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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. LI: Please be seated. We will start very soon. There is a metro delay – there is also I think a car incident somewhere nearby, but we probably should start now. Good morning, my name is Cheng Li, I'm the director of the China Center here at the Brookings. I'm very pleased to welcome you all to today's event: U.S. China relations in historical context. Over the past few months news and discussion in the United States have been dominated by concerns about China's stock market crisis, current safety appreciation, cyber espionage, tensions in the South China Sea and China's rapid military modernization. China appears to present a series of challenges to the United States.

These issues are of course very, very important, but they do not tell the entire story. Our two countries are now more interconnected than ever before in so many ways. The economy, education, entertainment, environment, just to mention a few. Another inadequacy in the recent American discourse about U.S./China relations is the absence of a historical perspective with the exception of our Brookings colleague Jeff Bader's recent piece you can access online. It's on the Brooking blog about the state top leaders -- state visit in the United States over the last three or four decades. It's always not so easy.

And the prevailing negative perceptions overlook the historical circumstances and development that define our bilateral relationship. Confucius once said - I quote, "One is to review the past in order to understand the future." 温故而知新 History can help provide the context for actions taken by both countries today and prevent a misunderstanding and a policy mistake at present and in the future. We are so honored to have America's three leading historians to share with us their wisdom and insight. My Brooking colleague Ken Lieberthal will introduce them in a more formal way in just a few minutes. Please allow me to say a few words about each of them informally. Mark Elliott is the new appointed vice provost for International Affairs at Harvard University. People at Harvard often consider his position to be Harvard's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and indeed Harvard is very much like an empire in its own right.

So many colonies around the world and Mark is a dear, personal friend and a classmate from out time together at the Berkley almost three decades ago. And Mark is a wonderful - very few

people in the world – friend in Manchu. Professor Bill Kirby is also a personal friend as one of the most popular speakers on China and Sino-US relations. And he has spoken at the Brookings events several times, so really welcome back. So honored to have you. And he just traveled from got back from China just yesterday and really, very very honored to have you here today. We now often talk about people to people diplomacy or public diplomacy. Bill is a true American good will ambassador to China. He plays such an instrumental role in education now in the cultural exchanges between our two countries. Last and not least Professor Warren Cohen was my advisor when I was a fellow at the Wilson Center. I also used his book *America's Response to China - A History of Sino-American Relations* many times in my classes. Yes, I know that. This is the fourth edition but I could not find the fifth edition, but it's in my notes so I need to move to other things. It's really wonderful to have you.

Moderating today will be my mentor Ken Lieberthal, Senior Fellow at Brookings China Center. Ken is a political scientist by training but a historian by experience. He has been a China Watch and a China hand for almost a half a century, maybe 40 years, 45 years. His knowledge and expertise of the history and the politics of Sino-U.S. relations are more than just academic. Now the audience can access today's discussion by our Twitter account, Brookings China. And tomorrow Brookings will be hosting a public event at the Seattle University in Seattle, Washington featuring eight Brookings scholars as we welcome President Xi at the first stop on his state visit to the United States. You may also tune in for tomorrow's public event via Twitter as well unless you want to travel with me to Seattle immediately after this event. So ladies and gentleman please join me in welcoming our distinguished panelists and for now Professor Ken Lieberthal.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Thank you, Cheng. Welcome everybody, it's always a pleasure following Cheng, uh, he usually covers everything you had planned to say and does it in a lively and engaging fashion, so you want to stand up and just say thank you, Cheng. The motivation behind today's event is the recognition that we all have that your own country's history influences the way you think about the present and future. What you think is special, what you think is core, the -- what you think was fair and unfair, what your potential is. And everyone is acutely sensitive to that and their own country rarely has a subtle understanding of that in another major country. And so we want to take advantage of

the -- three outstanding historians to bring various dimensions, pertinent dimensions of China's modern history and U.S.-China relations to bear, to increase our sensitivities to dimensions of what Xi Jinping and more broadly the Chinese side brings not only to the upcoming visit, but more broadly to the issues involved in this very wide ranging relationship and each will take up a different broad kind of angle on this.

In order of speakers, first Mark Elliott will look at the structural factors and ideas that endure over the longer term in China. Taking up issues such as China's rise, the notion of domestic rejuvenation, the motion of Fuxing which has a long history in China and as I recall from studying for example the Tongzhi restoration there is actually a kind of template for this historically in China. But China's understanding of the geographic and demographic dimensions of modern China itself, what is China?

And related issues and give us a perspective on these to fill in some detail from what Cheng laid out, Mark is the Mark Schwartz professor of Chinese and Inner Asian History in the department of east Asian languages and civilizations and the department of history at Harvard. He is now Vice Provost for International Affairs and he's the Director of the Fairbanks Center for Chinese Studies. He teaches courses on the history of late Imperial China, China and inner Asia as well as classes in Manchu Studies, Literary Manchu and Classical Mongolian. His most recent published book is *The Emperor, Chen Lung, Son of Heaven, Not of the World*. That is an extraordinary background, my God. But anyway, I stand in awe of that kind of vitae.

Secondly, Warren Cohen, he will focus especially on the major diplomatic, events in diplomatic history between the U.S. and China and kind of we have our own views of what we accomplished in the Open Door and so forth and this is – will give a sense of how this looks from both sides or a more rounded perspective of this. Warren is distinguished university professor emeritus of history at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Also university professor emeritus at Michigan State University. Senior Scholar with the Asia program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars here in D.C.

He is a historian of America's Foreign Relations especially with East Asia. He has published 20 books including *America's Response to China*, fifth edition, and *Challenges to American*

Primacy, 1945 to the present which came out just two years ago, 2013.

Third, Bill Kirby will focus on education and politics in U.S. China relations. A century looking at the role of cultural institutions especially universities and higher education over time in this relationship from the republican era to the present. And then assess to what degree high levels of cultural interactions such as American campuses in China. Bill and I serve on the advisory committee for the D Quin Chan University so we've had occasion to discuss this in some detail, but anyway to what degree high levels of cultural interaction such as American campuses in China and Chinese students in the United States have an impact on the broader relationship.

One of the highlights of the upcoming visit by President Xi will be some new people to people initiatives and his highlighting the importance of that. Liu Yandong was just here about a month ago, again focused especially on that aspect of the relationship.

Bill Kirby is Spangler Family Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School and Tien Chung Professor of Chinese Studies at Harvard. He serves as Chairman of the Harvard China Fund and Faculty Chair of the Harvard Center at Shanghai which is Harvard's first university wide center located outside of the United States. He was also director of the Fairbanks Center for 2006 to 2013. He's an historian by trainer but studies contemporary Chinese business, economic and political development in international context.

