either re-enter the business of building diesel-electric subs or find a willing foreign manufacturer), Beijing's response has been limited to angry rhetoric. Even so, there are questions about the wisdom of a decision that may have real costs (aggravating Sino-American relations as well as increasing political tension across the Taiwan Straits) but few practical military benefits.



Illustration by Wella Davis-Held

### **BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSES: THE NEW CHALLENGE**

In comparison with the Taiwan issue, differences with China over the U.S. program to deploy a full array of missile defenses have only recently become prominent. On the one hand, because the issue is relatively new, there may be room for creative solutions before each side becomes fully invested in hardened positions. On the other hand, because the substance of the issue touches on China's most impressive military assets and the U.S.'s most glaring military vulnerability, a confounding mixture of concerns about capabilities and intentions could make missile defenses an intractable issue doomed to plague Sino-American relations.

China's view of prospective U.S. missile defenses, including TMD (Theater Missile Defense) deployed in East Asia and national missile defense for the American homeland, is colored by a respect for the technological prowess of the U.S. and a concern that however limited and imperfect a first generation system may be, sooner or later it threatens to neutralize China's conventional ballistic missile capability within the region and its strategic nuclear deterrent against more distant rivals. China's defense planners worry that missile defenses, combined with overwhelming U.S. nuclear and conventional superiority, could make preemptive strikes against China a more attractive option for Washington in a future crisis. Short of preemption, Beijing worries that TMD could be used to protect Taiwan or American forces that come to Taiwan's assistance, offsetting Beijing's military ace in the hole, its medium-range ballistic missile forces that can presently target not only the Taiwan theater, but also U.S. forces and dependents throughout the western Pacific.

Given the state of current technology, China can confidently counter U.S. missile defense efforts through fairly simple countermeasures—most likely by accelerating the pace of its missile modernization program. Why, then, is China so concerned about what the U.S. insists will be a limited shield not geared to cope with great power arsenals? Aside from the possibility that even limited theater missile defenses deployed elsewhere in Asia might be shifted to Taiwan during a crisis, China more generally worries about the daunting prospect of having to cope with the predictable upgrading of all U.S. missile defenses.

China's strong interest in the issue notwithstanding, its concerns have played almost no role in the arguments that put missile defenses at the center of American military planning for the early twenty-first century. American officials have merely stated that the proposed missile defenses are not aimed at degrading the nuclear deterrents of the major powers and in any case will not have the ability to do so. But because intentions may easily change (and because some prominent advocates of mis-

sile defenses have explicitly suggested that the real purpose of the system is to deal with the growing "China threat"), Beijing is unpersuaded by Washington's assurances and unconvinced when it is told that the system is only meant to address the dangers that states like North Korea represent, dangers they assert recent events suggest can better be addressed by diplomacy.

Nevertheless, despite these apparently incompatible perspectives, Chinese and American experts have informally begun to explore possibilities for reassuring China while permitting the U.S. to proceed with its plans for deploying missile defenses. The good news is that there is little to lose by exchanging views; dialogue is unlikely to exacerbate China's concerns, and Beijing may even prefer frank, heated exchanges to having its concerns wholly ignored. The bad news is that the prospects for meaningful agreement are slim. As long as China's military is so overwhelmingly outgunned by the U.S., it is hard to believe that Beijing would accept arrangements that freeze it into a badly inferior position. If it thinks that permitting the U.S. to act without constraint would be even worse, Beijing might agree to a verifiable deal that sets some limits on what the U.S. deploys. It is difficult, however, to imagine that such an agreement would preclude research and development that could lead to a politically irresistible, much more effective American missile defense.

**T**he U.S. is unlikely to forswear improving its system if scientific advances makes this possible. Thus, even if an interim agreement can be reached, one should anticipate that China will continue to strive to redress the current imbalance in capabilities that would be reinforced by American defenses. China is likely to push at the unavoidable ambiguities in any arms control deal that is cut or, if necessary, to withdraw from the agreement when the time is ripe. In either case, Americans would view China's self-interested efforts with concern and probably interpret them as reflecting hostile intent. Beijing's claims that it was only seeking to ensure its security by maintaining a retaliatory capability would probably sound no more reassuring

to Washington than Washington's claims about the purely defensive purposes of its missile defenses sound to Beijing.

