

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

THIRTY YEARS LATER: NORMALIZATION OF U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS

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**Opening Remarks**

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Chairman of the Board  
The Brookings Institution

**The Breakthrough: Nixon and Mao, 1972**

BRENT SCROWCROFT  
President and Founder  
The Scowcroft Group

**Normalization: Carter and Deng, 1978**

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**The U.S. and China Reestablish Contact: Historic Significance**

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MR. THORNTON: Good morning. For those of you who don't know me, I'm John Thornton, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Brookings. And I am delighted to be here this morning and thank you all for coming. We have a very, very interesting morning ahead of us.

To put it in a little bit of Brookings context, we started the China Center just a few years ago with the purpose of deepening the understanding and the conversation about China, inside the United States, between the United States and China, and, to some extent, even inside China.

That, so far, has been very successful, very ably led by Jeff Bader, sitting right here in the front row.

And it has included a joint venture with Tsinghua University, so we now have on-the-ground capability. And we're determined to be a constructive force in the evolution of this relationship.

In my opinion, there's no question that the U.S.-China relationship is, and will continue to be, the most important, not only to this country, but to the world, at least during our lifetime.

So that's the context for the morning. Now every so often, it seems to us a good idea to step back and reflect a bit, and try to get a deeper understanding on what has worked in the past and what hasn't worked, even take some satisfaction, from time to time, on the positive evolution of the relationship since the Nixon-Mao visit many years ago.

So that's the idea of today's conversation. We couldn't have better people to help us through that conversation than those we have lined up this morning, beginning with General Scowcroft.

Now I remained sort of stubbornly attached to the idea of the wise man or the wise woman, even though that idea kind of comes in and out of favor, depending on the execution of the concept.

And there's no person in my mind who better personifies that than Brent Scowcroft. And, in fact, when we opened -- we inaugurated the opening of the China Center here at Brookings -- we had a dinner and asked him to come speak, and he did a marvelous job then. I know he will do a marvelous job this morning.

Brent was an aide to President Nixon in 1972, and, in a sense, has been in close proximity to this relationship ever since, including at some of its most difficult moments, such as the aftermath of June 4<sup>th</sup>.

But I can't think of a better person to begin this conversation this morning than Brent. He's going to say a few words, and he has expressed a desire to get into discussion and conversation Q&A as much as we can.

So if you can just join me in giving Brent Scowcroft a warm welcome.

(Applause)

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Thank you very much, John, for those generous, if inaccurate, comments about me. It's great to be here with you today. I fear that I am traveling a bit under false colors. It's true that I was in the White House in 1972. As a matter of fact, I came to the White House in December of '71, and I'll get back to that.

But I was not in the NSC. And I did not join the NSC until 1973. So my discussion of the Nixon visit, while I was on the trip, will be

less intimate with the diplomatic details than you might have expected from my resume.

But I'm going to talk a little bit about how it happened, what went on in '72 meeting, something of the color of what it meant for a group of Americans to set foot in China publicly after two decades of total estrangement, and a few conclusions. And then I'd be happy to have a discussion with you.

As I said, I came to the White House from the Pentagon in December of 1971. And less than a week after I arrived, I was off to China as a member of the advance team to set up President Nixon's visit.

So I was not around for the framing of the domestic change in policy or Henry Kissinger's secret trip. And I was not substantively involved in U.S.-China relations until 1973.

What I was in this first year was the Military Assistant to the President. It's a position that no longer exists. But I was in charge of all of the Defense Department assets that were used by the White House: Air Force One, the helicopters, Camp David, and at that time, the Sequoia, the yacht, the mess hall, the motor pool, and White House communications, especially when the White House was traveling.

So that was my job, and when I went to China with the advance team, it was my responsibility to make sure the arrangements for communications were there, for transportation, all of those kinds of details.

I was not a participant in the discussions, for example, for the Shanghai Communiqué.

Now let me step back and talk about the rapprochement of '72. Rapprochement is too strong a word. It was a reaching out to each other, but a very careful one, a very measured one, and a very narrow one.

President Nixon came into office with a stridently anti-communist public image. Chairman Mao was famous for his anti-capitalist slogans. So that was the environment.

And I think this moving together was not only remarkable, it was driven by the imperatives of both sides -- driven by national interests, not by ideology.

The two sides had had no contact for a couple of decades except a military contact in the Korean War. Mao was preaching self-reliance, autarchy, if you will. Don't rely on anybody else. We are our own universe, practicing our own way.

Richard Nixon was an enthusiastic supporter of the total trade embargo on anything to do -- any commerce -- with China.

So there was total estrangement. But there were imperatives, as I said, on both sides.

On the U.S. side, there was our dilemma in Vietnam, and the hope that somehow we could get some help to extricate ourselves from Vietnam.

There was, at that time, détente with the Soviet Union. And a détente with the Soviet Union -- and it was just beginning in '72 -- but a détente with the Soviet Union and total estrangement with China would somewhat unbalance things.

And then there was the need to appease in some sense the anti-war movement in the United States and show this was not simply a militaristic Republican administration.

There was the more subtle political notion of turning a bilateral confrontation -- that is, the West and the Communist world -- into something more complicated, into a triangular relationship where the United States would have better relationships with both China and the Soviet Union than they had with each other, giving us a lot of leverage.

On the Chinese side, we can only really speculate. But I think there were some obvious imperatives. First of all, in 1968, there was the Brezhnev Doctrine, which, in effect, gave the Soviet Union the right to intervene with any member of the Socialist camp who strayed from the true path. It was almost obviously directed against the Chinese.

There was the issue of how much the Chinese knew about it at that time of a détente or move toward détente with the Soviet Union, thus, meaning that China would be left out. And there were also within China at that time, which we had no knowledge of, there were a lot of internal ferment on Revolution versus development, the kinds of things which moved and which soon took from the scene the principal interlocutors, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping.

And Zhou Enlai, in addition, was, of course, seriously ill at the time, but those things were going on. And that is fundamentally what led to this remarkable change, which I would hope that we might be able to translate into modern times and other issues.

But back to anecdotes now for a moment. In 1971, as I say, I launched on the advance trip. We arrived in China, I believe, on New Year's Eve of 1972. It was a remarkable feeling. It was like traveling to another world. Neither we nor the Chinese knew how to treat each other. We had had no commerce, no contact, nothing.

And when I got there, it was literally like I was going through a different world. Chairman Mao had made China I guess, from my perspective, uniformly drab. Everyone wore uniforms. It was the Mao uniform. But there were three -- you had your choice of clothes. You could have black, gray, or navy blue. But everyone, the masses of people everywhere, was looking exactly alike.

We got there, as I said, in January, and at that time, most of the houses were heated by burning coal in fireplaces. And so about 200 feet above the buildings, there was this black pall of coal smoke everywhere, even on sunny days. I mean, they talk now about Beijing being smoggy. You ain't seen nothing compared to the way it was.

There were no cars, almost no cars. Some buses, and millions of bicycles, everywhere. Everyone moved by bicycle.

Just a couple of other things I found fascinating. On the uniform, the only break in the Mao suits was for young children. First grade, second grade maybe, they were allowed colorful sweaters and so on.

And during Nixon's visit, we went to a gymnastics demonstration in a stadium. Then we walked in, and all the Chinese were sitting there in bright colors, because it was televised. And so there were

colors all over the stadium, like you would see anywhere else. But that was the only time.

At one point in Hangzhou, we had a break, and I wanted to see a department store, so I walked and my secretary went with me. And, as we were walking down the aisles of the department store, the Chinese customers just looked straight ahead and didn't look at us.

But I saw something. I turned around to look at it, and as soon as we passed, every Chinese was turning around looking. Most of them had never seen anybody who looked like my secretary. That's maybe not the right comment, but, yeah, I mean, it was just fascinating. And what it showed is: here were two completely alien worlds sort of tentatively reaching out to each other.

We stayed in the old Minzhu Hotel, which is still there for some of you who know. And outside my window, right across the street, was a *hutong*, you know, with cattle in it, and I could look down on them and see daily life inside the *hutong*. That was China. They were everywhere.

In the hotel, which they had kind of refurbished for us, they painted all the toilet seats with a varnish that had something like -- well, I don't -- it was -- some kind of bush in it, and it left a red rash, which we called the Minzhu brand. It looked like a horseshoe on there.

When we left the hotel -- frequently when you have clothes you're carrying, you have them on a wire coat hanger and so on. You take the shirt off, and you leave the coat hanger. As we were getting into

the bus, this maid came running out with a wire coat hanger that somebody had left. You couldn't leave anything behind.

I did not see Chairman Mao on that visit. But I did see Chairman Mao on a subsequent visit; he was, at that time, very ill after a number of strikes. And it was a fascinating, if somewhat surreal meeting in his study, and he could scarcely talk. Indeed, to listen to him, it sounded like he was growling; you know, he was *rarow, rarow, rarow, rarow, rarow*. That's what it sounded like.

He had two nurses, a doctor, and two interpreters. And he would growl for a little bit, and then stop. And then they would put their heads together and decide what it was that he said. And then they would translate it for us.

So it was a complicated meeting. Zhou Enlai was elegant, urbane, and probably was the fundamental facilitator, rounding off some of the rough edges that might have interrupted the flow of this general encounter.

Deng Xiaoping played a lesser role at that time, his usual intense self. We had no idea he was in trouble at that time. He was purged in 1974. But even then, there was this competition, and one of Mao's growls was directed toward that guy sitting down there at the end of the table.

Another fascinating thing was the President's party of over 600 people, including about 400 press. The Chinese -- that was just incomprehensible to the Chinese. I mean, two press would have been a remarkable change for them and the way they approached things.

Accommodating over 400 press was one of our most difficult jobs. At first, they just said impossible.

But they finally managed it. And one of the more fascinating parts of my own responsibilities was that we had to have good communications back to the United States, and especially for the press. So we wanted to have the Chinese construct a satellite ground terminal for us in a building and so on.

So we sat there and sketched out this building with the walls, and the engineer would sort of, you know, make scribbles to show where the wall was. And when we left, which was middle of January, we needed it in two weeks.

When I came back with President Nixon, it was a brick building up there, completely -- every design exactly what we said, including the scribbles on the wall.

(Laughter)

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: But it was an astonishing kind of deal. It would have taken six months in the United States to put that together.

Now the substantive discussions, of which I was not a part of that time, were, in a way, fairly simple, because most times when you have presidential meetings, there are all kinds of little things to discuss about the relationship. Well, there were no little things to discuss, because there was no relationship.

So the focus -- the discussions were on the international scene and how each side saw it. The result of all this was the Shanghai

Communiqué. And the Shanghai Communiqué is, I think, one of the most remarkable documents in U.S. diplomacy.

As a matter of fact, it's worth looking at, because there are really three parts to it. In the first part is just a description of the meetings and where President Nixon went and so on.

And then the second part is that the Chinese side stated -- they laid out all their extreme ideological and other positions toward issues around the world. Then the U.S. side stated where we laid out all of our extreme positions.

And then it says, there are essential differences between the United States and China in their social systems and foreign policy. But we should conduct on principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

And then with these principles in mind, we came out with our famous statement -- neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region, and each is opposed to efforts by any other country.

That was the heart of the Shanghai Communiqué. What we came together on was a joint determination to curb what then we saw as Soviet ambitions in Asia, and that's what we came together on. The view was that it would be against the interests of peoples of the world for any major country to collude with another against other countries.

Now then we got to Taiwan, the last major part. And it says, the two sides reviewed the long-term disputes between China and the United States on -- and especially on Taiwan. And the Chinese laid out their views on Taiwan. There is only one China. The Chinese oppose

“one China one Taiwan”, “one China two governments”, “two Chinas”, independent Taiwan and so on.

The U.S. -- now, yes it did -- the U.S. side declared that the United States acknowledged that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain that there is but one China, and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States does not challenge that position.

Now, you know, that is art. But it worked. It worked. And it allowed enough of a framework for the two sides to move on and to develop a relationship.

Now one of the problems on our side, and this gets to the next phase you have, was that there was no domestic preparation for this in the United States. It was all done secretly.

And when it did become public, it was made public very carefully and very cautiously. The Secretary of State, Bill Rogers, was shut out of virtually everything. He didn't sit in on any of the major meetings. I spent a lot of time with Bill Rogers in Beijing, because he had nothing to do.

And at the time, we were writing the Shanghai Communiqué, our perm rep was vigorously defending the Taiwan seat in the Security Council against attempts to seat Communist China in that seat, to his infinite embarrassment.

But nobody told him. So it was that kind of an atmosphere surrounding all of this, surrounding the strategy that was developed. So after the Nixon visit, we had trouble getting traction, because nobody was prepared. There was a huge Taiwan lobby in the Congress furious about

what had happened. We had trouble extricating ourselves at the U.N., where we had lobbied people to support our position for Taiwan as a continuing member of the Security Council.

So we had a really, really difficult time, and so it was pretty fair to say we did not move forward very rapidly. That was not the only reason. As I said, Zhou Enlai became ill fairly soon after, and he left the scene in '73. Deng left the scene in '74, and there was considerable turmoil -- the Cultural Revolution, which is another thing -- the Cultural Revolution. What kind of China? Should China move into the modern world and industrialize? Or is China unique and should it preserve its purity as a culture and reject the outside world?

So all of those factors played a part, and the fact that it took from '72, when we opened, it took seven years to get to full normalization of the relationship.