That's what they used to call a renaissance man. I'm not sure of what the current term is for it. But in any case, each speaker will speak in that order. Professor's Elliott, Cohen, and Kirby and we'll take about 15 minutes, hopefully no more than 15 minutes for your prepared remarks to t up these issues. We'll then come up and sit here, we'll have some interaction among ourselves and then open it up to Q and A and with that let me just ask Mark to come up and start us off. Thank you.

MR. ELLIOTT: Well, good morning and thank you to Li Cheng and Ken Lieberthal for inviting me here today. It won't surprise many of you to hear someone like myself say that among the wide variety of factors governing U.S. China relations, history must be counted as among the most important. But compared to the situation of 25 or 30 years ago, it's no longer so common that historians, that is people who are trained to think critically about sources, who have deep cultural and linguistic

expertise and who reflect all the time about the past and its connections to the present.

It's not so common that historians these days are brought to the table where the conversation about that very important U.S. China relationship is going on. I say that in contrast to the situation when my advisor Fred Wakeman was in the middle of his career and he was a very frequent visitor to Washington, D.C. So I'm really delighted that Brookings has decided and I attribute this to its leaders here at the China Center - Li Cheng and Senior Fellow Ken Lieberthal has seen fit to invite historians to take part in this event at a moment when the broader discussion on the current status of U.S. China relations is reaching a crescendo and thankful for the opportunity to talk to you about why and how "a historical perspective can help guide relations at a challenging time and in the long term."

This is the rationale for why we're all here this morning. Now I don't want to sound like your typical academic turning his nose up at work that focuses mainly on policy or on theory. It's not hard to see. I have a lot of respect for that kind of work even though that's not what I do. It's not hard to see how in the press of daily crises, weekly developments, monthly trends, yearly forecasts it's easy to lose sight of the longer perspective and even to conclude that it doesn't really matter that much at the negotiating table. But for all sorts of reasons that do not need to be rehearsed in front of a distinguished group like this if we fail to take account of that long durée, that long perspective we will find ourselves as Li Cheng reminded us in quoting Confucius, "We'll find ourselves lacking the necessary context by which to judge different choices."

And we will end up with a limited understanding of the larger processes at work, the processes in which we ourselves are embedded, in which we are involved. We will not have that kind of distance that we really need. Now this is only because of George Santayana's famous warning about forgetting the past nor is it only because we would be naïve indeed to imagine that the situations that we encounter today are somehow new or unprecedented. But it's also because it is so often the case that it is precisely this long, historical perspective that determines in critical ways the context in which the Chinese themselves think and act. You don't have to be in China for more than 24 hours if you're a historian and you tell people what you do. The first reactions is always 中国的历史好悠久 immediately and then people will very soon ask you, so who's your favorite emperor?

And this is a topic on which even your ordinary high school educated person often has very strong and informed opinions. I don't think we have very many Americans with strong opinions on which of the Roman emperors was really great, but this is a difference than I think between the U.S and China and why this longer view of things matters so much.

So as a way to get started on the 15 minutes that I've been given, I want to provide an example of what I'm talking about and of how I see this intersecting with the current delicate state of U.S. China relations. For some time now whenever anybody has asked me to comment about China's rise, wasn't it historically without precedent and so forth? I've consistently responded that I see this as essentially a return to the status quo ante. That ante being sometime around 1842.

At first I considered this to be just the result of my disciplinary training as a historian, my tendency to reflect on the present in terms of the past and my professional bias to see history everywhere. But then I found I was not alone in this view of things going back to an earlier period. Since around the mid-2000's -- that's like a decade or so after the first signs of -- the signs of economic take off really began to be noticed in Chinese cities, the grounding of political legitimacy has moved further and further away from the ideals that marked the first decades of the People's Republic. Rather than playing up the transformative mid-century moment of the Communist revolution the party has increasingly hasn't abandoned that, but it has increasingly turned to the construction of a different narrative.

One in which two eras of fundamental reform -- one in the late 19th century and another one in the late 20th century are linked in a single and long process that has now lead at long last to the great revival of the Chinese people. 中华民族的伟大复兴 as it's called in Chinese which is presently underway. That is to say that the present moment represents the end of one long or longish for China historical epic and the beginning of another -- a new era, an era of rebirth, an era of revival, an era of Fuxing.

This notion of revival fascinates me. Sometimes it's translated as renaissance, sometimes it's translated as rebirth, it's often translated as rejuvenation. This Fuxing along with the idea of the prosperous age the Shengshi(盛世) is I think one of the most significant articulations of contemporary Chinese political consciousness.

Among other things it's significant because it suggest a return -- a return to some things. What that something might be is rarely explicitly spelled out, but it's not difficult to see that what's being spoken of is a return to an earlier age of political dominance -- and earlier age of economic power, both the need for China, both in East Asia and in the world at large.

Another way of looking at this is that instead of seeing the PRC as New China (新中国) which was all you ever heard about when I was a student in China in the 1980's -- that was the repeated theme, today the emphasis is not so much on a break with the past, but on continuity with the past with China's rise representing the culmination of a long search for wealth and power (富国强兵) to use the nineteenth century formulation.

The story of that long road to rejuvenation -- what's called in Chinese (复兴之路) is now on permanent display in the National Museum in Beijing and has been imagined also into a television series, into a musical, countless publications and touring exhibits for many years now. It has become a key part of the new national myth and I've given it a name. I call this discursive shift a return to imperial thinking. I guess I should be glad that influential people, very clever people in Beijing, people who are thoughtful and prudent, share the view that history matters. That's a good thing. But it's one thing for a historian like myself to pay attention to the way that history is being deployed by the state with the aim of shoring up legitimacy.

And actually there is nothing so exceptional about this state doing that, states do this all the time, they do it everywhere but it's quite another thing when the efforts to imagine or reimagine the past is done in such a totalizing fashion and in a direction that is seemingly at odds with so much previous thinking about the correct way to understand the connection between the people's republic and prior regime's in China.

As far as I say, the discourse of Fuxing with its reference to revival or restoration inevitably draws ones attention backward to the past, creating a perspective that puts the achievements of the past 35 years -- very considerable achievements into a very particular historical context in which the reforms of Deng Xiaoping are seen to have succeeded where those of the Guangxu emperor or the Tongzhi emperor before him as Ken referenced, those reforms did not succeed.

A context in which the government and the party has accomplished the heroic task of having brought the Chinese people back to a time before weakness, to have brought China back to a new period of greatness in its history, back to empire, back to the eighteenth century when the Qing emperors -- Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong who between them ruled for about 140 years, right? From the middle of the eighteenth -- middle of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century.

That was a time when the Qing empire, when China was the most powerful country in the world, it had the largest economy in the world, far larger than the economy of all of Europe, that is what is being revived. That idea of China's greatness. The message here as I see it is that great power status for China is nothing new. It's a return to a more normal state of affairs, the state of affairs that has obtained for most of the past in fact.