**I**n short, the mutual suspicions and bet-hedging that often plague relations among states in the uncertain realm of international politics make it likely that the missile defense issue will remain a chronic problem between the world's preeminent power and a rising state that it views as a potential peer competitor. The U.S. has to decide whether the plausible security benefits of deploying theater and national missile defenses outweigh the likely costs, one of which will be increased tensions with China. Although the benefits of good relations with China may have been unreasonably overstated in the American rhetoric about "strategic partnership" during 1997-8, it would also be a mistake to overlook the common interests that a sound bilateral relationship serves—addressing proliferation concerns, facilitating dialogue on the Korean peninsula, coping with the challenges of international crime and terrorism.

Exaggerating the benefits and minimizing the costs of an attractive policy choice is an example of wishful thinking rather than serious analysis. At least when thinking about our relationship with China and our interests in the Asia-Pacific, because the various costs of currently envisioned missile defenses are so much clearer than the limited benefits, the prudent course for the immediate future is heavy investment in research and development rather than a rush to deployment. As technology shows promise, the deployment decision should be revisited. Following this approach, the first deployment decisions will focus on the presently more promising theater defenses, an issue on which the Chinese have demonstrated greater (if still little) flexibility. It is even possible that carefully managing the process of deploying TMD (including the sensitive issue of its relevance to the Taiwan contingency) could help mute, though it cannot eliminate, China's worst case fears about the intentions driving U.S. plans for national missile defenses.

U.S. policy choices alone cannot determine the character of Sino-American relations. In the end, China's choices

reflect its own perception of national interests as well as its reaction to American decisions. Nevertheless, to establish the foundation for a long term relationship that is constructive, Washington must maintain a clear focus on managing the issues that threaten the most serious disruption in the near term. As the U.S. crafts its China policy today, Taiwan and missile defense are the issues that pose the most vexing challenges and demand the most careful choices. ■



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# How To Deal With Beijing A China Policy for the Bush Administration

By June Teufel Dreyer

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As the Clinton administration left office, supporters congratulated the president for successfully managing Sino-American relations and avoiding confrontation, while critics charged that his efforts to produce harmonious relations had come at the expense of American interests in East Asia. In fact, the problems that existed between the U.S and the People's Republic of China (PRC) at the beginning of the Clinton administration—most notably the trade deficit, human rights issues, and the status of Taiwan—were still present at the end of the administration, and had arguably become worse. Not all problems are solvable, and it is unlikely that the new Bush administration has the ability to do so. Yet some steps can, and should, be taken.

Mainland China has unquestionably made great strides over the past two decades. Its economic growth rate has been among the highest in the world, and will probably be between 7 and 8 percent for the current year, 2001. While its human rights record is far from perfect, the mass purges that killed millions of people, during Mao Zedong's era have not been repeated, and a more regularized legal system has begun to emerge. Recently, four student activists who were involved in the 1989 demonstrations at Tiananmen Square were released from prison early, a few weeks apart. One of them, Zhou Yongjun, gained worldwide attention when he knelt on the steps of the Great Hall of the People, begging the Chinese leadership to accept a student petition that he held aloft. At the end of February, the Standing Committee of China's highest legislative body, the National People's Congress, approved the United Nations' International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These and

other developments have encouraged some people to conclude that the PRC is successfully making the transition from a planned socialist economy to a market-oriented capitalist economy, and from a tightly controlled communist society to an open, civil society. Seen from their perspective, Clinton's attempt to make China a "strategic partner" of the United States seemed a correct response to these developments. By engaging Beijing, Washington could hope to gradually modify its behavior.