But I think this period -- from '69, '71-'72 -- really stands as a monument to what I would call the triumph of national interest over ideology. And I think that was true on both sides, because we were both driven by ideology in our public statements. And yet, we put that past us in the interest of making a step, which has turned out to be one of the most fundamental steps in the 20th century.

Why don't I stop there, and I'd be happy to deal with any questions to the extent that I can.

QUESTIONER: Thank you very much, Brent. Among the causes or motivations inspiring this contact, I don't think you mentioned the Russian troops and Chinese troops along the borders and various

incidents, of which we apparently had only very limited knowledge. But it seems to have been an issue for the Chinese at least.

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Oh, no, it was a huge issue. Well, I put all that under the Brezhnev Doctrine. But, oh, yes, they were serious. There were actually some armed clashes over islands in the river. And the Chinese were -- well, I don't know how seriously -- but alarmed at the possibility that, in fact, they would be attacked by Russia. And that was a powerful motivation on their side to make the move that they did. Absolutely.

MR. THORNTON: Sir.

QUESTIONER: Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts. I'm Pete Schoettle from Brookings.

Could you say a little bit about the Chinese reaction to the entourage around the President? You mentioned their surprise at the huge numbers of press. What I'm thinking about is, what did they think when they saw the military officers with the football, when they saw the hordes of staff, the whole size of the presidential staff compared to their entourage around Mao. What kind of comparisons did they draw from that?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Well, I don't know. It's interesting. On the visit, I wore my uniform. I was still on active duty at that time. And the protocol officer said it's the first time that an American uniform had been seen in China since World War II or something like that.

They were less concerned by the presidential party and the movement of the presidential party, because they had a lot of people

involved, too, as they were with the press. The press -- they were almost in a panic about the press, because they just didn't know how to deal with the press. They didn't want to push them around and so on, because they wanted good publicity and good TV from the meeting. It was widely televised here.

But one other anecdote that I should tell you about along those lines though is that we never knew when the meeting with Mao was going to take place. They never told us.

He was never on the schedule at all. But you would see sometimes a little increased flurry of activity among the Chinese, and then the conversation would go on for while and they'd say, it's time to see the Chairman. And we'd go see the Chairman.

But you never knew in advance when it was going to be.

One other anecdote about masses of people. One morning, the President was due to visit the Forbidden City at about 9:00 a.m., I believe. And we were staying some distance away.

We had a problem with communications there, so I went down ahead of time to fix it, about seven o'clock in the morning.

It had snowed about four or five inches during the night. And there were tens of thousands of people with brooms sweeping the street the three, four miles between the guest houses and the Forbidden City. Just thousands of them.

I came back about 8:30 a.m. to join the president and the party, and there was these thousands of people. At 9:00 a.m., they were

all gone. There wasn't a soul in sight. The streets were immaculately cleared of all snow. It was as if it had not snowed at all.

The Chinese' organization was unbelievable in its efficiency in that regard, at least it looked that way to somebody who is used to snow removal in Washington.

(Laughter)

MR. THORNTON: Yes, sir.

QUESTIONER: First, I'd like to share an anecdote arising out of your visit. And that is apparently Mao and Zhou Enlai were very impressed by the youth of Kissinger's advisers and indeed the president's advisers.

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Yes.

QUESTIONER: And they then determined that they needed to better train their prospective young diplomats. And so, as a result, hundreds of them who had been people who had studied English were summoned back from the countryside --

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Yes.

QUESTIONER: and they were sent to England notably to improve their English. And some of them, a small number of them, in their second year, came to the London School of Economics, where I happened to be teaching. And now amongst the members are the Foreign Minister, the Ambassador to the U.N., the ambassador here, and many others.

So, in many respects, you could say that Chinese diplomacy benefited a great deal of your visit.

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: I think that's exactly right. And for a number of years, I saw diplomats that I had contact with had had education somewhere outside China. They did pursue that vigorously.

QUESTIONER: But my question is, how did the Chinese at that time react to the detente that you had with the Soviet Union, because you said at that time that there was unevenness in the relationship. You have detente with the Soviet Union and estrangement with China.

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Well, détente was just starting, really. So it wasn't -- it wasn't a big issue, but the Chinese could see it on the horizon. And they did not, so far as I know, did not make an issue of it.

But I think that was one of the imperatives to ensure that we didn't slide off and leave them holding the negative bag while the Soviet Union was reaping the benefits of détente.

But it was -- it was still on the horizon in early '72.

MR. THORNTON: The gentleman in the back there.

QUESTIONER: Well, thanks. So that contact was quite historical and strategic, I think, visionary and also a surprise.

Had it not happened, what do you think the world would have turned out to be, and the related question would be that do you see such an opportunity today in the world that you would be willing to suggest to the next president? Thanks.

GENERSL SCOWCROFT: Well, I think I'll hide behind the old saying that history does not reveal its alternatives. I don't know. It did not have to happen at that particular time. I think it would have -- it would

have eventually. But what could easily have happened in the absence of a move at that time was a crisis on Taiwan which would bring us into a deeper confrontation and delay any rapprochement.

So I think the timing was fortuitous. Indeed, I would say that for our national interest, the timing was slow and that this move should have taken place earlier. And as I say, I hope that in our current attitude about how you deal with people with whom you have strained relations is, I think, this is an important lesson in the possibility.

Now this worked out brilliantly, and it won't always. But the two decades of total estrangement didn't produce much for either side.

MR. THORNTON: Sir.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. Hank Levine from Stonebridge International.

I was wondering based on your interaction with the Chinese leaders in the 1970s and subsequently, are there certain lessons learned or points that would be useful today as we look ahead to interacting with the Chinese over the coming 30 or 40 years?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Well, I've already stated what I think my principal one is that one can, by making diligent and serious efforts, change things fairly dramatically.

I think one of the remarkable things, and I guess I would say that in U.S. foreign policy over the last 40 years, one of the most strikingly consistently good policies has been U.S.-China policy, because every president since Richard Nixon, of whatever political party -- and some of them have come into office with dramatically different views about the

China relationship -- has ended up on the same general line that a strengthening, deepening relationship with China was in the national interest of the United States.

I remember a story that President Bush 41 told me when Reagan was running for president. And he was the vice presidential candidate.

And Reagan, of course, was sort of a famous member of the Taiwan lobby. And he made a few pretty flamboyant statements about Taiwan in the campaign.

And Bush was sent over to China to explain, as our -- not ambassador, but our first -- our second representative after the Nixon visit. So he had been in China.

So he was sent over to explain, you know, it really didn't mean anything, and he was sitting there with Deng and they were having this conversation. And an aide brought in a piece of paper, and Bush had just explained why it didn't mean anything -- and he's done it again.

(Laughter)

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: So there were a lot of rocks in it -- in the relationship. And you will later on today talk about one of the biggest rocks and that's the events of June 4<sup>th</sup>.

But in this particular case, the United States has behaved with, I think, great, you know, courage, and the sensibility in not letting irritations -- and, you know, our -- we are two such different countries. We have very different histories. We have different cultures. We have different philosophies.

We're very different, and to have this relationship endure and prosper the way it has I think is a remarkable tribute on both sides.

MR. THORNTON: The woman the way back there.

QUESTIONER: Thanks. Speaking of rocks in the relationship, I wonder given the involvement of the CIA in Tibet in the 1960s and the statement in the Shanghai Communiqué about territorial -- respecting territorial integrity and so on -- how was the issue of Tibet handled?

GENERSL SCOWCROFT: Tibet didn't appear, I don't believe, in the Shanghai Communiqué.

QUESTIONER: Were there discussions, given the CIA's involvement in Tibet?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: That's a question I can't answer. As I say, I was not in the discussions. Whether it came up, to my -- not to my knowledge did it come up, because the number one issue was Taiwan. And we had nearly gone to war over the offshore islands a few years before. So Taiwan was an overwhelming issue, and that was the major preoccupation.

MR. THORNTON: Sir.

QUESTIONER: My name is Dmitri Novik. I was at this time in Soviet Union.

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Mm-hmm.

QUESTIONER: My question is about Soviet journalists, about the 400 journalists you said were deeply involved.

Did you see Soviet journalists among them?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Not in our press corps. I would not be surprised if there were not Soviet journalists and there, but not in ours.

It's hard to imagine now, but the -- I can't tell you how upset the Chinese were at having to -- the prospect of managing 400 American journalists who, you know, swarmed -- trying to swarm around everywhere. It was -- they did it quite gracefully, and there were no particular incidents. But it was a real trial for them.

MR. THORNTON: Sir.

QUESTIONER: Richard Seldin, freelance writer. I was impressed with your point about the fact that maybe relations could have gotten started even earlier. I was in college at the time, and every member in my college -- it was NYU -- and other colleges in the anti-Vietnam War movement, there was a lot of pressure for recognition of China. And I wondered how much that really influenced Nixon at the time?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Well, I think it may have in the sense that, as I said, Nixon was very concerned at the student movement in general just, you know, the peacenik movement, and he had a pretty bellicose record. And so he wanted to take the edge off that. There's no question about that.

You know, it's become famous that saying, well, Nixon's the only one who could have made the relation -- that sharp a change, because he was such an anti-Communist and that nobody else -- had it

been done by a liberal Democrat, there could have been a huge uproar in the United States over cozying up to the Commies.

So I think Nixon took advantage of the fact that his anti-Communist credentials were as pure as they could get. So there couldn't be any misinterpreting that he was acting on behalf of the national interest, and not succumbing to the siren song of socialism.

MR. THORNTON: Brent, can I ask a follow up to this question, which is you referenced earlier the time between the original visit and then normalization taking seven years. Can you expand a little bit on right after it was first announced and then the period running into Gerald Ford becoming president, what was going on there and why it was slowing down?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: -- well, I tell you, you know, we had at one time in '73 before Zhou Enlai really got sick, we had some interesting initiatives going on with respect to Vietnam, and a lot of hope there.

And then Zhou Enlai disappeared from the scene, and the Congress passed a cutoff of aid to South Vietnam, so it didn't come to anything.

But at that time, we were not really pushing hard on the path toward complete normalization, because we were trying to clean up after the surprise of what had happened.

MR. THORNTON: Right.

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: And, as I say, the Congress was restive.

MR. THORNTON: Yeah.

QUESTION: I have an anecdote, which then leads me to a question. I've been going through the British archives recently on this very same period. And there are these wonderful memos from Ted Heath to his foreign secretary back and forth because Nixon did not consult Ted Heath when all of this was going on. And Ted Heath is serious, and he's saying: "that's it, I'll never cooperate with the Americans on anything again." And you can feel this agony and Alec Douglas Hume trying to bring him back from the brink and saying: "wait." You know, because at that very moment Ted Heath was going through his own negotiations on normalization and obviously Taiwan was an issue and Hong Kong was a huge issue.

And then the second indignity was that rather than Kissinger coming to brief later on, it was Secretary Rogers who came to, and that was Ted Heath's ultimate indignity, that he wasn't even getting the main protagonist.

But it leads me to question -- what -- you talk about sort of domestically how you rolled this out for people. How did you do this in the world capitals and how did you do this for other parties who were interested?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Poorly.

QUESTIONER: Well, Ted Heath thought --

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Well, as I said, it was a surprise. And since the Secretary of State was largely in the dark, now that's how you notify other capitals. The Japanese in particular were furious that they

had not been brought into this. But Nixon and Kissinger were focused on the Chinese aspect of it, and the rest was sort of cleanup.

And that's one of the reasons it took a long time to repair the effects of the shock for some of our closest friends and allies. And some of them were very supportive of what we did, but the way we did it they were surprised, it was not a diplomatic coup around the world.

MR. THORNTON: I'm going to take two more. This gentleman here.

QUESTIONER: John Zang with CTI-TV of Taiwan. General, could you shed some more light on how both sides had dealt with the contentious Taiwan issue before they actually agreed on the wonderful formula that has become the cornerstone of U.S.-China relations of the last 30 years? Thank you.

MR. SCOWCROFT: Well, we had been strong supporters of Taiwan, and there was a dust up with some of the offshore islands in -- I won't give a date -- but it was a few years before. And we came very close to hostilities. We sent some ships in.

So it was -- it was an extremely prickly issue and for the 20 years of estrangement, Taiwan was sort of the symbol of the conflict between -- between the U.S. and China.

So the Shanghai Communiqué in that sense was a remarkable document which artfully bridged what were totally antithetical positions.

MR. THORNTON: Next question. Sir?

QUESTIONER: Scott Harold of the Rand Corporation. First, General, thank you for your remarks this morning. Very interesting. And second, maybe as a segue into our next two sections, let me ask two questions.

First, from the early 1970s to 1989, you obviously played a very important role, and also after the June 4<sup>th</sup> incident.

Can you talk about the role of your personal involvement? Did that particularly reassure the Chinese? Did you think that they were able to draw on the fact that they had known you to be someone who had been long involved in this relationship, as Mr. Thornton mentioned?

And second, as an anecdote, can you tell us a little bit about the food that you had in the early 1970s? How was that question handled?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: About what?

QUESTIONER: The food that you had.

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Oh. Oh.

QUESTIONER: You talked about where you lived. You talked about what you saw.

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Yeah, I see that.

QUESTIONER: You haven't mentioned the food. This is China.

MR. SCOWCROFT: Well, yes. I think, you know, the Chinese put great store in old friends, new friends, the whole idea of friendship. It's a calculation, in part, on their side, but I think there's a genuineness to it. And I decided early on that this was one of the most

important, if not the most important, relationship that the United States had, and it needed to be nurtured.