Now as I see it this positioning -- this way of positioning the PRC in time stands as evidence of the ways in which longstanding habits of mind and the flow of its internal history cannot be overlooked in our efforts to understand China today. Or while it strives to be a nation state in many ways China still thinks of itself in quasi-imperial terms even if it rejects the application of the term Imperial in some particular circumstances and it holds to the belief instilled in schools through constant repetition in the longevity of a state stretching back centuries or even millennia into the past.

So this is indeed a long view, but it is the kind of long view that actually makes historians nervous. Despite what you might think historians actually believe much more in change than they do in continuity. The idea that the unified Chinese state is 2,200 years old comes very close to outdated ideas of a changeless China. Ideas of stasis and stagnancy and inertia that were rejected by Western historians of China pretty decisively a couple of generations ago. So it comes as a shock when we sometimes see colleagues in China themselves embrace this false notion of a changeless China as if China today really is the same as China in the Qing or China in ancient times.

That sameness -- that direct continuity is I would say an illusion, carefully fostered and tended. China today is not the same as China of the past and as many Chinese scholars of Chinese history themselves are at pains to notice, the geographic frontiers and demographic make-up of China have forever eluded clear definition. They have always been changing. The resurgence of what I call

imperial thinking in China today threatens to obscure the subtle point that there have been many different states in what is now Chinese territory and not all of them lead by Han people. It has also created a contradictory situation in which the imperial past is simultaneously celebrated and denied. We saw the effects of this paradox in 2014, right when Angela Merkel presented President Xi Jinping with an historic map from the eighteenth century whose boundaries did not match those of the present People's Republic of China. When the event was reported in the Chinese media as most of you know, a different map was actually substituted for the map that Merkel had given Xi Jinping as if the leadership were afraid of the consequences of revealing obvious discontinuities in China's geographical boundaries.

As if the leadership were afraid of China's own very rich past. That is not a good thing. In my view the flattening of the past hampers a fuller understanding of Chinese affairs at all levels and prevents us from seeing that what is going on now is not a revival, it's not a renaissance, it's not a rejuvenation, it is a recreation -- a re-imagination of the Modern Chinese state and the role it is to play in international affairs both in East Asia and in the wider world including in South America, Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East. All areas where the U.S., of course, has vital concerns. Even as it draws in important ways upon the legacy of empire, especially as concerns geography and population we cannot expect it to build upon the same ideological underpinnings that kept the empire together any more than we should expect there to be an imperial restoration or a return to an examination system based upon the classics despite the current fashion for Confucius reported on the front page of today's Wall Street Journal.

Things like that, things like the reenactment of sacrifices at the altar of heaven, this is theatre. It's political theatre but it's not politics in any meaningful sense I would argue.

Still the empire matters, the century long enterprise of building a new China has been influenced by empire, since that was the world in which the revolutionaries themselves grew up, not accepting Mao Zedong. Mao Zedong was born into the Qing empire. He was a subject of the emperor when he was a young person. As it happens the empire that we are talking about is not any generic Chinese empire, but the Manchu empire of the Qing. And as recent scholarship on the Qing has demonstrated this last empire was maybe not so Chinese as we had been used to thinking. The minority

Manchus succeeded as rulers of China both because they adapted Chinese political traditions and because they rules as Manchus bringing their own political institutions to the table and maintaining themselves as a distinct conquering people at the head of an early modern empire that looks an awful lot in many respect like the Mugal empire in India or the Ottoman empire or the Romanov empire in Russia.

This complicates the relationship between empire and nation in China in distinctive ways that have yet to be fully worked out. And so the better that we and the Chinese understand the historical peculiarities that define the Qing and how the PRC leaders now see themselves as heirs to the Ching. And remember they still occupied the palaces in which the Ching emperors lived. The better we will be able to appreciate the meta-politics of the twentieth century and the transition that China has had to negotiate over the last century or so as it seeks its place in the world next to other nations, especially the United States. I'm at my time, I have some remarks about problems that I see with the way the tribute system is often applied to how we understand Chinese history but I'll wait and see if I get an opportunity to sneak that in perhaps during our discussion or during the Q and A. Thank you very much for your attention.

MR. COHEN: Thank you, Cheng, for inviting me and thank you, Ken for the invitation from somebody from the University of Michigan that was better than I expected. (Laughter) Earlier this year the Dictionary of American Biography asked me to write a history of Chinese American relations beginning to end in 3,000 words. I was startled. I had been given almost that much for book reviews, but I accepted the challenge and it turned out to be good preparation for giving you that same history today in 10 minutes. Let me begin with my quote from my America's response to China which Cheng Li demonstrated for you. And this is a quote that Mike Dovenberg when he was Brzezinski's point man on China inserted into a speech that Vice President Mondale gave in Beijing in 1979. The quote is from Theodore Roosevelt addressing a Chinese emissary Tang Xiaoyi in 1908 and I quote, "It is to the advantage and not to the disadvantage of other nations when any nation becomes stable and prosperous, able to keep the peace within its own borders and strong enough not to invite aggression from without. We heartily hope for the progress of China and in so far as by peaceable and legitimate means we are able, we will do our part toward furthering that progress." Now it went on to say in the

2010 edition, that's the edition after the one that Cheng Li showed you, "That today much is in the time of Teddy Roosevelt, American leaders want and American interests require a peaceful, prosperous, open, responsible and cooperative China."

And the chances of realizing that hope are reasonably good given the extent of shared interests and what are likely to be the domestic concerns of both in the near term. In the beginning as we historians are want to say, the Qing and you've heard about them from Mark and you know who they were and how strong they were, they were dominant in east Asia when the Americans arrived, they were dominant in the late eighteenth century, the early nineteenth century when the initial contacts were made between the two countries. The United States at that time was a new weak nation and the Chinese determined the terms of contact.

And those terms could be pretty grim. There is the notorious Terra Nova case of 1821 when Chinese officials boarded an American ship, seized and then strangled an American seaman who was allegedly responsible for sweeping debris off the deck that struck and killed a passing Chinese boat passenger. Now today the Chinese again determine much of the terms of contact, but with two unquestionably major differences. The United States is no longer weak, it is stronger than China economically and militarily. And the Chinese now understand the need to engage the rest of the world. Nonetheless they can be and have been arbitrary in their treatment of Americans who live and work among them, although to the best of my knowledge they haven't strangled any recently.

For roughly half of the 200 years of contact at least between the Opium War and the Korean Wars, China's 100 years of humiliation, the United States treated China and the Chinese with condescension -- often contempt. Chinese weakness had been revealed by the British and other European and Japanese Imperialists and concern lest these nations carve up the Chinese nation, to the detriment of American interest the McKinley Administration in 1899 and 1900 issued John Hay's famous open door notes, asking the offending powers to respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and of course American interests. The power is paid lip service to Hay's requests allowing Americans to perceive themselves as China's champions against European and Japanese imperialists.

