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The China Connection: U.S. Policy and the People's Republic of China

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Eurasia to our side. These are matters so essential to the shaping of Western strategy that they must be addressed directly.

The notion of controlling and stopping a Russo-American ground war in Eurasia is an extremely doubtful possibility. A limited war for short-term gains cannot be reconciled with the mortal animosity between two foes battling for the minds of men. Furthermore, high-tech weapons, conventional as well as nuclear, have a momentum all their own. Decades of "cold" warring, dating at least from the Red scares of 1919, have accumulated deep frustrations on both sides that, once unleashed, will simply disallow compromise.

Yet, the greatest weapon of superpower America is its eminently-exportable liberal-capitalistic ideals with their universal appeal to individualism and the human spirit. These can and do work over time in reshaping global attitudes just as they did in creating the American Republic. The most viable strategy for realizing this long-term goal is the very maritime strategy advocated by Colin Gray. His monograph should be mandatory reading for any intelligent discussion about Western strategic options for the foreseeable future.

Gregor, A. James. *The China Connection: U.S. Policy and the People's Republic of China*. Stanford, Calif.: The Hoover Institution Press, 1986. 280pp. \$7

Since the early 1970s, enthusiasm for the "China connection" in the United States has taken on the proportions of a growth industry. Entrepreneurs expect access to the world's largest single market; practitioners of academia establish exchange programs with a gusto that rivals an NFL linebacker blitzing a quarterback; America's farmers see China as a relief valve for their burgeoning surplus; and U.S. soldiers, sailors and airmen have entered into sustained contact with the world's largest military establishment. However, the mismatch between our expectations of what an abiding

relationship with China will yield and what we have realized to date, is perhaps even larger than it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Perhaps it is for this reason that The Hoover Institution selected the U.S.-China "connection" as the subject for the first volume in its U.S. Foreign Policy Series. The goal of this endeavor is a "clear, cogent analysis" of U.S. interests and involvement in key countries and regions of the world. It is against this yardstick as well as that of the mismatch between expectation and realization that Professor Gregor's work should be measured.

His monograph is organized and informative for the reader who is not familiar with the subject. After a brief overview of China's land and its people, Gregor sketches the history of

U.S. involvement with China and the creation of the PRC. Successive chapters deal with the development of the PRC's foreign policy through 1969 and rapprochement with the United States. To his everlasting credit, Gregor shuns the shibboleth of "the China card." Instead, he conveys the sense that the United States and PRC forged their current linkage in the crucible of geopolitics and that the Sino-American rapprochement grew just as much from strategic necessity as political opportunity.

Gregor then spends a good deal of time examining the PRC as a "security asset." After a brief description of the U.S.S.R.'s view of the geostrategic environment, he considers the conventional and nuclear capabilities of the PRC as well as Western arms sales to China. Although it is difficult to analyze U.S. interests and involvement in China without considering the competitive nature of the Sino-Soviet relationship, it probably deserves more attention than it gets in this book. In the same fashion, Gregor also does not do justice to the Sino-Japanese relationship and its impact on his subject. Japan cannot help but wonder if China's dealings with the United States suggest that the PRC's reconciliation with the West is more tactical than substantive. However, his treatment of the Taiwan issue is measured and informative.

If there is, as some suggest, a cyclical tradition in Chinese history, then China never changes but only reworks its form. Perhaps this is why the most important chapter of this

book addresses the "Transformation" of the PRC. The dominant theme in this book is the idea that China is desperately trying to consolidate its position in the international system as well as its domestic political and economic structure. That process cannot go forward without some costs of opportunity for all concerned. However, Professor Gregor is a bit optimistic over our ability to comprehend exactly what China is consolidating. Most of us remember the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. However, few Americans appreciate the shifting strategic perspectives, bureaucratic resistance, shattered institutions, concerns about militarism, and vexing bilateral policy differences that marked the PRC's formative years. The vision of thousands of Chinese students marching through the streets of Shanghai and Beijing in late 1986 raises some of these very same fundamental issues again. But of even more importance is the question that Gregor does not ask: What are the limits of these changes?

Gregor argues that the real issue for the United States is to assess the benefits and costs—strategic, economic and political—of its "China connection." His work would have been of more value than it is if he had examined in more detail how this computation would affect China's capacity to achieve the consolidation that it is seeking. The issue of strategic cooperation is one example in this regard. Though some progress has been evident, the author cautions that it is still very difficult to convert

shared interests and concerns into political and institutional mechanisms for defense cooperation, not to mention an operational military relationship. Americans need to be reminded that China has historically rejected a purely military interpretation of security. Instead, it has used a combination of psychological and political means in pursuit of its strategic goals. The current leadership in Beijing seems to recognize this and has made good use of the tactic of ambiguity to enhance China's position and not stretch the boundaries of change beyond their elastic limit.

Gregor's conclusions challenge many of our more warm and comfy notions of the importance of China. He cautions that Beijing's interests may diverge with ours as we move away from China's periphery. He argues that the PRC has the potential to work considerable mischief among our allies in East Asia. He contends that neither nation will be vital to the other's economy for the remainder of this century. Finally, he warns that maintaining the "China connection" may ultimately prove to be of secondary importance to the future policy of the United States toward the Pacific and Asia. Gregor thereby makes a strong, albeit implicit, case for the United States to avoid thinking about China as it has in the past, a past that has been marked perhaps more by myth than reality. China is a friend, not an ally. We need to recognize that as well as the fact that it probably does both of us some good to keep some daylight

between us. One final note for the reader who is not a "China hand": read this and any other book like it with the understanding that our knowledge of China, though growing day-by-day because of such work as Professor Gregor's, is still cramped by the formal, rather restricted nature of our access to its institutions.

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Olsen, Edward A. and Jurika, Stephen Jr., eds. *The Armed Forces in Contemporary Asian Societies*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986. 368pp. \$39.50

This collection of papers was originally presented at a conference on "The Role of the Armed Forces in Contemporary Asia" held at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, in 1982. As the title suggests, the various authors focus on the domestic role of Asian armed forces in their societies.

In revising and updating the 16 papers for inclusion as book chapters, the editors sought to establish unity by having each chapter address the origin of the armed forces' status in their host society and then assess what the military is doing with the power it has accrued by virtue of that status. An extended introductory chapter by editors Olsen and Jurika establishes the framework of the book and provides a short sketch of the subsequent chapters. Those chapters are then divided geographically into East Asia, Southeast Asia,