So I continued from '72 on and, as you indicate, I played, I guess significant role in the Tiananmen incident aftermath and, yes, I think it gave the Chinese a lot of comfort.

The food was quite a shock to a Utah American. First of all, *maotai* at that time was ubiquitous. And I'm not a great drinker. And in China you don't sip a drink by yourself. You know, you drink in community with the table, so anytime anybody wants a drink, everybody drinks.

And it's frequently *ganbei*, which is bottom's up, and to prove it they frequently hold the glass over their head upside down to show that they hadn't been cheating. So that was an experience for me. But some of the food was exotic. You had to suspend your mental faculties and not wonder what it was. You know, there were such things as the five treasures of the duck, including -- have you ever tried to eat duck feet -- including the webs? It's like chewing rubber bands. They just keep -- anyway, sea slugs was a special favorite of mine. They are technically sea cucumbers. They look like big cucumbers with brown warts all over them, and they are a delicacy.

There were -- you know, none of it tasted bad. It was just getting it past your mind that was difficult. And interestingly enough, you go to China now, and you very rarely run into those more exotic dishes, at least in the major hotels in Beijing now.

MR. THORNTON: Ladies and gentlemen, can you join me in thanking General Scowcroft.

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Nice to be with you. Thank you.

(Applause)

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Now, you're going to hear from somebody who really knows about it.

(Laughter)

MR. PASCUAL: Okay. If I could get everybody's attention. You know that was such a dynamic session, and it, I think, that everybody engaged in the topic. And we have the benefit of having Dr. Brzezinski with us -- here with us right now.

And so, I'm going to suggest that rather than break up too much that we actually stay with this dynamic and keep going, because we haven't been here too long, and I think it will give us an opportunity to sort of keep these issues fresh in our minds and make a connection across all of the issues.

So with your indulgence, I'm going to keep us going here right now. And if anybody needs to take a quick break or get a cup of coffee, please do that quietly and come back in.

But let me encourage all of us to stay here with the conversation, because when you got something good, go with it.

We have the benefit now of hearing from another incredible American statesman, thinker, and scholar Zbigniew Brzezinski, who, of course, was President Carter's National Security Advisor from 1977 to '81.

He was another one of the central players in the process of normalization of relations with China, and in particular his travel there in 1978 really began a process of developing a different form of a

relationship with Deng Xiaoping, which helped give that process of normalization a huge boost.

And in 1981, Dr. Brzezinski was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his role in the normalization of U.S.-China relations, as well as for the contributions that he made to human rights and the national security policies of the United States.

Dr. Brzezinski now, as many of you know, is a professor at Johns Hopkins University. He is a distinguished -- or counselor is the right term and trustee at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

I personally have had the benefit of his advice and counsel in many cases, particularly starting in the 1990s, when I was working on issues related to Russia and the former Soviet Union.

And one of the things that on a personal note, I would say is that this was a remarkable individual who had the capacity to put together a hard realism about the strengths and weaknesses of other countries and how they related to U.S. interests, yet, at the same time, remain -- retain at the forefront basic principles and values for which the United States stood and in particular continue to elevate and sustain as a fundamental factor in American foreign policy a respect for human rights; and then the ability to bring those together in a diplomacy which handled the complexity of contradictions, yet did it with the way that was transparent and maintained a basic realism about respect for American values and interests of the United States.

And so I think we all owe him a great deal of gratitude for the way that he has continued to manage that convergence of realism and values in the conduct of American foreign policy.

Dr. Brzezinski, we look forward to hearing from you.

(Applause)

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Good morning. Thank you, Carlos for your kind words. I really appreciate them. Sometimes when I'm treated so nicely, as you have just treated me, I'm tempted to emulate President Carter, who on one such occasion, after being gloriously introduced, stood up and said, "Thank you for your introduction. Of all the introductions I've ever had, this one was the most recent."

DR. BRZEZINSKI: I don't know what Brent said.

DR. PASCUAL: Remember that for future occasion.

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Yeah. I don't know what Brent said, so I'm speaking, so to speak, independently of what he had to say. And I'm focusing particularly on the processes of achieving normalization, and also some remarks regarding their consequences.

Perhaps a good way to begin is to just remind everyone here of sort of, to me, a significant fact which, in a sense, summarizes the 30 years of normalization. When I went to Beijing in May of 1978 with presidential instructions to see if it is possible to normalize relations and to establish sort of a strategic relationship with China, there were approximately 1100 or so -- 1100 or so foreigners living in Beijing. Today there are over 150,000 foreigners living in Beijing. That sort of

summarizes the dynamic pattern of Chinese reentry into the world, and I was very closely connected with what transpired in 1978.

We came to power with a historic breakthrough in relations with China, a fact, a dramatic and historically important fact, but it was also somewhat stalemated by 1977, '78. It wasn't going forward. There was a risk it could go backward, and there was a sense in the new team that we should normalize relations with China.

I will confess that in my list of priorities for the president, which I submitted to him when I was his national security advisor in the first year of his presidency, China was included as a major objective of American foreign policy -- we should normalize relations with China. But it wasn't necessarily a top priority for the first or second year, because we had some other issues on the agenda, notably the ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty. We had the SALT negotiations with the Russians, and we had a sense of urgency about the Israeli-Arab conflict, feeling that we had to do something to avoid a repetition. These items took precedence, but we nonetheless moved forward with an attempt to explore with the Chinese whether it is possible to normalize, and the effort was undertaken by the Department of State and the Secretary of State, who felt strongly that we should move forward nonetheless. It was, however, very much a diplomatic initiative in the good but also in the limited sense of the word. That is to say, it was an attempt to see if we

can find a diplomatic juridical basis for establishing a relationship with China without jeopardizing the nature of our connection with Taiwan and certainly without jeopardizing its status as something de facto separate.

Given that context, and given that approach, it was not entirely surprising that it didn't work out and that the effort to do so in the course of a visit by the Secretary of State did not yield the kind of progress we had wished for. In the meantime, however, the American-Soviet relationship deteriorated. We were facing with not only increasing difficulties in dealing with the strategic arms limitations but also with Soviet activities elsewhere, particularly in the African Horn, and in that context it became increasingly clear to me that a different approach to China emphasizing more the strategic dimension of the relationship might in fact be of significant benefit to the United States in our relations with the Soviets, in addition to improving the American-Chinese connection itself, which would be desirable. That led me to start campaigning with the President on behalf of a somewhat different approach, one which would emphasize the strategic connection, take advantage of the Chinese's increasingly openly articulated position that China strongly opposes hegemonism, which was the Chinese code word for describing the Soviet posture in the world, that we should take advantage of that posture and move forward with normalization with that dimension primarily driving the process.

It took some time for the president to decide, but I have to say that ultimately he embraced it, and he embraced it energetically, and when he finally decided to send me to talk to the Chinese leaders -- and we weren't sure whom I would really see when I would go -- he did so in a manner which emphasized the need for forward movement and certainly for the strategic dimension of the relationship. I was given written instructions to that effect, which actually I wrote, and off to China I went in May of 1978.

To give you a sense of how uncertain this process was, I remembered that as we were landing, my principal aide on China, Professor Michael Oxenberg, an excellent scholar of Chinese affairs, unfortunately no longer with us, whispered to me, "Let's look out of the window," out of the Vice President's plane which we had, "and see who is greeting you. If it is the foreign minister, it will mean that the Chinese are upgrading this visit to a more important status." Well, it was the foreign minister, and we then proceeded to go into talks, which in a sense arose in the level that the Chinese are very conscious of protocol issues, first with the Chinese foreign minister but then with the formal head of state, Hua, but above all with Vice Chairman Deng Xiaoping with whom I had first a two-and-a-half-hour conversation in which the strategic dimension of the relationship, if it is to emerge, was very much the theme.

But Deng Xiaoping also made the point repeatedly and obviously in order to put us on the defensive by asking me if the United States had made up its mind, and I told him a couple of times we had, and I told him: "look, I've already told you that several times so let's talk about substance." And of course implicit in that from the Chinese point of view was the question: how are we going to deal with Taiwan and how far are we prepared to alter our existing relationship with Taiwan and with what implications?

That of course was the most difficult aspect of the discussion, because we were not prepared to make an arrangement which would de facto dramatically destabilize the status quo in that part of the world but to speak of our own obligations and commitments. So, in a -- we went back and forth on this issue for quite a while with me stressing that that is a issue that is part of the historical legacy of the Chinese revolution, indeed in some respects even of World War II and it will work itself out in a historically satisfactory fashion we hope, but in the meantime we can certainly strike a relationship which is mutually beneficial and which gives us both strategic advantages without trying to resolve all aspects of that particularly and historically unresolved issue, namely Taiwan.

And much to everyone's surprise, Deng Xiaoping then invited me to dinner. In the course, we talked further about normalization

and how perhaps we could structure this process secretly both through our ambassador in Beijing, their ambassador in Washington, and he kind of wistfully at dinner said to me after telling me that this very young man -- he went first to France and he talked about his experiences and how it influenced his world view -- he was in his 20s I believe -- it was in the early 1920s in any case when he went -- a remarkable story in itself if you think about it for a young Chinese, rather very leftist-oriented student to end up in France in those years and how it influenced his world view, and he wistfully said to me you know, I have only three years left -- it wasn't clear to me whether he was speaking of his age or of his tenure in office -- and it may not be possible for me ever to visit America, and I got a sense from that that there was a sense of urgency on his side as well, that he was prepared to move forward fairly rapidly and consistently if we were prepared to move similarly. And in fact I took advantage of that remark to him at that dinner to say well, I think you will be in America earlier than three years, and if you come to America I'll treat you in my house to a very American dinner with my family, and he said: "I'll come." And six months later or so -- well, seven months later in January of '79 -- Deng Xiaoping came to Washington and the first night he and his wife came to have dinner with my family.

Now, why did that happen, and what did it mean? I think it was directly related on the American side to the concerns that were

generated by the lack of success in the Vietnamese venture, and by the dynamism of Soviet strategic buildup, which was giving us a sense that the dangers parodied between the United States and the Soviet Union, in the realm of strategic weaponry, could become tipped in a disadvantageous fashion to us, not necessarily precipitating any great nuclear collision but creating options for a more assertive Soviet global behavior. And in that context a relationship with China would certainly greatly complicate Soviet strategic calculations.

On the Chinese side there was concern with the Soviet fearing that the many border incidents, some of them violent, could escalate; and, hence, there was a sense there was some benefit in a relationship with the United States built around the notion of anti-hegemonism. And, in fact, I think it is worth noting that normalization of relations with China which then ensued, announced formally 30 years ago in mid-December, produced not only a diplomatic connection but also a tangible strategic connection. The diplomatic connection skirted the issue of the future of Taiwan. The United States did agree -- which it wasn't prepared earlier when we were pursuing purely the diplomatic track -- we did agree to terminate our diplomatic recognition of Taiwan as the Republic of China, but we did not agree to end arms sales to Taiwan but simply made them conditional on the circumstances prevailing at the given period of time. That produced some misunderstandings even on the last

day of the process when we were about, at a set time, simultaneously to announce normalization relations. The Chinese conveyed to our ambassador their understanding of the agreement to the effect that the suspension of arms sales to Taiwan from one year, which we promised to undertake, would then continue subsequently, and at the very last minute I had to send a message to the ambassador to go in and tell Deng Xiaoping look, that is not the understanding we reached, there is nothing in the record that supports that. Quite the contrary. So, let's just agree to disagree and go ahead. The ambassador was a little reluctant to do this, fearing that would precipitate an abortion of the process, but I felt we had to do this for the sake of the record and clarity, and the ambassador did go in, and Deng Xiaoping didn't agree with the position but we announced the normalization of relations nonetheless.

But the normalization of relations was then followed by something which I think is of great international importance, namely, the emergence of an American-Chinese strategic connection, which certainly from the Soviets' point of view dramatically altered the Soviet view of the strategic situation insofar as the Soviet Union is concerned. The first tangible aspect of this was initiation of, to us significant, and to China beneficial, intelligence cooperation directed at the Soviet Union. We had at that time lost some of our intelligence capabilities because of their people in Iran, and the arrangement with China helped us to compensate

for some significant intelligence gaps while at the same time enhancing the Chinese sense of security and also understanding of some technical and strategic issues, therefore beneficial to their own sense of security. I'm sure others were aware of that. In particular, the affected party was aware of that, and that's certainly entered into its calculations and strategic assessments.

Secondly, later in 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. In the wake of that action, the United States, as we all know, undertook to support the resistance in Afghanistan, and it was joined in that effort in different ways by a range of countries, some of them Arab but also Great Britain and some of our other allies, indirectly Israelis also, and this was a major international undertaking, though it was not known at the time but I'm sure the Soviets had, at some point, to know it, there was active Chinese participation in this effort, and China was involved significantly in the effort to oppose the Soviet domination of Afghanistan.

In effect, this was a significant strategic transformation of the fundamental relationships -- strategic relationships in the cold war, and in some ways I suspect it contributed to the end of the cold war in the sense that the Soviet Union increasingly found itself not tipping the scales of history in its favor as its leaders proclaimed in the '70s, but increasingly pressed by an American rearmament particularly started by Carter but then greatly increased by Reagan, and by the American-Chinese collusion

in the Far East, which meant that the Soviet Union still had to maintain huge deployed garrisons in Mongolia of the 22 divisions with all the consequential financial costs to the Soviet economy, the burdens that the Soviet economy found it more difficult to support.