On the less optimistic side, critics point out that enormous problems have emerged, and that the leadership is increasingly less popular with its own people. Economic growth has bypassed whole professions and regions of the country. The differences between rich and poor, both at the level of the individual and the province or region, have widened markedly, engendering much jealousy and tensions. For example, the average annual income in urban areas last year was 6,280

yuan, but only 2,253 yuan in rural areas. This disparity of nearly three to one is continuing to enlarge: last year urban incomes went up by 6.4 percent, while rural incomes increased only 2.1 percent. One percent of the country's population owns 40 percent of its wealth, while the working class pays more than 40 percent of the country's total personal income tax.

The recently-freed dissidents have mainly been in jail or in exile for most of the time since the demonstrations nearly twelve years ago; their respective sentences were due to end in a few months anyway. Their release does not indicate that party and government are softening their position on human rights, but rather that this is the time of year that the United Nations debates a resolution on human rights, and China wants to avoid being censured. Concessions can be expected every year at this time, but are even more likely this year, since Beijing is hoping to be selected as the site of the 2008 Olympics. (And has since been selected.)

Moreover, in what has been termed “hostage diplomacy,” the individuals can always be re-arrested. This has happened to at least one of the recently freed men before, as well as to others, including Wei Jingsheng, China’s most famous dissident

**T**his very same logic explains China’s signing on to the UN Human Rights treaty. Additionally, it should be noted that Beijing has stated that it will not comply with Article 8 of the treaty, which proclaims the right to form and join free labor unions. PRC law allows only one labor union, the All China Federation of Trade Unions, which is firmly under government control. The formation of independent groups is prohibited, and the Chinese constitution does not recognize the right to strike.

Party and government are vicious oppressors of not only political dissidents and advocates of independent trade unions, but also of any group that is not firmly under the control of the central government. This explains the motivation behind the decision to attack members of Falungong, a quasi-religious organization that insists it has no political agenda. When 10,000 of its adherents appeared unannounced in Beijing in April 1999, the leadership interpreted their presence as a clear political challenge, which perhaps it was. But this cannot justify beating and torturing the movement’s adherents—resulting in the death of a number of people who are likely to have simply been practicing breathing exercises for their health, just as they have claimed.

At the same time, there has been a crackdown on other religious groups—almost as if the government was looking for a convenient excuse. Unofficial Christian churches have been disbanded and their premises destroyed. Catholics are a particular target, because of their direct connection to a foreign “ruler,” the pope, and many priests have reportedly been jailed and physically abused. Tibetan Buddhist monasteries have had similar problems. Some ethnic minorities, including Tibetans and various Muslim groups, are very unhappy; the Chinese press regularly rails out against “separatist tendencies” among them.

There are also increasing numbers of disturbances caused by peasants who are

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incensed by high taxes, and by workers who are unhappy about being thrown out of jobs in the process of economic restructuring which has accompanied the transition from the socialist planned economy to the capitalist market economy; pensions and unemployment benefits often aren’t paid. Again, according to official figures, six million workers who were laid off by state-owned enterprises last year haven’t been able to find jobs, and every year an additional 11 million new people enter the job market. Both of these groups have grown restive, and have faced oppression from party and government

**E**nvironmental disaster is looming. Nine of the world’s ten most polluted cities are in China, rivers are drying up, and deserts are expanding. The official news agency recently revealed that the PRC’s deserts expanded at an annual rate of 2,460 square km from 1985 through 1995, and that desert expansion has become *more* of a problem since then. Beijing has suffered steadily increasing sandstorms in recent years; one of these in February 2001 was so severe that it actually affected Taiwan, hundreds of miles away, as well. Virtually everyone is upset with rising levels of corruption, and most people are cynical about the government’s efforts to clean it up.