Now one critical point to bear in mind is that the Americans did not see the United States

as an imperial power, we never see the United States as an imperial power and they assumed that the Chinese shared this perception of the United States. In fact it is quite different, from the Opium War on the United States participated in what the great Harvard historian Akira Iriye taught me to call multi-lateral imperialism. Others -- the British in particular seized privileges by force. The United States used most favorite nation treatment what historians have referred to as jackal diplomacy to enjoy many of the same privileges: fixed minimal tariffs, exemption from Chinese law, the right to station troops on Chinese soil, to sail gunboats up the Yangtze and to plant missionaries anywhere in the interior.

But the self-image that Americans had as China's champion allowed the United States to support Chinese nationalism when it emerged in the twentieth century. Teddy Roosevelt was favorably impressed when the Chinese stood up to the United States at the time of the anti-American boycott of 1905. Roosevelt hadn't thought the Chinese had it in them to stand up to anybody. The United States supported Chinese nationalism, the potential emergence of a strong China, because Americans assumed it would be friendly to the United States. That it would distinguish between European and Japanese imperialists on the one hand and their American champions on the other. That Americans would be exempt from Chinese anti-foreignism, from Chinese anti-imperialism. Indeed Calvin Coolidge imagined the Chinese revolution in the 1920s would lead to a government modeled after the government of the United States. When Chinese appeared hostile to the United States, many twentieth century American leaders were astonished, they were genuinely shocked by Chinese ingratitude, by the failure of the Chinese to recognize all that Americans had done for them. United States had liberated China from Japanese Imperialism. Earlier had created institutions such as the Peking Union Medical College and other universities and of course John Hay had prevented the imperialists from dismembering the country.

When they tried to understand what was happening, the 1920's they decided it was Bolshevik agents who were responsible for turning the Chinese against the United States for writing this anti-American propaganda. And in the 1940's with the emergence of the People's Republic of China once again Americans blamed the Soviet Union. The Chinese would never have done this on themselves. They would understand what the Americans had done for them were it not for these Soviet agents. Easily forgotten were the Imperial privileges Americans had enjoyed in China and the

mistreatment of Chinese immigrants in the United States. The eventual exclusion of Chinese emigrants in violation of the Burlingame Treaty of 1868.

Now these days a hot topic for Chinese scholars is the World War II alliance, it talks about the cooperation between the United States and China. Indeed there is a meeting in New York this week on the subject. And some of you in the audience probably saw Hedi's exhibition at the Wilson Centre last year. Chinese presentations on that cooperation are very rarely without an anti-Japanese edge. Indeed to my astonishment Brent Scrowcroft deliberately catered to that feeling in his address to the banquet on his occasion of Hedi's program. Now the reality when we talk about that cooperation in World War II is that each side was disappointed by the other. Each was fighting two wars, but they were not the same two wars. The American priority was Europe. Europe first. Chiang Kai-shek's priority was the Chinese Communist party.

Each wanted the other to take care of the Japanese so they would be free to deal with their primary concerns. This was the basis for tensions in the relationship that lead to the recall of General Stillwell and also for Franklin Roosevelt's conclusion that he needed the Soviets to come in to do the job that the Chinese apparently were not willing to do themselves. To finish off the Japanese forces on the mainland. And hostility towards Chiang, mistrust of Chiang persisted among American leaders long afterward. As did his mistrust of them. And this mistrust of Xiang is probably the principle reason for the willingness of the American government to abandon Taiwan on the eve of the Korean War and for Eisenhower's reluctance to give Taiwan a Mutual Security Treaty when he first took office.

The American relationship with Mao and the CCP during World War II is also interesting. Zhou Enlai in Chongqing was probably the most popular Chinese contact for most Americans I'd say with the notable exception of Claire Shenault of flying tiger fame who was a Chiang aficionado. American observers in China most obviously Jack Service and John Davies knew the communists were a force to be reckoned with when the war was over. The Communists became extremely friendly toward the United States. Not only on the surface but in their educational programs as well. They sided with the American whenever the United States and John quarreled as you would expect. But there was always awareness in Washington of the CCP ties to Moscow.

In the immediate postwar period, the Americans tried unsuccessfully to prevent Civil War in China. When they failed they hoped that Chiang and Kuomintang would prevail, but they didn't consider the outcome of the civil war in China of any great importance. A communist China would be unfortunate but not catastrophic. China was weak and would not be a threat to the United States probably for 50 years according to George Kennon. And that turned out to be a reasonably good estimate if we'd stayed home and not gone to Korea. Moreover there was a sense that Mao's intense nationalism would keep China from becoming an adjunct to soviet power. That was the principle concern of Washington in the early years of the Cold War. Not so much whether China became communist but whether China would serve Soviet interests in East Asia. There was an anticipation of a Sino-Soviet split which unfortunately for the Truman administration came much later than they had hoped.

Now the Truman administration under the guidance of Dean Atchison, his Secretary of State intended to extend recognition to the People's Republic of China. And this step was delayed by domestic/political considerations and undermined by a Mao's seizure of the embassy property. Mao was not interested in recognition in 1949, 1950. Although it's interesting that Joe's operatives in the United States were preparing for recognition and for U.S./China relationships. Joe had people all over the United States working on starting economic contacts as soon as the Civil War was over. And then of course came the Korean War putting off recognition for nearly 30 years. Thirty years during which Americans had no interest in China's progress, no interest in China becoming stronger and did what they could to isolate and weaken China.

Now the obvious point is that when Americans consider China friendly or minimum not a threat they hope to see it prosper and are willing, sometime eager to help it along. That was not the case between 1950 and the mid-1970's. But it was again from the mid-70's to 1989. And China benefitted enormously. The Tian'anmen massacre in 1989, the killings in other cities witnessed by my students in Chengdu caused a brief blip. But Bush's conviction of the continued strategic importance of China and Clinton's emphasis on the economy soon overrode concerns about human rights. And the United States again contributed mightily to China's rise.