This common cause, so to speak, also helped to overcome some of the initial tensions and misunderstandings regarding normalization and developed a kind of esprit, a sense of common purpose that accelerated the process of normalization. It had a further effect in my judgment, though indirect. As you all know, it was shortly thereafter that Deng Xiaoping initiated his revolutionary changes in China, revolutionary changes in the nature of the system starting from the bottom up but leading eventually with the dramatic changes that have occurred in China over the last several decades. It is difficult to imagine that he could have pursued this process in the context of continued or aggravated American-Chinese tensions and the lack of any relationship. The fact of a stable relationship with the United States created a more congenial international context for undertaking a process of change which truly transformed China -- not only transformed China but also gradually, over time, precipitated a very significant reassessment of the nature of the world and of China's role in it.

If one were to trace Chinese views of the world over the last 30, 35 years, one finds a significant acceleration in a redefinition of what

are the essential characteristics of the contemporary world leading to views which today are summarized in the sloganeering fashion -- such as harmonious society, in a harmonious world -- a society in which class conflict is no longer the defining characteristic, and a world which is not dominated by class conflicts but a world in which the goal of harmony is a legitimate objective without revolutionary change.

Now, of course, one mustn't be naïve about it, these goals serve Chinese national interests, and they're egotistical, but they do involve a very significant redefinition of the nature of our era. They posit the proposition that China's rise can be peaceful, that no antagonistic contradictions are more characteristic of the world than class conflicts, and that China's rise to preeminence can be achieved by gradualism and, most important of all, by working within the system that exists in order to transform it, rather than against the system in order to change it altogether. All of that, of course, occurs subsequently, but it is, in my judgment, a fact that it couldn't have taken place if American-Chinese antagonism over Taiwan had continued, if America had continued not to recognize China as the government of China, and had continued not to recognize the People's Republic of China as de facto a Chinese entity, and in a context of presumably increasing mutual recriminations.

Now, this doesn't mean, of course, that the relationship is free of tensions. There are some residual tensions over Taiwan. And in

my subsequent visits to China, because the Chinese now describe me as one of the four elder friends of China -- and I had to point out to President Jiang Zemin when he used that formula that that's very nice but actually only three of them are alive so they have to change the numbering. But in the course of these visits, Taiwan always comes up, and in the course of my last visit prior to the Olympics, I thought the Chinese leadership, including President Hu Jintao, thought that Taiwan's receding as a source of conflict, provided we both recognize that actually the arrangement is beneficial mutually. Taiwanese-Chinese relations are becoming intimate in terms of contacts, closeness, investment; and there's no chance that anyone would recognize Taiwan as a separate sovereign state, not to speak of it as being the government of China. If Taiwan declared independence, as some of the Chinese were concerned about and feared might happen on the eve of the Olympics. I'd say, if they do that, they'll discover that not many -- three or four, five countries would recognize them as independent and their businessmen will not be able to travel anywhere in the world, because they won't have documents that anybody recognizes. So, I don't think it's a fear they should entertain.

I brought up the issue of Tibet, and I told my Chinese friends that Tibet could be an issue in our relationship, and it does remain a source of disagreement of varying perspectives and as such is an element that complicates the relationship but doesn't define it.

Democracy clearly is also an issue, though we also have to acknowledge the fact that there is serious discussion in China how to move forward with democratization. In fact at one point, another general secretary of the Communist Party, Hu Yaobang, entertained me at dinner in China a year before Tiananmen Square and talked to me one on one with utter candor about the need for China to move towards a multi-party system, estates subordinated to law, an open press, and so forth. And with views such as these, he did not remain secretary general for too long. But it shows that these ideas percolate, and there are ongoing debates today in China about the need for political change.

We have tensions with China about the global economy and about their relationship with us, but their relationship with us has become increasingly interdependent. They have invested very heavily in us. They have a stake in our success. We have a stake in their success, and we're interwoven even if occasionally affected by frictions that are unavoidable in such kind of relationship.

So, it seems to me that, in conclusion, the normalization of relations which followed on another spectacular event, the breakthrough, was one of those transformational events in international affairs that has cumulative consequences, cumulative consequences that go beyond the relationship itself and contribute to a process of change worldwide, which is important and which involves, in this case, the progressive entrance and

the peaceful rise of a country which clearly, if it continues to be successful, is going to be, without a doubt, a great world power.

Thank you.

MR. PASCUAL: Dr. Brzezinski, that was an amazing review of that period of normalization, and one of the things we will do when we let you get a drink of water is we'll also put a microphone on you so don't be alarmed as they do.

I should have noted this earlier -- Dr. Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft have just actually completed a new book together that they did with David Ignatius, and I highly recommend it to any of you who haven't read it. It's called *America and the World: Conversations on the Future of American Foreign Policy*.

And in that book, the two of you did an incredible job of, in fact, bridging from lessons of the past into what it means for lessons for the future, and I just want to take the liberty of raising the first question in that kind of spirit. You rightly focused so much of your discussion on this question of normalization of diplomatic relations, which of course at times now has become a huge barrier in our conduct of diplomacy, and one of the things that comes up often is does normalization of relations mean that you approve of the views and the positions of the other side, or can it in fact be a strategic tool? Is it part of that diplomatic arsenal of capabilities that we have in order to be able to conduct our diplomacy more

effectively? And these issues are obviously particularly sensitive now on discussions related to Iran. They come up all the time on Cuba. But as you work through these issues on China, you obviously manage to be able to convey to the Chinese that you didn't agree with them even though we were establishing diplomatic relations or at least didn't agree with them on the nature of their system politically and economically and obviously, as you said, on issues related to Taiwan.

I imagine that there was -- in fact, I know, and you might want to say a few word about this -- a somewhat intense discussion and debate back here in the United States and with the U.S. Congress. And I wonder if you would mind reflecting a little bit about how you managed this issue on the one hand being able to say there is an advantage to the United States to establish a diplomatic relationship, but the creation of that relationship does not need to suggest that we condone the views and the policies of the country that we're establishing the relationship with.

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, there's no doubt that there was an advantage to the United States in establishing relations with China, but that's not something that I would have said to the Chinese. What I would have said to the Chinese and I probably did say it was that there's a mutual advantage in the establishment of a relationship. If I were to emphasize that there is an advantage to the United States, that would make me look like a pleader and would, I think, probably complicate the

whole process. The process was, without doubt, facilitated by the fact that both we and they felt the strategic need of it, and that certainly helped to overcome what were some real concerns both on our side and on their side. We weren't prepared to open the doors to some renewed conflict in the Formosa Strait, not to speak of, you know, an open effort at takeover of the island. The Chinese weren't prepared to concede the fact that the status quo wouldn't do forever, and their position, understandably so, was that this is not acceptable in a historical perspective. But we did find a formula for bridging that gap, essentially derived from the fact that it was mutually beneficial to have that relationship.

Now, the nature of the political system of China was not a subject of discussion. We had diplomatic relations with Russia, and we undertook them at a time when some rather very unpleasant things were happening in Russia. We had diplomatic relations with Nazi Germany. We have diplomatic relations with other countries that exist, and a diplomatic relationship is not a seal of moral approval. Now, a diplomatic relationship, however, can produce consequences which have some benefits, and one of the reasons, without steering far from our subject today, that I do favor, a dialog with the Iranians, and if it is feasible, the establishment of normal diplomatic relationships, is that I think it would help to promote political change in a country which is far less centrally controlled, far less subject to effective state authority than was or is the

case with the People's Republic of China. And in that respect, I think there would be benefits to the United States from it, though the issue with the Iranians is of course complicated by the fact that the one stage in the relations with us, they grossly abused all principles of international law pertaining to diplomatic relations, and that is an unresolved legacy which it may not be all that easy to overcome. But that's neither here nor there.

As far as China's concerned, the primary focus was on the international consequences of a more constructive American-Chinese relationship. That led then to mutual and beneficial strategic operation, thereby creating circumstances favorable to China's grand opening to the world, which in turn creates pressures for reform of its system. So, in a sense, historically speaking, the general thrust consequent of that step of normalization I think has been beneficial.

MR. PASCUAL: Fantastic. Let me bring this back to the audience, and, Jeff, let me begin with you.

MR. BADER: Jeffrey Bader of Brookings. Dr. Brzezinski, you described the original impetus for the U.S.-China relationship as based on mutual strategic understanding of a need to resist Soviet hegemonism. Now, that need of course vanished with the disappearance of the Soviet Union. How would you describe -- how would you characterize strategic basis for a positive and sound U.S.-China relationship. We've done a pretty good job arguably over the 30 years in

maintaining a positive relationship. Are you confident and comfortable that there is a continuing strategic basis for the relationship and that that is well understood by the American political system and American political class?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, whether it's well understood I'm not so sure, because by and large, you know, strategic understanding is not a characteristic peculiar to the American political elite. So, strategic understanding tends to be unfortunately sort of a more limited phenomenon.

But I'm sure there are people in the U.S. government that understand it. There are certain people in the Chinese leadership who understand it. They have more of a tendency to think that way, actually, than we do. But it's a different strategic relationship. Soviet Union no longer exists, we don't view Russia as an enemy, the Chinese certainly don't view Russia as an enemy, but they are mutually suspicious of each other.

Look at the Russian reactions recently in the Russian press, even controlled press, to something that's not much noted in America – the agreement with the Chinese to rectify in some minor aspect the Chinese-Russian frontier, ceding to China some islands and some territory. Sense of outrage in Russia. Very, very intensive outrage. Even

though Russia is the largest territory, by far the largest country in the world.

But we don't view Russia as an enemy. Neither do the Chinese in the whole cooperative relationship. I think our strategic relationship with China rests essentially on a mutual interest, not necessarily or even directly acknowledged, in gradual change derived from the status quo. China is not an active anti-status quo power in the traditional sort of literature, therefore, is not a revisionist power, an impatient frustrated revisionist power. In some respects, Russia comes closer to being so than China. This is why China on the whole has been extremely helpful, for example, in the negotiations with North Korea. In fact, the negotiations with North Korea, which currently are stalemated again, would have not gotten this far without a very active Chinese role, which in some respects involves a kind of co-leadership in the process with us. And the Chinese do have a major interest in the Iranian nuclear issue to result peacefully, because the consequences for them of a war in the Persian Gulf could be potentially calamitous.

So, the ideal China today -- and I think the Chinese self-description fits it as essentially, quote/unquote, "peacefully rising" -- it is a revisionist power, but believes that its peaceful rise within the system will create pressures for changes in the system by reallocating the degree of control which rests heavily with us and the other founders of the Bretton

Woods systems, particularly in the economic dimension. So, that I think is a fundamental interest. And China is not a country which sees itself benefiting from a worldwide revolutionary upheaval of some sort, which was the doctrine in the past.

So, that is my sort of appreciation of the nature of the strategic stake that we have with the Chinese, and indeed if you look at the sort of preeminent world powers today after the United States, if you are to single out a single nation state as the next most important player, China would probably be there on that list. Number two -- if you think of the E.U. as a single player, I guess E.U. would be number two, but that's only in the economic and financial area but not geopolitically. So, we are really parties of a relationship, in which gradual change derives from the status quo, is something that binds us together, and we have to sustain that. I think they realize they have to sustain it. This is why Hu Jintao came to Washington and played an important role in Washington. You know, who are the most visible players in Washington at the meeting of the G-20? Apart from the host, the United States, it was certainly China, then of course Sarkozy, Gordon Brown, and Brazil. It's rather revealing in that respect.

MR. PASCUAL: Let me come to the middle of the room over here.

QUESTION: Hello, I was wondering to what extent there might have been discussions on Africa during your May '78 trip to China and, more specifically, there were some reports that you might have been instrumental in encouraging China to support anti-Soviet forces in Angola, so I just wonder whether you'd want to comment. In other words, at that point within this context of making life more difficult to the Soviet Union, what kind of discussions were there regarding Africa?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: No, I have to tell you that I absolutely don't recall any discussion of Africa as such. And there may have been some discussion in general, probably more by me than by Deng Xiaoping, about how we viewed the Soviet-American relationship and what we found troubling about the way the Soviets were conducting themselves, but there was no discussion of any American-Chinese collaboration regarding Africa, and I don't recall Deng Xiaoping really addressing that issue at all. The Chinese were more concerned with their own problems with the Soviets, and they were concerned that there could be some Soviet action against them, and that came up actually when Deng Xiaoping came to Washington when we normalized relations. You will recall we normalized relations on December 15th and at the end of January Deng Xiaoping came to Washington, and it was at that time that he told us that China is planning, quote unquote, "to teach Vietnam a lesson," which he compared quite explicitly to, "the lesson China had taught India back in 1962." And

the question did arise when he told us whether he was concerned about Soviet reactions, and he did speak about the possibility of some strong Soviet reactions and indicated to us that they had considered them and that they were ready for them. But, again, Africa did not come up in that context.

MR. PASCUAL: Okay. We'll come over here.

Question: My name is Demitri Vinik. My question is about the nature of a triangle in relations. Is it forever? Because right now, we have the same triangle -- Russia, China, and United States. --In order for the triangle to be stable, it needs 3 legs. If it has only 2 legs, it can collapse. So, my question is this. What is your prediction for the relations in this triangle, because right now, we see more agreements between U.S. and Russia than between China and United States. Before it was different picture.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you.