In terms of China’s international behavior, things are hardly better. A White Paper issued prior to Taiwan’s presidential election in spring 2000 warned that Taiwan could not continue to refuse to negotiate *sine die*, and demanded that Taiwan accept Beijing’s definition of one China—that is, a China whose capital is in Beijing, with Taiwan a province thereof—before negotiations could begin. This is tantamount to demanding that Taipei give away its negotiating position as a precondition to negotiations. A CIA report released in March 2001 accuses the

PRC of failing to keep its pledge to avoid engaging in any new nuclear cooperation with Iran. The PRC has also been assisting Iraq to build anti-aircraft systems in contravention of UN sanctions. The U.S. has complained to China three times about this. The military budget for FY 2001 represents a 17.7 percent increase over the previous year, even though the PRC faces no external enemy.

**T**he goal of the Bush administration must be to encourage favorable developments in the PRC while not seeming to condone those that are inimical to world peace, international human rights standards, and American interests. In endeavoring to do so, we must:

- *not assume that China will necessarily evolve into a democracy.* The transition away from a socialist economy does not automatically result in pluralist democracy, as has been shown by the experience of the former Soviet Union. The facile assumption that Sino-U.S. tensions will disappear when the mainland becomes capitalist is as ludicrous as Karl Marx’s prediction that nationality and ethnic tensions would disappear with the advent of communism. What China seems to have evolved thus far is a kind of state capitalism under which entrepreneurs understand that they have to toe the party line in order to stay in business. While this could transition into pluralist decisionmaking, it would be unwise to assume that it inevitably will.

- *not assume that a democracy will necessarily be easier to deal with than the current autocracy.* One of the few emotions that the current mainland government has been able to tap into to shore up its legitimacy is nationalism. Several generations of mainlanders have been educated to believe that Taiwan has “always” been part of the ancestral land

It should be pointed out that the number of missiles that the mainland has targeted against Taiwan has increased exponentially over the past several years, which is a major factor giving credence to the island's request that it needs more capable weapons.



September 2, 2001. The United States will brief China on its plans to test a new missile defense system in an effort to win Beijing's acceptance. Officials will share information on their missile defense plans with the Chinese as part of an outreach effort in preparation for President Bush's trip to Beijing next month.

A prototype rocket motor intended for use in the missile defense system is seen during a successful test launch from Vandenberg Air Force base in California August 31, 2001.

SSgt Richard Freeland via Reuters.

and that its return at the earliest possible date is a sacred quest. In fact, Taiwan was held by China only under the Qing, or Manchu, dynasty—who were not ethnically Chinese—only after 1683, and only loosely held. It was a province of China for barely ten years, from 1885 to 1895, under the Manchus, and it has never been part of the People's Republic of China. Most present-day Chinese are unaware of this. The current government is able to restrain these nationalist passions as it deems advisable for diplomatic purposes. A popularly elected democratic government might find it impossible to do so.

■ *recognize that the "one China" policy is a dangerous semantic trap, and avoid being drawn into pronouncements that could play into Beijing's definition of that one China.* The one China policy was a clever diplomatic ruse devised by then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai to enable their two countries to cooperate against a perceived threat from the Soviet Union. It was possible only because the Taiwan government of Chiang Kai-shek insisted that it was the government of all China, and only because the people of Taiwan who did not agree were powerless to object. Even so, the phrase Kissinger and Zhou agreed upon, "Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait agree that there is but one China; the United States does not challenge this position," never rang quite true. The people of Taiwan are now free to express their opinion, and a large number of them do not agree. Moreover, there is no Soviet threat. President Clinton, prompted by domestic scandal to move ahead his scheduled trip to China and under pressure from his hosts for a

quid pro quo, went far down the road to accepting the mainland's position when he iterated the "three no's" (no support for two Chinas; no support for one China, one Taiwan; no support for Taiwan's entry into international organizations where sovereignty is an issue). There should be no further official mention of the three no's, and as little mention of the one China concept as possible.