The next obvious point is that while most of us would like to see a democratic China that

respects the rights of its people, that abides by its obligations under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights we don't expect to live long enough to see it. Today, tomorrow, we'll settle for a China that does not threaten American interests or those of America's friends in East Asia. Should Xi Jinping's China return to that model the United States will continue to welcome and continue to contribute to China's rise. Until then I doubt if many Americans will want a stronger China. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. KIRBY: So at some Warren and I should have a debate on a couple of World War II issues but we'll come back to that. It's a real pleasure to be here once again at the Brookings Institution. I want to thank Ken and Cheng for this invitation and indirectly thank my friend John Thornton for building this China center. A man also interested in history, Harvard history major, Magna Cum Laude, not bad and a man who also studies and reads history and it's a pleasure to be here on the eve of President Xi's state visit coming at a time in which Chinese American relations are flourishing in so many dimensions. Notably in the economic and cultural sphere and yet they remain tense or at least anxious in other realms, particularly power, politics and strategy. What I want to focus on is -- we'll turn on the slides in a moment. They are on here -- is the cultural realm with particular attention to education and higher education. This has been a very strong suit in the history of Chinese American relations and a central feature to what was once called and Warren alluded to it our special relationship. This -- my teacher John Fairbank was among those who wrote frequently of this traditional friendship between the Chinese and American peoples arguing that American good works and good will had created a foundation of pro-American feeling among Chinese. That the United States was special and this relationship was special with the legions of missionaries, educators and business people who resided in China, made their lives in China before the revolution. Never mind that even a little bit of reading on China's foreign relations over the last two centuries shows that China has had many special relationships. The British in the nineteenth century is the minotaurs of modern China and the Japanese in the early twentieth century. The Germans in the 1920's and 30's. And of course nobody more special than the Russians who in the 1920's founded the two great Chinese parties that still control greater China today -- the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang and who in the 1950's would build a relationship that was said to have been as close as

grips and teeth, ultimately with a little bite to them.

Never mind all that the point of this kind of approach is while there have been ups and downs to the Chinese American relations it's the ups that are the norms, the downs that are the exception and it's this cultural affinity rooted in part in education that is central to it. And the central question which we won't be able to answer here today but we can think about it, what is the role of cultural interaction in political relationships. It's widely seen as a means of opening. You recall the jazz tours and American jazz tours to the Soviet Union where the ping pong -- if that counts as culture opening to the People's Republic in 1971, '72 and at the same time however world history over the last two centuries would not need one to believe or to come to the conclusion that the more people get to know each other, the more they like each other. Anyway, there is however been something rather special in education relations between China and the United States and more accurately between the Chinese and Americans who are educated in different parts. If one were to look at some of these slides, we see in the twentieth century the move for educational institutions or at least examinations of compounds such as this last used in 1905 to the creation of institutions like this -- like Yenching University founded in 1919 by a merger of three Chinese Christian Colleges made a global university by its relationship with Harvard through the Harvard Yenching Institute -- a global center for Chinese studies. One of the leading universities in a very dynamic system of higher education of public and private Chinese and foreign institutions in the republican period. It would survive the nationalist effort to control it, survived even the Japanese invasion, although at the end of the day it would not survive Chinese communism and you can see here as we go through the slides, Yenching University, it is, of course, the campus of Peking University today.

And the argument here -- and here the American role is more dominant than that of any other country. The intellectual and architectural foundations of every leading Chinese university today have an international origin with a substantial, in many cases, American influence. Here is the architectural plan. It's an American architect that designs Yenching University, called here Peking University.

But you can see on the right it's Yenching Daxue there, and it is the campus on which one of China's two leading universities today and the campus on which Yenching -- Peking University is

now recovering its roots through Yenching Academy, bringing foreign scholars to come and study at Peking University, and a very prestigious Master's program that has just begun this last year.

Other universities have similar stories, not always American. Jinling College, now part of Nanjing University at the heart of this, is a private women's college with a close relationship with Smith College in Massachusetts, and it's the heart of the campus of Nanjing University.

But Nanjing University also has another ancestor, Zhongyang Daxue, Guoli Zhongyang Daxue, National Central University, started in 1930 by Chiang Kai Shek, modelled on the greatest university in the world in 1930.

So let me briefly ask you; what's the greatest university in the world in 1930? Columbia? Stanford? Anybody?

Tsinghua, no, no.

Not Oxford, no.

Definitely not Harvard, nowhere near.

Not Cambridge.

The university on which every great university is modelled really, and still up until 1930, was the University of Berlin. And you know that National Central University on a German model is modelled after the University of Berlin. You have architectural -- you go on *Unter den Linden*, and you can see buildings that look just like this. And you know that this university is modelled on the University of Berlin because it has a Brandenburg Gate welcoming you into it.

And on the new campus of National -- of Nanjing University, they have built a replica Brandenburg Gate to welcome you into it. But that's the exception.

Let's take, for example now, the story of Tsinghua University. This is the Qing Hua Yuan, the garden for which the university is named. And it did not originally have Chairman Mao's calligraphy in the 18th Century when it was opened. But it began -- and here's the gate to it.

It began as a preparatory school for students selected to study in the United States, and at the urging of the then-President of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Edmund James, the American government remitted a portion of the Boxer Indemnity for the education of Chinese in the

United States and the establishment of Tsinghua. So Tsinghua has an American origin and American DNA to begin with.

China, James argued, was on the edge of revolution, which it was in 19 -- it started in 1911. "The nation which succeeds in educating the young Chinese of the present generation will reap the largest possible benefits in moral, intellectual, and commercial influence," James argued to President Theodore Roosevelt.

And its first decade Tsinghua built up an American-style campus, starts first with a Japanese-style building, the Tsinghua Xuetang, but then built up this Midwestern campus modelled, in fact, on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The grand auditorium at Tsinghua is almost an exact replica of the grand auditorium at Urbana-Champaign to prepare its students -- you know, it kind of looks Midwestern. This part. Doesn't it? In this certain sunlight. There's no football stadium, but otherwise ...

And the results are really extraordinary -- the results, if one looks at this, not just from Tsinghua, the individuals who are Boxer Indemnity students who go on to have an enormous influence in China; Hu Shih, perhaps the leading intellectual of the May Fourth Movement, later ambassador to the United States and President of Academia Sinica; or, China's first Nobel Prize winner in the sciences -- people forget there were prize winners before the People's Republic -- Yang Chen-Ning; the linguist, Y.R. Chao; and others.

So Tsinghua became Guoli Tsinghua Daxue, one of the great universities of a dynamic university system. Tsinghua's History Department, founded in 1926, was chaired for a decade by a gentleman named Zhang Tingfu, T. F. Zhang, who revolutionized the study of modern Chinese history.

And, my teacher, Fairbank, learned his Chinese history at Tsinghua University from Zhang Tingfu in the early 1930s. So we have -- you couldn't learn Chinese history, at least modern Chinese history, at Harvard. You had to go to Tsinghua.

And so this becomes National Tsinghua University, and it has a heavily American imprint until at a certain point in time when, after 1950, it becomes instead Moscow State with the founding of the People's Republic in China -- a place that would, in time, graduate some notable individuals, not the least

our soon-to-be-received guest, Mr. Xi Jinping, Liu Yandong, and others, graduates of the 1960s.

If one thinks back on this period, though, of influence, of American -- strong American influence, what -- before '49. What difference did it make? We're thinking; what difference did it make to the broader intellectual?

No country had stronger economic and cultural ties with China than the United States before the war.