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, you know, triangles tend to be dynamic and not just between states but also among people. If you move into triangle, you move from triangles to triangles. I don't think there is a triangle worldwide between Russia, China, and America, because Russia is not in the position to be a member of that triangle. It has an enormous space and a lot of nuclear weapons. But beyond that, it is essentially a commodities exporter with a declining population -- dramatically declining

population -- and a country that is increasingly concerned about its tenure in the Far East, its huge territories that are becoming increasingly empty, and it is sometimes even demonstrably dramatized by actions which perhaps are even deliberate.

If you go, for example to the Amur River that separates Russia from China, you go to a Russian town on the Amur River, a charming little town, three-story-high buildings made of wood, in some places wooden sidewalks, not very well paved roads. Across the river, the Chinese in the last several years have built a new city, and at night you see 20-story-high aluminum glass buildings with neon lights, cars, paved streets, and so forth. It sort of dramatizes the very rapid transformation of China and the intrinsic difficulties that Russia has in the Far East. Not a good climate, you need a lot of governmental subsidies for people to be there. With the end of government subsidies, the number of Russians living in the Far East is receding significantly now. Even Chinese are now being employed to work across the Amur River leasing farms, leasing forests, and things of this sort.

So, in the long run, if there is going to be some sort of a triangle, it's more likely to be Europe, China, and America with Russia joining Europe eventually. If Russia is to retain the Far East, it has to increasingly become part of the European undertaking, not necessarily a member of the E.U. but in any case an extension of Europe in some

fashion that's cooperative and which gives Russia the kind of innovative, financial, and human capability for developing that huge space which, given its demographic crisis and extremely poor infrastructure, it is going to have great difficulties in doing.

Russia developed recently a 20-year-long development plan to build up a new infrastructure in Russia, particularly in the Far East. This plan now is no longer relevant. It was based on assumptions regarding the price of energy, which simply have collapsed, and this sort of average that the Russian budgetary planners assumed they needed was \$95 per barrel price of oil, for example. It's now \$43. We don't know when it will go up and how soon. So, I think from the Russian standpoint the best alternative for Russia is to become more closely connected with Europe and then there will be a cooperative triangle of some sort involving Europe in this larger Eurasian sense -- China, America.

MR. PASCUAL: Let me come back over to the back of the room.

QUESTIONER: Thanks. Dr. Brzezinski, I'm from Bloomberg News. So, you alluded in your talk to 30 years since normalization how China has basically become an indispensable partner for the U.S. on a host of transnational issues from, you know, the rescuing the financial system to global warming, and you specifically talked about North Korea. In reference to today, the talks being stalled, and in fact North Korea

apparently rejecting the four-page draft that Beijing had given for these current round of talks, I want to know whether you think that considering North Korea's delays and resistance to even small steps towards giving up its nuclear program, would China and the U.S. be better off conceding that North Korea will never give up its nuclear program and trying to start from there, and did the Bush administration, do you think, make a mistake in taking North Korea off of the terrorism list, and what would you have done and would you do going forward?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Can you summarize the question?

MR. PASCUAL: Do we have to accept that the goal of a nuclear-free North Korean peninsula is over or is it possible for the United States and China to continue to work together?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, I think it's desirable for this effort to continue. It cannot continue indefinitely, but if one says that if it cannot continue indefinite, then one has to say what should follow, and I don't think anyone is prepared to start a war on the Korean peninsula. I don't think the Chinese are interested in a military outbreak. I doubt very much that the Japanese are interested in that. I don't think we are. I don't think the Russians are. Therefore, the process will have to continue. At some point, the North Koreans will have to face the fact that their self-isolation is detrimental to their national prospects, and given the fact that there appears to be some serious political complications developing in North

Korea pertaining to the health of the top leader, one should not exclude the possibility of some significant changes after a change of leadership. Experience in dealing with communist totalitarian systems is that changes at the top quite frequently precipitate very significant changes in policies.

MR. PASCUAL: Okay, here in the middle.

MR. SEABROOK: Yes, Peter Seabrook, TECRO. You mentioned Vietnam just a couple questions ago on how Deng Xiaoping said he was going to teach them a lesson, and I was wondering if -- how much you thought China's eventual embarrassing defeats in its own Vietnam war contribute to it dropping all its martial ambitions and embracing China's peaceful rise as, say, opposed to a more successful performance in the Korean War if that was at all tied up in there.

DR. BRZEZINSKI: I think there's no doubt that they did not perform militarily as well as they had hoped to, although they did perform adequately in the sense that they did go in, they did occupy the territory they wanted to, and then eventually they withdrew. But it wasn't as decisively successful militarily as they had hoped, in particular in terms of its impact on Vietnamese attitudes. The interesting thing to me, however, is that they were very much aware of that fact, and they -- their own analysis of the war in Vietnam emphasized inadequacies of their military performance and may have had in a general sense the consequence to which you allude, but it also had another effect to which you did not allude;

namely, it convinced them that they have to undertake a very significant process of modernizing their armed forces, that their ability to conduct modern warfare was simply inadequate, and I think that was probably a rather shocking lesson for them to assimilate. But the Chinese are very industrious and very determined, and I've no doubt that they have since then taken very major steps to make their armed forces more modern, potentially more effective.

MR. PASCUAL: And let me take two questions together.

Dr. Brzezinski, I'm going to ask you to respond to those and leave us with any sort of final comments you want to.

I'll take one from the back over there, and I'll take the other one over here on the side.

Question: Doctor, thank you. Could you comment on the adoption of technology by China. It's interesting. You've talked a little bit about from the defense side, but I think towards the commercial side it's something that has been steep, but I'd be curious as to your thoughts of technology adoption. Thank you.

DR. BRZEZINSKI: I'm sorry, it's not my department. If I was the head of NSC, I would hire someone to deal with it.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. I'm from China's Xinhua News Agency. Ten years ago, Dr. Brzezinski, you wrote a geopolitical book

named *The Grand Chessboard* in which you cited that United States hegemony in the world would be replaced by a useful structure participated by some major powers. And recently you wrote another book with Mr. Scowcroft named *American's World* in which you cite the United States should assimilate or incorporate China into the international system. So, my question is how should the United States assimilate China into the international system?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, I have felt all along that the kind of unique superpower status that America inherited in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union was bound to be a transitional phenomena, and when I wrote that book to which you refer, which was written in the late '90s, I argued that the United States has to acknowledge the reality that eventually that status will not remain unaffected by global change and that the United States should move in the direction of trying to create some sort of larger sense of shared understanding among the various major players in the world.

When writing that book, I did not anticipate that the United States for eight years would adopt a policy of repeatedly shooting itself in the foot, and that came as a surprise to me. Some of you probably know that it was more than a surprise. I was really not only disappointed but rather angry because it was so unnecessary, and there's nothing worse than a stupid mistake which is altogether unnecessary. People make

stupid mistakes but sometimes these mistakes are the products of necessity. But a stupid mistake which was not the product of necessity is really the stupidest kind of mistake. And that's what we did. And that has been extremely damaging.

I think therefore now we have a chance again to establish our legitimacy internationally, regain the sense of respect that the United States has had, and make the world feel that our contribution to its further change is a positive one, and to engage others in the process. And in a curious way, in a curious way -- and sometimes history works in a curious way -- that lesson is now more likely to be driven home to others by the global financial economic crisis, because what others are now learning is that without a healthy America, without an America that is successful financially, economically, and therefore also politically, they're not going to be successful.

It's very interesting, this connection, to watch not only initial Chinese reactions -- which were a little bit well, it's all America's fault but thank God it doesn't really involve us -- but the Chinese dropped it very quickly. But Putin and company went much further. They claim that this is really a demonstration of our inability to play a constructive role in the world and that their country is totally immune to it because of their very intelligent and effective leadership.

And look now what's happened. Our stock market has dropped 34 percent, Russia's by about 65 percent. Among the 20 countries that came to Washington to look for remedies, Russia was the second worse off in terms of economic consequences - the fall of the Ruble, massive financial flight, the downgrading of Russia's credit standing in the world, the only member of the G-8 who no longer have the top rating, the crisis of the domestic reform program and the long-range blueprint. All of that is now questionable. Why? Because of what happened here. And how can it be corrected? Only if the world economy, the financial system and credit liquidity are revitalized, it cannot be done without it happening here.

So, the interdependence of the world with America in a sense reemphasizes at this historical stage this importance of the American role in the world still. If we don't function well, no one functions well. But even more dramatic, if we function well, we can function well with some others not functioning well, and that's a very important lesson, and this is why the G-20 was an important step in the direction of more institutionalized recognition of that reality, including, incidentally, Russia coming to it now as well, and global recovery I think will have to entail a more deliberate effort to revise global institutions.

I think the G-8 makes no sense whatsoever anymore. The G-8 was originally G-7, the industrial democracies, the most advanced

industrial democracies cooperating. Russia was then admitted at a time when its democratic credentials seemed promising. It's no longer a democracy, and now it is shown to be as vulnerable or more vulnerable than many other economies. We have to have some larger formula, maybe not as large as the G-20 -- because the G-20 involves a lot of countries with financial resources that have no geopolitical influence -- like probably something between G-14 and G-16 in terms of the really important countries of the world, in terms of global, social-economic, political cooperation.

And then we need a more intimate dialogue among countries that have global impact and are willing seriously to cooperate, and that has to involve our traditional allies, as in Europe, but also now very much not only Japan but China in the Far East. We have to engage in a much more deliberate effort to promote a Chinese-American dialogue that is truly comprehensive and global in scale on a regular basis. And I think it's important to mention that thirty years after normalization that the time is ripe for such a very special American-Chinese dialogue, which, of course, would parallel other dialogues among the more important global powers, as well as the G-14 or G-16, and that in turn will have implications for how international institutions -- the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other institutions are run.

So, we need a new international institutional initiative, and I think that's for the next President to pursue, because that is a necessary concomitant of financial economic stability, the recovery of confidence, and as a byproduct more widely institutional cooperation.

MR. PASCUAL: Dr. Brzezinski, there probably could be no better note on which to end, which essentially is taking us back to the question of U.S.-China relations, where they go in the future, how important they are in shaping the nature of the international system as we go forward and, as you began with, reflecting back on how it's in our interest, in the interest of the world and in the interest of China to do so.

Thank you for a fascinating conversation and discussion.

MR. BRZEZINSKI: Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. PASCUAL: We will take a 10-minute break. We'll be back here at 11:20. Thank you.

(Recess)

MR. THORNTON: We're going to finish sometime in the next hour. Jonathan Spence is going to speak for 20 to 30 minutes, and then we're going to have discussion and questions.

No one speaking today has needed any introduction at all, and certainly Jonathan needs no introduction. If you were feeling the way I was this morning, having gone to university in the 1970s, feeling nostalgic

for that period, then you'll remember that feeling of being in a lecture hall with the great professor pulling it all together for you. And, you're sitting there thinking to yourself, that's exactly what I think.

I'm sure we'll be treated to something similar this morning. So, without any further ado, I want to turn it over to Jonathan Spence.

(Applause)

PROF. SPENCE: Well, good morning. Thanks for having me here all the way from New Haven.

I was just reflecting earlier this morning that they do tell you there's nothing new that's going to happen in life, but I can assure you that talking right after General Scowcroft and Dr. Brzezinski is terrifying. I mean that was two incredible presentations, and I learned a lot, and one had the privilege of seeing people who are actually making the decisions.

All I do is look at decisions made long ago, and sometimes you feel there are echoes that strike us currently, and so I want to give a very schematic outline of what might be the larger context, the much larger context in which what we call "normalization" took place. And so let's focus on the United States to some extent, but we can roam more widely in Q&A. As John said, we'll try by noon to break for general discussion.

The first contact, the first moment in which we study anything is always arguable, and we usually end up not being able to defend it. But there is sort of a clear moment, I think, in which the United States'

relations with China took a new and possibly kind of formative aspect, and that gives us a date of 1784.

If you want to take yourself back in the Revolutionary history time, in 1784, we know from many documents that the first American merchant vessel after the Revolutionary War traveled to Canton and traded quite successfully with the Chinese. And so, that ship which in fact left from it was Philadelphia-financed, and eventually sailed from New York to Canton, that is a moment I think at which we can start our discussion.

But, as historians love to say, we do have to think just a little bit about what happened before 1784, which was that China's first contact with ships from the United States took place after about five centuries of what we might call: "probing between Western cultures of various kinds and Chinese institutions of various kinds." The early possibilities of a kind of global dialogue between China and the West was in fact under the Mongol domination of China when the immense Mongolian Empire essentially linked the areas around Beijing to areas near the Mediterranean. So that puts us back in Marco Polo's time.

We could discuss that a little bit if you like, but it reminds us of the possibilities of kind of global interconnections on the land route and the possibilities of a peaceful structure as it was in fact emergent under the Mongol Empire, at least for travelers and messengers and those visiting the different sites of the earth.

Moderately recently, scholars found documents showing that almost exactly the same time as Marco Polo visited or did not visit China in the late 13th Century, we now know that a Chinese priestly believer, at least an historian in Christianity, did travel from an area near Beijing to France. In that medieval period, France was divided between the British and the French, and this traveler, religious traveler on a diplomatic mission from the Mongol court, was able to talk to the entourage of the King of France and the King of England somewhere around the 1290s. So it does remind that we can, at least for fun, go back to earlier days.