■ *be skeptical of Chinese claims that the entire future of Sino-American relations depends on the U.S. getting one upcoming foreign policy decision right—meaning the way Beijing wants the United States to do it.* Major recent issues regarding Taiwan have included PRC hints that if the U.S. sold advanced arms to the island or allowed its president to visit the United States, Beijing would respond by increasing the number of missiles targeted at Taiwan by several hundred, hold military exercises directed against Taiwan, which might include lobbing missiles in the Taiwan Strait as it did in 1995–6, and refusing to cooperate with the United States on nonproliferation, including in Iran and Iraq. It should be pointed out that the number of missiles that the mainland has targeted against Taiwan has increased exponentially over the past several years, which is a major factor giving credence to the island's request that it needs more capable weapons. Since the PRC has not been cooperating with the United States on nonproliferation with Iran and Iraq, contrary to its promises, its threat to cease cooperation already has limited validity.

■ *know China's words, and be prepared to quote them back to China where relevant.* (a) Remonstrations to Beijing about its human right abuses are invariably refuted with arguments that the People's Republic is a sovereign state, and as such can do what it wishes. Washington needs to remind Beijing that the United States is also a sovereign state. As such, it can invite, or allow to travel at will, anyone from anywhere who comes in peace and observes its laws. Government officials should be free to meet with these visitors. There



should be no need to shunt the Dalai Lama into a side office of the White House, and no repetition of the then-president of Taiwan being confined to a shabby transit lounge in the Honolulu airport during a stop in 1994. Nor should the administration tell members of Congress that they should not meet with these visitors, as happened when current President Chen Shui-bian stopped over in Los Angeles in 2000. The U.S. State Department had no right to tell Taiwan, as it did in the spring of 2001, that Taiwan should not send its naval ships to the Marshall Islands because the U.S. feared that the People's Republic of China would be offended. (The vessels visited the Marshall Islands nonetheless, with no visible repercussions).

(b) Beijing has frequently said that trade decisions should not be affected by disagreements over human rights and political considerations. Yet it has hinted that trade relations with the United States will suffer if Washington goes ahead with arms sales to Taiwan and persists in criticizing its human rights record. Past disagreements have resulted in Beijing purchasing Airbuses from Europe rather than Boeing jets from the United States, and signing contracts with Mercedes rather than General Motors. We should remind Beijing of this whenever the issue is raised, adding also that since the terms of trade are reciprocal and the balance of trade is lop-sidedly in China's favor—the U.S. trade deficit with China in 2000 was \$83.8 billion, America's largest, well ahead of second-place Japan, at \$81.3 billion—so Chinese businesses are apt to suffer even more than their U.S. counterparts.

■ *realize the defeatism inherent in the phrase "the United States can do very little to change China."* This is usually operationalized as "we are helpless, so we shouldn't try." To be sure, there are limits on America's ability to change China. Washington does, however, have some leverage. As previously mentioned, Chinese leaders do care about trade. Further, a drop in business with the U.S. would cause additional job layoffs, which are already causing

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major headaches for the leadership, and Beijing also wants badly to host the Olympics.

■ *decide what we really want from a relationship with China.* We must lay out some objectives for ourselves that are sufficiently concrete to be meaningful, but not so specific that we box ourselves in. At the same time, we need to have in mind what we will do if the Chinese leadership does not comply. Let them know, quietly—since saving face, and not causing others to lose face, is important—what this will be. Then, if Beijing refuses, we must act. There should be no repetition of the 1996 fiasco, when the Clinton administration decided not to punish China for the sale to Pakistan of nuclear equipment used to produce weapons-grade enriched uranium. This is taken as a sign of weakness, and will be interpreted as an invitation to evade more understandings in the future. It is absolutely vital for American credibility that the Chinese understand that their actions have consequences, and that we mean what we say.

Secretary of State Colin Powell's speech in early March represented a fine start. Powell said, among other things, that China would be regarded neither as a strategic partner nor an enemy, but that if the Chinese do see fit to test our resolve, they would regret it. The new administration should build on this start. It must not allow threats that "U.S.-China relations will deteriorate if . . ." to intimidate it into making concessions that weaken the American position, and it should remember to judge the Chinese leadership by what it says and does, not by some idealized vision that we hope the country may some day evolve into. ■



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