My sense is that the actual impact on policy is not negligible but very difficult to discern. Strong relations in trade, strong relations in cultural, but this did not translate in any obvious way into policy, into American -- when the United States and China became allies during the Second World War, there's enormous American public sympathy toward China in its struggle in the Second World War. But when we became allies it was a shotgun marriage, thanks to Pearl Harbor, and we became allies then because we had a common and deadly enemy in the case of the Empire of Japan.

And indeed, when one thinks back over the history of Chinese-American relations over the last century, our relations have been the strongest at times when we've had common adversaries -- Japan, from 1942 to 1945; the Soviet Union in the 1970s and a little bit into the 1980s.

And it's interesting when one thinks of the World War -- the period of World War II. Perhaps had it been possible to limit Chinese-American cooperation to the main area of common interest, the military struggle against Japan, that relationship would have worked to more -- to greater mutual satisfaction.

And the propaganda and myth-making, surely dictated by the pursuit of Cold War, obscured the limited degree to which the interests of the United States and Nationalist China ran parallel. For example, President Roosevelt's ambition for a united, liberal China, whose foreign policy would be pro-American as a matter of reflex, bore no resemblance to the national government or to its historic foreign policy aims.

There were, however, important educational outcomes that are tough to measure precisely but did have an important -- during the Second World War, China sent hundreds of leading young economists and engineers to train during the war for China's post-war reconstruction -- scientists,

engineers, and managers pursuing internships in American industries during the war -- and they would have an enormous impact on post-War China. Many of the leaders of China's first five-year plan were trained in the United States during the war, and virtually all of the leading technocrats of Taiwan's Economic Miracle were returned American students from this period. So there's a long-lag effect and with an impact that surely made, in the case of Taiwan, policy cooperation between the United States and the Republic of China perhaps a little bit easier in time.

Well, President James, back to our President James, was convinced in 1907 that every great nation will the world will inevitably be drawn into more or less intimate relations with a rapidly changing China, and he imagined a world in which China learned from others, not the other way around, but he also conceived of a China that would rise because of its intellectual and international alliances.

So if we look at the situation today, what do we see at Tsinghua? We see Tsinghua itself, a university founded to send Chinese away to the United States, now welcoming in this new Schwarzman College, a college founded by an American businessman who has raised more than $300 million for this new college, an international college at Tsinghua University, 40 percent of whose students will be from the United States, as a means of bridging through education the Chinese-American relationship and to training leaders who will know each other and each other's countries better and better over time. It's a remarkable development.

We see the internationalization of curriculum of most leading Chinese universities, the growth of Tongshi Jiaoyu, not just in political education as formerly but in a sense of liberal education, elite programs such as the Yuanpei Program at Peking University.

Look at the School of Economics and Management at Tsinghua University. Its dean, Dean Qian Yingyi, a Harvard-trained economist, Berkeley professor, has imported a liberal arts education into this school, of all schools, at Tsinghua University on a quasi-American model.

Or, Schwarzman College under Professor Li Daokui, David Li, with a strong commitment to internationalization and to teaching at the highest level, he's also a Harvard economist.

And I wish that Harvard's own Economics Department had the same passion for teaching as these two graduates of ours.

And we see individual Chinese now seeking education in the United States in ever larger numbers; 300,000 or so in the United States today have graduate and have undergraduate.

And every major -- and we see Chinese universities establishing their international campuses. As one of the two -- there are eight different campuses of Zhejiang University, and this is its international campus.

American universities now see their future in China: Stanford with its Siheyuan and the Peking University campus.

Columbia with its office in Beijing.

Chicago with its wonderful center at Renda in Beijing.

NYU-Shanghai now in its second year, very successfully in Shanghai.

Here is the Harvard Center in Shanghai, which I have to bemoan the fact that we don't have the whole building yet, but a nice place to teach, the best conference center in all of Harvard University, just a little far away.

Duke-Kunshan University that Ken and I are advising on, the most important American intellectual educational venture, in my view, in China since the founding of Yenching University, with the aspiration of having a standalone liberal arts college that will be state-of-the-art in China but for Chinese and for the world, in the wealthiest small city in China. Nice rooms, too. I show these to my students because they're much better than the Harvard rooms.

So we have all of this -- an extraordinary moment. And it's now policy in a way that it wasn't in the 20s and 30s by both governments to promote exchange in a dramatic way: China Scholarship Council, Confucius Institutes, on the Chinese side. A 100,000-strong effort on the American side.

So the question is, to try to end with: What difference is it going to make to policy, to political decision-making, that our elites are increasingly educated in one part in each of the other countries?

The daughters and sons of Chinese leaders are studying in American universities. And, the daughters and sons of many leading Americans also study, not as long, usually part-time, in China.

What difference can this make? How can it not, one can say, make a positive difference?

Well, there's -- as a historian, one should always be wary of too much optimism. And one thing that concerns me -- and I've seen it over the last year -- is you see Chinese universities rising in global rankings, Tsinghua now in the 20s, Peking University in the 30s by *The Times* of London Higher Education Ranking. One still, nevertheless, sees outside the gates of many Chinese universities statutes such as this.

I asked a Chinese university president a few years ago, why do you still -- not this university, another one. Why do you still have a statute of Chairman Mao, who basically did everything he could to destroy Chinese education? Why do you have a statute of Chairman Mao outside of your university?

He said, we missed our chance to take it down in the 1980s. (Laughter)

But we have -- we're in a moment in which, on the one hand, the trajectory is an ever-greater integration of the shared set of values by leading institutions in the United States and in China, and at the same time, over this last year, a really chill wind led by the Minister of Education, Yuan Guiren, and by a number of other individuals as well, against so-called Western values, Marxism apparently not being one of them, and seeking to have a kind of 中国特色的一流大学, a kind of world-class university, but it has to be Chinese.

Now how do you be world-class and be only representative of one country? It's not an easy thing to do.

So let me just end with a picture of another statute -- this gentleman. Actually, we don't know who this is. This is a statute purported to be that of John Harvard. It's actually a 19th Century undergraduate posing as John Harvard since no one knows what he looked like.

And each morning -- and this is where I end on a more positive note. Each morning when I was in the building, back when I served as Dean of the faculty of Arts and Sciences of Harvard, I would look out the window and I would see the first tour bus arriving from China, not directly from China but from Chinatown, to visit the John Harvard statute.

He's a benefactor, so he gave us financial independence, which is very useful. He's a

man about which we know otherwise very, very little. But they were coming to visit a symbol of aspiration and, I think, admiration of the values that distinguish universities globally in the 19th, 20th, and 21st Centuries.

And at the same time, this is a symbol of a university, my university, that has been enormously enriched, and is every year re-enriched, by the influx and exchange of talent in and with China by our faculty and by the large number of Chinese students who come to study at Harvard.

If education has historically been, quite frankly, really only tangential to the larger story of U.S.-China relations, I'm optimistic that in future it will be more central, though still not play a defining role, in our collective future.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Just a minute as we get miced up on the stage.