But we can look at some of the things that happened in the centuries after Polo, from the 13th Century until the 1784 voyage. We can see that trade and missionaries were the two interconnected dynamics that drove this contact. So there was always something religious in this structure, initially, of course, pre-Reformation. So this is the Catholic faith with its various emissaries and also some of its heresies conducting contact with each other and with the world.

A fascination with the trade possibilities of China is very much part of this story, and much of Polo, his writings or his memoirs are in fact about trade. They're about prices, cost, distribution and so in many, many different ways in China itself.

It has largely been seen or studied as a one-way trafficking of people wanting to go from the West to China, but in fact that again has

also been disputed as an interpretation by historians as they do find more of these Chinese contacts outside what we think of the borders of China proper into Central Asia and onward and also many more contacts between China and the Middle East than we had known about in the past. So there's a kind of global movement here across three or four centuries which of course the Americans inherited as people did from other countries.

It was almost entirely, even after the Reformation, a Catholic-dominated series of ventures, with Spain and Portugal being the driving force, and France and Italy also being deeply, deeply involved in it.

It was the beginning of probing about language study, and again we're learning much more now about, for instance, the first language schools for studying Chinese were established in Italy in the 17th Century and so on. We begin to realize, as we find documents, that there were Chinese coming to France around about 1715 who spoke good French, other Chinese who spoke good Italian.

One of my favorite Chinese reached London in the 1680s, and he was immediately approached by mail by the professor of Oriental languages at Oxford. The Chinese man in the 1680s and the Oxford professor were able at once to communicate and then to talk for weeks on end -- in Latin. And so, having no other language contact, that was how they intersected, and for them that was normative. That's what educated

people did. So you had a slightly different range of language and experience.

But even by the 17th Century, we had strong contacts with Russia in place, which we could talk a bit more later if you like.

China's first modern treaty structure, as some people call it, was between China and Russia in the 1680s, and that remarkable treaty negotiated in part through the Jesuit missionaries, Russian orthodox priests, Chinese, Manchus and Russian travelers. This treaty system in some ways, modified perhaps by what Dr. Brzezinski was saying, but there are also treaties still in some ways in operation geographically and globally. I sometimes think it might be one of the few deeply successful treaties about border demarcation that we've had on the planet. We can think about that if you like.

Then by the middle 18th Century, it might seem rather late, but by the middle of the 18th Century, one began to get much more Protestant probing of China through the Dutch and the British and then later from those from the United States as well. But again, trade, religion and the beginning of military interests were all now part of the story.

Then I was thinking through the way that the writings took place about China, the extraordinary circulation of these writings. But in that period just before the Empress of China sailed and docked in Canton City, I think we could say, trying to summarize all these different works, that

China was perceived in the West, very broadly, as containing three separate blocks of ideas.

One was that China was a country of natural philosophers. This was very widely discussed. There was something special, it seemed to Western investigators, about China's governmental system and its philosophical background. The name, Confucius, also became known for the first time. Confucius' *Analects* were translated for the first time and published, again, in the 1680s.

On one side of the world, we have the Russian-Chinese treaty. On the other side of the world, we have the distribution and, indeed, the book reviewing of Confucius' *Analects* in Latin, reviewed by scholars in the low countries in Belgium and then later in France. So the first is some kind of philosophical center to China that was impressive to Western observers of whatever other faith and belief.

The second was that China was also seen to be two things at once. Besides this natural philosophical inclination, China clearly had two things at once which absorbed Western advisors. It was overpopulated and centralized, and it had a larger population than anyone had imagined possible for a human society, and it seemed to have some kind of a tougher central government than most other countries had been able to attain.

Just to give us some figures for ourselves, probably China's

population around about the 1720s was probably somewhere around 180 million people. China's population by the 1780s, when the Empress of China docked, was probably about 330 million, giving a doubling of the population within less than a century.

So there were natural philosophies that suggest something about their intellectual prowess, overpopulation and centralization, suggesting a very difficult set of challenges lying ahead, and one of those challenges lying ahead was seen by Adam Smith and other early economists in the Western tradition who wondered how that was going to play out, as we say now.

The third, and it needn't exactly be related to the other two, but it was very sharp in Western consciousness, was that China was militarily weak. You looked at these paradoxes of that intellectual power or the powerful centralizing government, it seemed probable to a mixture of observers that a battalion, a brigade of well-trained Western troops could perhaps defeat all the armies of China. You begin to find remarks like that.

And, you also find a curious language of belittlement. You've got Western military observers saying the Chinese look as if they have effective armor, but if you check more carefully, you'll see it's just silver foil. The Chinese look as if they have guns, but if you look clearly, you'll see there's no actual hole in them for the gun powder charge. They look

militarily disciplined, but they're not really subject to the kind of drill and organization that we, the Westerners, are taking for granted in our organization.

So those three, I think would have been sort of in different ways, and we can talk about that in the discussion, sort of shaped a good deal of the writing about China. China was written about to an incredible volume starting from the late 16th Century and going right through to the voyage of the Empress of China and in fact, indeed, down to our own time as we know by looking at any book shop or any review section in the newspapers.

What happened when the Empress of China got there? At the beginning, I suppose what we might call a normalization period, 1784 style.

What was this normalization? Well, the crew and the officers on the Empress of China were very much aware that they were doing something important. They represented something new. England had been defeated. The United States was now beginning to stand on its own. It was no longer controlled by foreign monopoly companies, and, by God, the Yankees were going to get there. They could now go, and they needn't take orders from the British. They could open up their own trade. And so, the second that independence is mooted, we get American ships going to China to trade.

There was immediate fraternity, we know from some of the documents including the ship's logs which have been preserved in some of the Empress of China's trips. We know that the first inclination of the Americans reaching Canton was to fraternize with the British because they spoke the same language. There were some extraordinary discussions in early sources which show very, very frank discussions from the new Americans with the old British in Canton on the edge of the harbor, in which the British, at least interlocutors who were recorded in these discussions, said they felt they had made a grave mistake in pushing for war with the new United States, that they regretted it and they hoped that they could now shake hands like gentlemen. This was on the other side of the world from where the great treaty negotiations were going on.

But they would share power now between them and, as one of the British officers said, if we two work together we would be invincible. So now if both sides could somehow re-coalesce, they would have a formidable force.

It was the British who introduced the American traders to the Chinese merchant establishment which was monopoly-controlled by Beijing, and it was hard to crack that system because other traders were imposing their own force and discipline on that trade. But it was the British who introduced them. They had interpreters in Canton, and they began to get the Americans recognized by the Chinese monopoly system so they

could trade. And so, that was a very, very, early link.

There were some real problems. One of them was a muddle over flags. It turns out that the new Continental Congress flag was almost exactly the same as the old East India Company flag. And so the flag that the Chinese foreign experts saw flying, they thought was reinforcing the old East India Company dominance of the British traders. In fact, that was a simple muddle, though it took several years to sort out that these represented different entities, national entities now which should be seen, although they had the same language, as having two different societies and backgrounds and traders.

The British, having done their job introducing the Americans to the Chinese, sort of thought no more about that for several months, but the Americans found it almost impossible to get any further trade established. By really pushing the Chinese and trying to find out what had gone wrong, it turned out that the Chinese officials reporting to Beijing had declared the new Americans to, in fact, be the old English. They had done this because they didn't want the bureaucratic muddles and the cost and the bribery of re-enrolling the Americans in the system. So, in fact, they were actually deceitful. The Chinese had not introduced the new American traders as truly new, and that again took some time to handle.

And, lastly are the two facts I think that would certainly be rather current in terms of normalization. One was the central problem that the

Americans faced in the 1780s, as did the British or the French or others, was how on earth to find a product that the Chinese wanted. There was every kind of fascination with the possibilities of China trade, but what on earth could they sell the Chinese?

We know from the ship's manifest that the Americans in Philadelphia and in New York made a sort of grab bag of guesses, and what they actually brought to China was mainly:

Ginseng - the herb, the long life and then strength-inducing herb which grew mainly I think in the area around Pennsylvania in the United States - ginseng.

Pelts -that is seal pelts and sea otter pelts, and from that begins the first catastrophic decline in the numbers of those creatures as tens of thousands were slaughtered every year for sale in China itself.

Tar and nautical supplies which were in big demand by the Chinese shipping fleet

Finally, as one of them wrote on the margin of a notation, dollars, dollars and dollars. In other words, the Chinese were just going to absorb our cash. They were going to absorb our money, and that was recorded and noted in the 1780s.

In this difficult debate about what to do about finding a product the Chinese wanted, it's there that the American traders made, we might think of it as a kind of unholy alliance with the British merchants which was to

add opium to this list. So opium and opium sales, for which the West is still truly criticized in China, sprang essentially as a balance of payments redressing factor to an ongoing losing trade in China and the desperate inability to find proper products to sell.

The last factor that went, though, which I guess would link us also to current normalization in some way, perhaps not as unfortunate as this way, was that the Americans all are knowing in 1784, with the Empress of China, sort of blundered into a situation in which an extraordinarily difficult aspect of international law was unfolding. That was how to treat, how to use legal structures to deal from the Chinese side of the equation with Westerners coming across the world and then committing some kind of a crime.

Whose law was to run in the country as a whole? The Chinese were very clear that it had to be their law, and the Chinese had a sophisticated legal code that seemed to cover most of the contingencies.

But in the harbor, in the very same harbor where the Americans were anchored in 1784, the British, one of the British merchant ships had had an assembly for some of their own senior officers and some Chinese traders. Seeing them off after dinner, they had fired a salute, an honorific salute. The salute was of course without shot. It was just the noise, the pomp and ceremony of the noise. But there was a wadding in the cannon that they were firing, and the wadding flew out and hit two Chinese in

small boats nearby who were trying to bring products to sell, and both the Chinese men were killed. So the question became who was responsible and whose law was to take dominance.

And so, a good deal of the first messages we have from afar in this early period were American discussions of what had happened next and British discussions of what had happened next, the upshot of which was, and we can talk about it more later, that the foreign ship was forced to give over the man who had fired the cannon to the Chinese authorities. The Chinese authorities said, of course, he'd be fine. They just wanted to get the details and sort all this out. But in the event, the Chinese authorities in Canton City executed the gunner because somebody had to be found responsible for the act of homicide. So the lessons were thick and fast coming just in that very first year.

Well, to move towards topics that we can focus discussion on, let's just look at a few of them. If we take the 19th Century as a whole, and we can backtrack to any part of this you'd like, there is a series of generalizations which I feel fairly okay about. One was the reliance on opium not only continued, but it increased, and the social problems engendered by the opium also increased.

In 1839, the British went to war with China. The Americans acquiesced in that war and the treaty system afterwards. That treaty system broke the Chinese monopoly structure of trade by force of arms,

forced the Chinese to adapt Western aspects of jurisdiction and law for trading problems and any other equivalence to that disaster that had happened on the ship in 1784.

They forced the Chinese to open five treaty ports, and probably most of you would know this by now, of which one was Shanghai. So Shanghai opened essentially under gunpoint but turned out to be the most successful of the five basic harbors running from Canton up to Shanghai that were opened by new treaty systems.

There was an influx of Protestant missionaries on an unparalleled scale to China which changed all kinds of aspects of the relationship between the Chinese people and the foreign preachers.

The West in this same period of the 1820s and 1830s, with both Americans and British Protestants working together, translated the Bible into Chinese, Chinese characters, and then moved beyond that to translate the Bible into a whole range of Chinese dialects, Anhui dialect, Fujian dialect, Guangdong dialect and so on, which were then done in transcription form, so that preachers could use them even though they knew no Chinese essentially. So you've got the tools of propagation of religion in place.

Dictionaries were compiled with increasing sophistication by both sides.

Each increase in missionary presence demanded increase in

military watchfulness and preparedness and in cost. Each treaty system enabled the Westerners to penetrate deeper and deeper into China. All of these made prospects of clashes and so on more and more likely.

Taiwan came into the equation fairly early when some American missionaries and diplomats pointed out that Taiwan seemed to be rather a promising potential base perhaps for United States power. It seemed to have missed out on the various other ways that had brought the Spaniards to Manila and the Portuguese to Macau and the British to Shanghai. What about using Taiwan, perhaps incorporating harbors on Taiwan as part of the United States' presence?

I should add that the Dutch had done just that in the 1620s when the Dutch had, in fact, settled fairly large parts of Taiwan. But that was not followed through by the United States government. There was a discussion of it.

Japan became increasingly important in the United States' thinking as opposed to China. Somehow the balance between Japan and China had to be calibrated, and it seemed that the Japanese were moving much faster in the correct direction than the Chinese were by the way they treated trade, conscription, education, landholding, militarization, mining, development, shipping, and an extraordinary range after the Japanese started their reforms in the 1860s. So Japan, for the first time, became a kind of model for what China might be like at some time in the future in a

way that the foreigners, Americans and British and others, found useful.

So a real estate boom, modern style, hit China through Shanghai. That's not a modern phenomenon. Shanghai underwent incredible escalations in property values in the middle of the 19th Century, and foreigners were usually the beneficiaries from this as opposed to the Chinese themselves. That involves city planning and water filtering and engineering and many other things that were part of this story.

The idea of the medical missionary spread increasingly, so that somehow the combination of Christian missionary enterprise and modern medical skills would be drawn together to help the Chinese and develop a Western sense of its own something approaching Manifest Destiny in China itself. Again, that's fairly self-evident.

But with that urban series of developments went the growing changes in schools in China, in scientific education in China, in the development of a new vocabulary of Chinese that would be adequate to represent all the new ideas that were coming from the West.

A couple that some of you may know, there's a wonderful book, for instance, on the introduction of the vocabulary of modern chemistry into Chinese. It may sound absolutely the height of nerdism, but it's a beautiful book because you learn how on earth the Chinese were to put modern chemical equivalents into the classical language and how were you to shape Chinese to make new elements available as they were discovered

and so on, should you take a new character, et cetera. I won't go into that now, but it was very much part of the world.

Then other aspects of this normalization with enormous consequence:

One was the education of women in China, both girls and mature women, in schools that were very often missionary-run where the teachers were very often Western women. So the segregation of sexes as much as it existed, which was pretty thorough in many ways, was transcended by the presence of the Western missionary woman teacher and their sense that a career was possible. You get Chinese women doctors trained by Western missionary women who have received their M.D.s from the East Coast and also the University of Michigan and some other major areas, later California. That itself had a very strong impact on the country as a whole which has been widely studied.

Then one that I got lured into because of the recent Olympics and all the talk of the normalization at the Olympics, but the whole field of athletics is part of this. The whole idea of competitive athleticism, again, is not something of the modern Olympic movement. It sprang in the 19th Century from the wish to get schools together in some kind of competitive but not too competitive way, to share values and so on between different schools in China. And so, the beginning of athletic meets and then international competition is something that was in this late 19th Century

period.

Well, to bring us up to the present day because we can do that in discussion, but to bring us to the end of the 19th Century a few more of this kind of teasers or at least the broad ideas of what happened in this early normalization style. One was the rapid growth of Chinese migration into the United States and, with that migration, the increasing spread of discriminatory laws against the Chinese. And so, the development of Chinatown, as it was increasingly called, with deep, complex legal and other kinds of discrimination was part of this normalization process if we can call it that in that particular area.

We know how very, very tight elections were in the 1880s. Probably you all know this backward, but the China vote was considered crucial or rather the anti-China vote was considered crucial in a lot of very, very close races at that time. And so, union organizations were brought into the local political structures and so on, and the Chinatown cycle was kind of clamped down on the Chinese in America.

But at the same time, other sides kept pushing through because the American pressure and the British pressure and the other foreign powers involved in China at the time generated, perhaps on the whole unintentionally, generated in China an institution in the constitutional forms that those countries had adopted which had made them so apparently strong. So you used the negative side and the humiliation side to begin

exploring the possibilities that might lie in this.

The development began in China of thinking through alternatives to the old imperial centralized system, and thus the search was on for how to impose or construct a parliament in China or a congress in China or a senate to introduce the idea of a vote, to introduce the idea of an electoral district, all of these things which now had to be negotiated and thought through and again tackled linguistically. You had to have a vocabulary for suffrage as it were, and that became another fascinating part to the new vocabularies of modern science.

And then just when you might have thought that Chinatown was getting the most negative impact through no fault of the Chinese own in United States' thinking, round about the 1890s to 1900s, you began to get a small but steadily growing influx of extraordinarily bright young Chinese men and women into Western universities. A new kind of wave of the future was suddenly presenting itself in which these young Chinese students were clearly coming -- this is the 1890s, 1900s -- with excellent English, excellent broad scientific preparation and able to tumble straight into the hurly-burly world of American graduate schools all the way from California to the East Coast. That, again, is a very, very powerful kind of model, I think.

Then the Westerners of the growing diplomacy level and that's where we might end, I think, with what Dr. Brzezinski was saying. The

West, again, constantly had to make various kinds of adaptations as part of what we might call normalization.

One very important one that the West made in the 1890s, specifically in 1895, was to allow Taiwan to become a Japanese colony. It's amazing how little we think about that or talk about it. China was forced, by losing a war to Japan, to give up Taiwan to Japanese sovereignty. Again, it's unlikely to think that could have been abated much, but the foreigners, the Westerners did accept that.

Japan also seized parts of southern Manchuria, and in that case the Westerners did say enough is enough. And so, a group of great powers including Russia, France and Germany, I think it was, forced the Japanese to pull back from territorial gains of Manchuria but enabled them to stay and deepen their hold over Taiwan.

So normalization can mean many things, and that's just a taste of what it used to mean two or three hundred years ago.

Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. THORNTON: Okay, which of Jonathan's former students wants to go first?

QUESTIONER: The question I would like to ask, it seems to me, has resonance in the past as in the present. I think you touched on it but didn't dwell on it very much. But the view that China played, I think, a big

part not so much in the Renaissance in Europe but certainly in the transformations that led to the French Revolution and therefore to the idea that you could have governments and kings, or governments certainly, that were not based on religion and so on. So, in that sense, there was a tremendous image of China as a very rationale place.

I think this fits into Chinese consciousness of China having been not only very great in its own realm but as being very influential on the world scale. Doesn't that sort of memory, if you like, figure very largely now in the way in which the Chinese and many Chinese intellectuals look at America in the sense that America is in part a model, but it's one that they want to somehow rather supersede, that China has yet further contributions to make.

I'd be very interested to hear your observation.

PROFESSOR SPENCE: That's an enormously broad sort of speculative question. I've been fascinated for a long time about Western perceptions of China broadly conceived.

There's no doubt that China was read about. As I said, it was written about largely from the late 16th Century onwards. But it found a particularly intense readership, I think, in France and to some extent in Britain and to a much smaller extent in Russia and other countries, also in the German states at the time. But France seemed to have picked up with particular passion these ideas of trying to use China as well as just read

about it or think about.

It was, again, I don't want to summarize too much of what you said, it was springing from this idea that these Chinese, these histories of China and these records of China seemed to suggest that China was admirably governed. I mentioned the huge nature of the country and the powerful centralization of the government.

So it might be weak militarily, as Defoe and Swift and various other writers thought, but it did have a powerful central government. It did have this huge population. Its early texts, which were just beginning to be translated, clearly showed the role of reasoning, powerful human reasoning. Confucius clearly showed an interest in problems of governance and morality.

The upshot of all this reading as it got digested and translated into French and reinterpreted was that, yes, indeed, as you said, this country had attained all these admirable aspects without having need for Christian religion. So why, therefore, were Western centralized states insisting on the power of the church when it was not, in fact, necessary?

How much is made of this now, I'm not sure. So I'd have to yield on that. It's a little abstracted now, and we can say that there was also a strong dose of China mockery at this time because intellectual worlds were all kind of overlapping, and so we get the idea of critical novels about China.

Defoe wrote the *Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, not very much read to the famous first *Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. But in the second adventures of Crusoe, Crusoe goes to China. I wonder how many have read that, the literary experts here. It's a fascinating volume two rushed out by his publishers, as we say nowadays, because of the incredible success of the first *Robinson Crusoe*. That Defoe study, I mean novel, based on his reading or some of his reading about China, is extraordinarily anti-Chinese, and it mocks many of these aspects of the central government, the tyranny, the over-centralization.

So you, in fact, get a whole lot of things going at once from the professor at Oxford corresponding in Latin down to the scurrilous attacks on China in Crusoe down to Diderot and Voltaire praising Chinese moral structures and indeed feeding into some of the ideas that did lead to the French Revolution, but I don't think you've got borrowing of revolutionary ideas as such from China until maybe the 1960s student movements in our leading universities and elsewhere.

MR. THORNTON: Sir, in the back.

QUESTIONER: Since John invited questions from former Spence students, I thought I'd give it a shot. John Delury from Asia Society.

Professor Spence, I wonder if you could revisit the thesis of one of your early books, *To Change China*, which I guess you were writing just before normalization, right? In that, at least a crude way of putting it is you

identified this pattern of Westerns coming within an agenda, offering something that the Chinese maybe did want, hoping they'd get something more and often not getting it.

I'd be curious if you think, at least from the perspective of American diplomacy in the last 30 years, whether the Americans sort of broke that pattern or not, if you see it still in effect. How would you update that book if you wrote about the last 30 years?

PROFESSOR SPENCE: Okay, thank you. That's called a leading question, but I didn't lead into it. How did I assess?

I wrote this book a long time called *To Change China* in 1969. Yes, okay. Well, it was a youthful *jeu d'esprit* as they say, but it did have a theme. I took the theme from the first Jesuit scientists who went to China because many of the missionaries had scientific skill. I started with Jesuit astronomy, and I ended with Soviet technical advisors in the 1960s who were still there in those days.

John, being an admirable former student, succinctly summarizes the argument which was that generations of those who wanted to change China, that is premise number one.

Why? There were all sorts of other countries they did not want to change, but for some reason China attracted a certain kind of transformative agent. They could be people wanting new military technology, new scientific technology, new agricultural technology and this

kind of thing.

But it attracted a lot of Westerners, some of whom, and there's a side study of this, some of found in China a way for social advancement they couldn't get in their own countries, which I still think is an interesting theme. Could you rise in the ranks by going to China as opposed to staying where you were, socially, economically and in other ways?

But anyway, you got a steady movement of people determined to change China. A lot of them went with extremely good ideas and extremely good intellect and sometimes moderately good financial backing. Many of them made what they thought was satisfactory initial headway, and many of them then felt that the Chinese were obstructing their attainment of needed knowledge by deliberate, well, I was going to say deliberate bloody-mindedness. They simply were not going to yield on these aspects that we knew were good for them.

And so, from going with extraordinarily high hopes, some very talented people ended up not only with a good deal of their career kind of in wreckage but what interested me a lot was a melancholy factor, that the people who had been in China for a long time to change China and wanted to change China very often became anti-Chinese, left the country and, in a sense, became missionaries of Chinese resistance to progress and began to preach against -- I don't mean in a religious sense but in a general kind of sociological sense -- to preach against the very country

that they'd sought to change.

How could I update it? Would it be true of the United States in the present time? That's a difficult one, very difficult.

I think possibly that the last time that could be seen with some clarity would be during World War II and the Civil War afterwards when certainly there was a lot of, I think, bitterness and disappointment with the way that things had gone in China, in China's politics, in the Nationalist defeat and so on, a feeling that American advice had not necessarily been followed and so on.

I think we're right now in the middle of something that blow either way as Dr. Brzezinski said, that I mean we haven't really -- how could we have -- digested what the current financial chaos is going to mean in China and to their thinking about how Westerners acted.

There are many new variables in this. One is that so many Chinese have studied in the United States or in Europe by this time, that they have gone back. You get more Chinese now determined to change China as you did in fact in a sense -- that would have been a different book -- from the 19..., or even earlier, from the 1850s onward.

In a sense, the push-pull continues and the fascination with China continues, and China continues to be written about with an absolute outpouring of books and studies and pamphlets and now blogs on an immense scale. I can't even read blogs, let alone the thousands of blogs

that are coming out every day, indeed hundreds of thousands apparently to those who follow these things, and they are dealing with every possible aspect of Chinese politics and reform and constitutional change. The government does not seem able to check this, this huge flow.

Maybe now the Chinese are becoming, in a sense, their own best critic and are taking over and are working more in a joint venture kind of fashion with Western colleagues. I think probably the story is rather different now because of the increasing strength of the central government and its different tilt on ideology.

MR. THORNTON: Ambassador.

QUESTIONER: Professor Spence, I do want to pursue this question further about the interest in foreigners who come to China with an agenda and to change China. Why is that?

And, I want you to think of this by contrasting it with India. India is a big country as well, and India was not always democratic. Indeed, I mean there were some attempts to change India, sati-burning and that sort of thing, but it doesn't seem to be as consistent and without the same kind of intensity directed to India as towards China.

What is about Chinese society that invites this reaction from the West?

PROFESSOR SPENCE: Well, to bring in the Indian equation is, itself, challenging. I had a few more notes in case I didn't fill the time, and

in that, sort of the last page of my short notes to myself, I was going to sort of remind us that part of the normalization aspect of China might be that we have to remember how Chinese see their great power relationships as opposed to how we see the way they ought to see them.

I was just sketching in for people that in a meaningful assessment of China's options, we should remember that China has its own borders which have nothing whatsoever to do with our borders. In many cases, the Chinese borders are linked to societies with whom we don't have a very good or thorough understanding, and one of these is the northern belt of societies which from the Chinese point of view the key determiners would be Japan, Korea and Russia. Minor changes in policy or even major ones are not going to affect the fact that these are absolutely crucial to China's survival and safety.

The other would be the southern borders which would include absolutely Vietnam and Burma, Myanmar as is, and probably India.

To try and discuss now the Indian alternate way or the different kinds of sympathies that India has generated as opposed to some of the hostility that China has generated, one now has to plunge into Indian studies or South Asian studies in a new way.

I'm exactly halfway through Gupta and Wang, which was sent to me for a pre-review, where we see two senior scholars of business administration and business history paralleling Indian developments with

Chinese developments and looking at about something like 80 different corporations, 40 in China, 40 in India, and seeing how they manage their affairs, their businesses, see how they do or do not lean towards democratic processes and how much they might or might not be accessible to Western joint venturing or various forms of collaboration. It's a study of which Western corporations have been able to make this jump successfully in both countries, which have failed in both and how the balance is.

The Indian legacy can be studied or at least, again, when to use South Asia and when to use India is complex, but a good many of these books seem to be focusing on India. They do point to one of the very strong factors in India and sympathy or at least a rapid turnover into good collaboration with Indian business being language. Then the fact that India has such excellent education in English is taken almost for granted by us.