We'll have a few minutes that we'll take among ourselves to raise a few questions, and then we'll turn to the audience. When we turn to the audience, let me say -- let me use the time while people are getting miced up to ask you first, if you're recognized, please wait for a microphone to come so that everyone will be able to hear you and we'll have a record of it, second, give your name and your institutional affiliation, and third, please ask a question rather than make an extended set of comments. A brief comment and question is fine, but we have limited time and a large audience here. Thank you.

We heard a very wide-ranging set of remarks. Let me start with Mark Elliott's presentation.

You repeatedly used the term "imperial" China, an "imperial" sensibility, if you will. "Imperial" has a lot of connotations, and I'm not sure what specifically are the limits of that term that you had in mind when you used the term "imperial."

There are many now who would think of an imperial mindset as effectively wanting to dominate the region, establish either protectorates or, you know, Finland-ization of neighboring countries, or whatever.

Maybe you want to deal with this in terms of my taking you up on the -- on your desire to

have someone ask you about the tribute system.

MR. ELLIOTT: Well, thank you so much.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: But, in any case, if you'd wrestle with that a little bit because it's really, you know, at the end of the -- you know, post-2000. If you look back on the 1900s as a whole, it's a term really freighted with a lot of negative, aggressive-type connotations.

Is that what you had in mind, or how would you apply that to contemporary --

MR. ELLIOTT: Ken, this is a really good question, and it's something I have been thinking about quite a lot. I'm working on a book that tries to suss out precisely the connections between what we might call an imperial structure and a national structure and what empire is. So about a year and a half ago actually, as part of this, I published a short piece in *Dushu*, asking: Was China an empire, and what do we mean by it?

So first of all let me say that although, of course, in terms of its etymology "empire" effectively means "power," that's not really what I have primarily in mind when I speak of empire in this context.

There's been a fair amount of comparative work done in the last 10 years. I'm sure you're familiar with some of our former colleagues at Michigan. Fred Cooper and Jane Burbank have authored an important study here, talking about empire as a kind of political structure that is geographically extensive; it combines a variety of different kinds of political or legal or cultural, linguistic, religious systems within a single overarching sovereign state, and does not pretend to be a unified or uniform type of polity.

And in that regard, "imperial" carries with it -- certainly, it's freighted, but in this case it's not freighted with the sense of dominating everything and necessarily conquering or conquest, but in terms of figuring out a way to reconcile many types of differences within a single and, in some cases more loosely, some cases more tightly, organized political framework. So if that is our understanding of "empire," then I think we can make the case that at many points in its history, certainly, China has been imperial but not at every turn.

And this is where things have gotten interesting for me because, of course, the Chinese

word, as many in the audience will know the Chinese word for "empire," "diguo", this is a brand new word that was only invented in the 19th Century. There was no Chinese term for empire in the pre-modern world. Westerners only began to refer to China as an empire in the 1500s and 1600s. Before that, it was a kingdom.

And Chinese only began to refer to the "Qing" as an empire after 1895. There was never any reference -- I've looked pretty hard -- no reference to China as an empire. No Chinese thought of China, the Qing, as an empire until very, very late.

So this is, in some respects, a kind of projection back, and you see it in English more often -- "imperial China," the "emperor." We call the Huangdi an emperor. Why? Who says that "emperor" is a good translation of "Huangdi?" We're just sort of used to that.

But you also see resistance to the idea that China was imperial because "imperial" means you get to "imperialism," you get to Diguozhuyi, and that's not China, emphatically not.

So then you have a peculiar mismatch of terms and understandings of "empire" that I think complicate things.

So you're quite right to call me out on this use of "imperial," but I do think a case can be made where we think of China as an imperial state that was imperialist but not in the sense of being imperialist like America was imperialist or Japan was imperialist or Britain was imperialist.

But here we get into problems of discourse and of terminology that are going to take -- it's going to take a lot of work before I think we can find our colleagues willing to accept the idea that, yes, China was an empire and it was imperialist. Right now, we have an empire that wasn't imperialist.

As for the tributary system, briefly, if I may, efforts to try and introduce the tributary system into our analyses, on the one hand, I think great, we want to look to history to guide us, but the understandings of the tributary system that I see are 30 years out of date.

Nobody thinks that the tributary system governed foreign relations in the Qing anymore. The Qing had all kinds of mechanisms for dealing with different sorts of countries. It was totally *realpolitik*. And if the tribute system fit, fine; if it didn't, something else was going to -- could come to take its place.

And the famous Macartney mission of 1793 that's often brought forward, I think, is a good example of how historians' understanding of what was really going on there are at a very different place now than the understanding in the popular imagination.

And from where I sit, the Qing was pretty flexible, in fact, in its dealings with the British and not at all intransigent, and China was not closed off from the outside world or any of those things at that time.

So -- but that's ...

MR. LIEBERTHAL: We don't have time.

MR. ELLIOTT: No, we don't have time.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: I wish we did.

Bill, you finished on a complicated note about the kind of impact of education and cultural exchanges and experiences that those generated.

And I guess at the end of the day, if you set aside the issue of national policy and impact on national policy, go to a more fundamental question about impact on mutual trust. Do you have any comments about that?

Does more extensive -- because I, frankly, have been struck by a recent narrative in China that resonates with a narrative that we have seen periodically over time in China, where education is a way to undermine. You know, it has a lot of insidious dimensions to it, too. It's a way to introduce values that are not 没有中国特色的, you know, that they aren't -- that they're somehow rather if not designed, at least their impact is one of destabilization, or generating conflicts and dissent. Do you have any thoughts about that at the end of the day?

MR. KIRBY: You know, I think they can be destabilizing in a good way for both sides. That is to say, one of the great virtues of a Chinese studying in this country or an American studying in China is the opportunity to see your country the way others see it -- very difficult to do.

All of us tend to be -- when we go abroad, to stick with other people like ourselves, to talk with people who agree with us, and so on.

But when you have the opportunity, for example, if you were a young Chinese and you

come -- he's just retired, so he doesn't teach it. But you can come and have a class with our colleague, Rod MacFarquhar, on the Cultural Revolution. That's actually a class that you just can't take at Peking University for some reason. You can learn something remarkably different about how the rest of the world understands your culture.

The Americans are, I wouldn't say, equally insular, but if you were to look at the world history guidelines that I once reviewed for the State of Massachusetts of what Americans are taught in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts about world history, these guidelines have China three times. Confucius, opium, and Cold War, I think, was it; that was it. Thomas Jefferson was mentioned 13 times.

Turns out that Massachusetts had plagiarized the guidelines from the State of Virginia, and that's why Jefferson was mentioned so often.

But, incredibly insular forms of education, if you look at the role of Texas and how American textbooks are done.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Yeah.