And so, in China, again, the rapid leap into trying to do intensive English right away through the school system, though it's beginning to be mirrored a little bit in this country by the development of Chinese in Chicago schools and in all sorts of special programs here and in the Confucius Institutes and so on. The United States' learning of Chinese is now sort of limping ahead of the Chinese learning of English which is itself limping way behind the Indian knowledge of English and so on.

I think the rules, again, India, all these countries including our own are subject to instabilities that cannot be anticipated, and the last few days in India have been another terrible example of this. You just don't know what's coming here. And, China can sometimes seem more of a peaceful base for long-range investment. Now it's, again, going to have to answer its own questions.

But I think India is becoming part of the equation. Just speaking of my own university, at Yale, we've just decided to put a huge amount of investment into Indian studies, South Asian studies. People will definitely be studying South Asia in conjunction with China. So we'll see how it works itself out.

MR. THORNTON: Sir.

QUESTIONER: Yes, Professor, I'd just like you to comment on a rather unusual but interesting hypothesis that's been put forward by Gavin Menzies in his latest book, not the one where he says the Chinese discovered America but where he indicates the influence of the voyage of Zheng He providing the basis for some of the ferment that went on in the Renaissance.

We know, of course, that the Chinese had the compass. They had the astronomical knowledge. They had the accumulation of scientific knowledge necessary for voyages, but nobody could really read the language. Although Zheng He had assumedly 10,000 books on his ships,

if nobody could read it, it wouldn't have much of an influence.

What is traditionally said is that the Renaissance is a result of going back to the old Greek works, translating them. There was an exchange with the Orient which provided this. But it's an interesting hypothesis, given the fact that much of this knowledge which lay at the basis of the Renaissance in fact was already developed in China. Do you think there was enough of an interface there that there would be a significant influence on the Renaissance from the Chinese?

PROFESSOR SPENCE: Well, we're in difficult country with interpretations quite so bold, and there are lots of things we can do with the Zheng He voyages which were in the 1420s and 1430s when China definitely did send a large number of large ships through Southeast Asia and along the Indian coast and on the east coast of Africa and to the Persian Gulf region. The fleet does seem to have been commanded by a particularly skillful admiral who was also Muslim. So you've got aspects of crew members going on the Hajj and things like this. It's a very new and intriguing kind of venture for the Chinese, and it's one that they brought to an end themselves for budgetary reasons in the 1440s, I guess it was.

So China did have a brief period of naval expansion which it decided to terminate for cost reasons and possibly for other political reasons we don't fully understand.

Like Polo's visit or like other dramatic moments in sort of world

history time, there are many spells one could weave out of such a narrative light, and one of them is of the ships being blown out of the statutory channels and ending up in the Americas somewhere. It's just feasible for logs of wood but very infeasible, many, many naval scholars have shown, because of the amount of fresh water that would have been needed for the trip, and there was absolutely no way that those ships could have taken on so much water and kept their crews alive on that huge distance. But there's a whole group of policy discussion about that.

So I don't accept that hypothesis, though one should say that Commander Menzies is a formidable debater. And he has a line that I simply cannot puncture which is at the height of the argument, and he has been at many academic conferences, he looks sternly around the room of assembled nerd-like academics, and he says, well, which of you is a submarine commander?

So far, this has been met with shocked silence, none of us even having the courage to say, well, I was once a submarine commander.

So he usually sort of wins enough debating points from the silence to continue his argument.

The Renaissance argument, we have countless sources for where these pressures might come, the new scientific breakthrough. Obviously, Arabic and Greek mathematics and astronomy seem to be the most likely ones, plus all sorts of indigenous discoveries that went on in the West.

Rather than going to Menzies on what happened in the Renaissance in science, I myself would still go to Joseph Needham, the great British historian of Chinese science in his 24 volumes to date, 3 linear feet of volumes to date. I actually measured them with a yardstick. I was so awed.

Needham's great project -- he died recently in his mid-nineties -- but his great project was to chart all the indigenous Chinese roots of indigenous Chinese science as a first premise to teach us how to see what China had accomplished already so that we could give a sensible balancing to not exaggerating what Jesuit astronomers brought or what French statisticians brought or what different surveyors brought. There was an exciting period, breathlessly exciting period of interchange, scientific, in the 16th Century and the 17th Century between China and the West.

But as more scholars who also know Arabic as well as Chinese are discovering, you had very, very complex Middle Eastern contacts with China. You had many more than we had realized. We had much more in calligraphy and in potteries and in textiles and in astronomy and in algebra, for instance. All of these now, other scholars who have taken on Joseph Needham's work, they are now trying to trace this back in nautical engineering, mechanical engineering, physics, chemistry and so on.

As we get a deeper sense of how sophisticated China was

scientifically and technologically, not just in the moderately recent past but in its own Bronze Age, for instance, you've just got to go to the Freer Gallery and see the amazing Chinese bronzes and so on, just out of this world. Technologically, they're just incredible. So, clearly, in the second millennium B.C., China would have been an absolute global leader in firing techniques and in the whole metallurgy side of their culture. It was incredibly sophisticated. So they give us a sort of base from which to see.

It is possible that one or two Chinese ideas somehow came through this. I don't believe that the huge books, libraries and so on, on the ships would have been really a factor here.

It's possible that some of the Chinese who got to Medina or Mecca might have met an Arab astronomer or might have said, you know we had this way of calculating the plow or whatever or gauging planetary motions or stellar obliquities of various kinds. We don't know. We've never found a link in that case.

I think the voyages themselves, it's just a coincidental propinquity. I don't think it's proven as knowledge.

But the root of Chinese science is a fascinating field, and I recommend it to those who want to change fields. I would say in China the history of science is wonderful. The history of Chinese philosophy is wonderful. As many of you here know, Chinese archaeology is at a breathtaking stage at the moment and showing us all kinds of new things

that we hadn't guessed before.

MR. THORNTON: I want to take one more question from the floor, in the back.

QUESTIONER: Hi, Professor Spence. Thank you. My name is Felicia Sondez, and I'm a reporter with a Japanese newspaper, the *Asahi Shimbun*.

Last year, I was teaching at the China Foreign Affairs University in Beijing, and I encountered a lot of interesting opinions from my students there about U.S.-China relations. The question that I have now is about events that occurred in the lead-up to the Olympics in Beijing such as the incidents in Tibet and anti-CNN protests, protests such as the one against the French supermarket chain and also media coverage of the torch relay throughout the world. Do you see those as indicative of tension in U.S.-China relations now or would you see U.S.-China relations improving with the coming administration?

MR. THORNTON: The short of it was the pre-Olympic events like the torch relay and the CNN event and various negative things that happened before the Olympics, would you see that as somehow indicative of U.S.-China relations or do you see U.S.-China relations improving in the next administration?

PROFESSOR SPENCE: Sorry, I didn't catch every word of your question. I think I got the general idea now.

It's the various protests before the Olympics, what they say about the Chinese government and also about the Westerners reactions. Is that right?

MR. THORNTON: Yes, and U.S.-China relations.

PROFESSOR SPENCE: It's been an extraordinary year for us being emotionally beaten around the head by the realization that contrasting events, when they come so swiftly, immediately alter the impact of all the prior events. I mean it's sort of a philosophical truism. But the China where the Tibetan protest took place was in some ways very different from the China where the earthquake took place, and that was very different from where the winter blizzard took place, and the attempt to clean Beijing up was also indicative of a sort of new determination by the government.

I think clearly negative feelings were generated. I mean by the demonstrations and the violence in Tibet. There seems to be no doubt of that. And, it still seems that we don't know a lot of what happened in other cities with large Tibetan populations, in Szechuan and elsewhere, perhaps there was considerably more turmoil than we realize.

So the swing, I think part of this is shown by the fact that 2008 wasn't discussed much in any kind of context of 1989, but one thing they did have in common was the extraordinary amount of Western journalistic coverage. In both those years, very important years in Chinese history,

you had an immense presence of foreign journalists. Again, General Scowcroft talked about this, I thought, very, very well and interestingly.

There's no doubt you have an enormous amount of issues competing and clashing with the value systems, the Chinese perception of what their position in Tibet is, both historically and in the present mode, the varieties of Tibetan outrage at different kind of policies, the effect on the economic development on Tibet which many Tibetans feel is pushed by Chinese interests. All of these overlapping with a sense of the journalistic openness and accessibility at all times to all channels of communication and the clash between that and Chinese desire and/or ability to close down certain kinds of journalistic expression. All these things kind of piled up and interrelated, it seems to me.

One study I was reading recently talks about the lack of interest in the Uigher problems as opposed to the Tibetan problems and tries to speculate why this is so and to try and separate out what is a major political demonstration with deeply held ideological views behind it, and what is a more attention-seeking kind of demonstration. So we are pushed around by our difficulty in interpreting exactly what these meant, these different kinds of things meant.

Sometimes, I mean it's smallish. They're not smallish, but just things that happen like being in the opening ceremonies in Beijing, which I had the fun of being with my wife, and wondering if it was going to rain

and looking at what on earth would have happened if it had rained. It looked, because of the weather clearing patterns in China and the bombarding of clouds and the anti-pollution attempt, that we were going to get these absolutely incredible tropical type storms in Beijing, which did in fact come about two days later. So even the weather is part of the equation here.

And, the fact that none of those people racing around 80 feet above ground ever fell off, again, a human incident, a human tragedy could have come out of something that was an enormous national triumph. These things were shadowy.

We would see it surely as an error of judgment to announce that the Chinese could use those demonstration bases with impunity to launch their own particular political discussions of the government, and the government's refusal to allow that obviously was very bad press and was not very good in terms of human rights either. But it seemed to be controllable because there were many other forums in fact for expressing one's views through I suppose the various wonders of the internet in all its forms. So it was difficult.

There was significance in all these events. Trying to work out which are enormously cosmic and which were just peripheral, that is the difficult thing. I think in the long range the thing that comes across is the Chinese did run the games with real administrative skill and concentration, I think,

in a very, very potentially difficult series of situations.

And so, that would be my ultimate reading of the events. There was some luck in this as well, I think, and I believe in luck. I mean, either way, it happens.

Thank you.

MR. THORNTON: I'm going to ask you one closing question which is an impossible question, which is this: Given your understanding of the sweep of history and the patterns and, in some sense, the progression, if we were sitting here 30 years from now --

PROFESSOR SPENCE: When we're sitting here 30 years from now.

MR. THORNTON: When we're sitting here, yes. You're all invited 30 years from now. What would you guess would have been the evolution of the U.S.-China relationship?

PROFESSOR SPENCE: Well, they would all look to the event at Brookings back in 2008. Elderly scholars will still talk about the young Thornton and how much difference he had made.

That is hard. I think 2008 is going to be remembered as a year in which a lot of things went wrong and a lot of things began to be seen that could or should have been seen much earlier. There have been other periods of sort of human self-deception like that, but this is on an extraordinarily large scale.

But we don't know yet how it's going to play out in China. We don't know at all. And, Dr. Brzezinski's point about the Russian losses, we may grieve about 34 percent decline. Russia is dealing with a 63 percent decline. And so, heaven knows the other figures yet to come in, what they're going to say.

The Chinese are now orchestrating how to deal with the figures, I gather, including unemployment figures which may be 100 million off. I mean it depends how you're going to tabulate, what you're going to phase in here.

I think we've had questions, wonderful questions during the day, during the morning. Obviously, we cannot forget India. We cannot forget Japan. We know that there are other major players here. We cannot forget China's interest in Africa and what seems to be extremely shrewd, long-range planning for mineral deposits everywhere from eastern Canada to southern Australia. I mean there are so many bits of this equation that it's hard to carry in one's head.

I guess if I had a sort of feeling what happened in 2008. There are some very distinguished China scholars here, so I wouldn't speak for them.

My sort of gut feeling is that study of China now and its effect now is in some way switching from politics to economics and getting into an area I wasn't very good at - Chinese politics, but I'm much less good at Chinese

economics. Maybe that's why I like history. But so much of what we've focused on in terms of Chinese politics, I think, has become kind of overshadowed by a whole new series of events in the economic sector.

I reflect on my own teaching. I'm retiring now. I started as a student in '59, and you can argue that between '59 and the almost 50 years I was involved at teaching this field in some way or another, there was much greater clarity about China's politics, the focus and so on. You were able to focus on the People's Republic and/or the Taiwan relationship and/or that was the beginning of the Great Leap Forward and/or the general ways that the collectivization mystique was gathering its momentum in China, the responsibility and/or the role that Mao himself played.

We had Zhou Enlai referred to several times today. We'll be thinking much more about him, I think, in the future.

But in all these ways, China seemed predictable and seemed to have certain parameters, and it was fairly easy to fit current China to historical China as well. I think there are lots of ways that they seemed to be linked.

Now I think we have more Chinas. We have completely different social structures emerging. We have completely different policies, globally, emerging for China. In all of these, politics obviously is still important, but economics seem to be driving things in a way that I can

appreciate the significance, but I can't appreciate the detail here. I don't see exactly what an investment banker is going to be doing in two years time, with all due respect.

So we have here I think that in 30 years, when we all meet again, we'll be saying, do you remember that time in 2008 when we thought it was going to be comparatively simple and now look what happened? Now look what happened. We had to reconstruct all kinds of new modes of dealing with each other -- that's my guess -- and feeding each other and heating each other.

I mean God knows all of things are approaching crisis level. So you better lay on good refreshments in 2038.

Thank you.

MR. THORNTON: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for coming.

(Applause)

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