MR. KIRBY: And so we have -- you know, I think the Americans do a better job of this than the Chinese. But you know, basically, if you were a young Chinese in high school you get a comic book version of your country's history, and it's one that's become more narrow over the last two years rather than more expansive, even in a museum.

If you were to go to the National Museum, which I went to recently, in Beijing, this wonderful national museum, and downstairs is this wonderful exhibit on Gudai Zhongguo 古代中国, and downstairs the richness and successes of every empire, and downstairs the Qing is good and prosperous and civilized.

MR. ELLIOTT: Gudai is before 1842.

MR. KIRBY: Yeah. Upstairs, on Fuxingzhilu there's a new exhibit inaugurated personally by President Xi, in which the Qing is, of course, bad and *Fu Bai*, and the only good Chinese just happened to be members of the Chinese Communist Party. No one else fought the Japanese, as it turned out, even though 90 percent of the soldiers who died fighting Japan fought for the national government. You know, it's a remarkably more parochial than in the past narrative of modern Chinese

history.

So I think one gets the kind of critical perspective that is essential actually for intellectual growth and for creativity in both countries.

China, as Mark was saying, has taken on many of the attributes of being the great power that it historically was. Its greatest challenge, in my view, is not in economics, not in military power, but in finding a set of values that others will willingly adopt. This is the way in which Chinese power, -- that is, the power of Chinese civilization -- would spread across East Asia. That's a very difficult and, at the moment, still elusive goal for China's leadership, which is not to say they are not trying to find it, but I don't think you will find it in the speeches of President Xi.

Warren, do you have any comments on this?

MR. COHEN: Well, in terms of imperialism and China and the empire today, I suppose I'd start with Tibet and have some thoughts on that.

On the education thing, you know, Bill mentioned all of these people who came over during World War II to study here, and I had -- some of these were my friends, somebody like Wang Xi at Fudan.

But most of them got into serious trouble when they went home. Ching Sah-Me's parents had -- one had a Ph.D. from Princeton; the other had a Ph.D. from Chicago. In the Cultural Revolution, of course, they were finished. And her father had written a two-volume history of American aggression against China, and it didn't help him because he had the American education.

And even more recently, I had an exchange program at Michigan State with Chuanda, and when the people who we trained at Michigan State went back they had some problems because they had been American-educated and because this stigma that they had to deal with.

And I just -- you know, as things twist and turn. You know, one day you're all welcome; the next day there's an attack on bourgeoisie liberalism, and none of the Chinese students can have anything to do with the American students. And I just don't think the situation right now is very promising.

MR. KIRBY: I don't think it's promising now, but I would just say here's one example that just came home to me last night. I learned from a friend that a very great professor in China, a man who

was incredibly kind to me when I was a young scholar, Professor Zhong Zhongli of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, had passed away yesterday or the day before.

Here's a man educated in the United States in the 1940s at the University of Washington-Seattle, got -- wrote the book still assigned to graduate students on the Chinese gentry, goes back to China in 1958 to patriotically serve the country and to start the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Well, it turns 1958 is not a good year to go back to China, and he spends the next 20 years doing nothing except suffering.

In 1978, he restarts the Shanghai Academy of social Sciences and the Economic Research Institute, which has rewritten in a very sophisticated, extraordinary way, Chinese economic history, not from the party's point of view but from the point of view of broadly rethinking the economic and business history of pre-Communist China.

A very remarkable man who built this institution. A man of great talent, influence. A man of great suffering and ultimately of influence again.

And so longevity is the key. We should take the long view.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: With that, let's open it up for questions from the audience. Again, please wait until you are -- until the microphone comes to you. Please indicate your name and affiliation. Feel free to direct a question at one panelist or at the panel as a whole.

Why don't we start back here? Yes. Yes, here comes the mic.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. It was a very great presentation.

My name is Li Xiang. I'm from Georgetown University. I also work as a correspondent for *Phoenix Weekly* here.

I have two inter-related questions. The first one is regarding the tipping point, which is a very popular-like argument in China and U.S. media. I'm just wondering, looking back at U.S.-China trajectory, how do you assess the tipping point argument? Do you think the difference between the right-now tipping point was the previous difficult point in the U.S.-China relations?

And the second question is regarding as Dr. Cohen mentioned that Clinton set aside the conflicts because of economic relations. And, currently, do you think the conflicts actually outweigh the

benefits from the relations, or the economic relations actually help these two countries set aside the conflicts but move on very benign relations in the future?

Thank you.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Thank you.

MR. ELLIOTT: So just what's tipping? I don't understand.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: That's the notion of a tipping point that we may be -- I mean, there have been a couple articles recently. Mike Lampton is one of those who's questioned whether we are actually at a point where the assumptions we've made about the relationship about engagement, et cetera, are in danger of shifting into fundamentally more adversarial relations.

MR. COHEN: I think Mike's assumptions are tipping. I don't know about the rest of us, but ...

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Well, do you want to elaborate?

MR. COHEN: Well, you have someone like Mike Lampton across the street, who has, for years in my view, been apologizing for everything that the Chinese did. I'm not happy with much of what he had to say.

But gradually over recent years, and particularly since Xi Jinping came to power, Mike has begun to worry about his own positions and to -- I think he's beginning at the point of where he's tipping into a situation or into a mindset in which he no longer believes that a good relationship between the United States and China is going to be possible.

You know, for me, there was a tipping point in 1989, when -- before 1989, every time I went to China, there was a story about Konglaoshi who was a great friend of China. After my criticisms of what happened in June of 1989 I ceased to be considered a friend of China.

So when I went to speak at Fudan in -- I can't remember when it was. I think in the late 90s. And I was introduced as a great friend of China, and I said to the students, "I used to be considered a great friend of China. Since Tiananmen, I'm no longer considered a great friend of China."

And the first question I had, "What are you talking about? Tiananmen?"

And I assumed that the student was playing games with me, but when I talked to Wu

Shin-ba afterward, he said, "They don't know. These students there have -- this is also hidden from them."

So for -- I think for many Americans that was the tipping point. Any hopes that we had -- for (inaudible), there wasn't a tipping point. He knew all along how things were going to turn out.

MR. ELLIOTT: Can I just say something here? I think that it's often the case that when it appears to us that a change has occurred in the relationship or is in the process of occurring that it must be the other side that has changed.

So I'm going to go back briefly to my tribute system example. When Macartney came to China and he got that famous letter from Qianlong to George III about "We don't need your country's manufacturers," nobody thought that that was an extraordinary letter to get. Nobody was surprised by that letter because it was true.

It's only 100 years later that Westerners decided, "Oh, my God, look at how arrogant these people are. This is an example of why things have gone bad with China."

I would argue that, in fact, what's changed is the West's attitude toward how it dealt with the rest of the world.

So if U.S.-China relations are at a tipping point, so-called, I think certainly we should be looking for explanations in how we understand things to be changing in Chinese -- on the Chinese political scene, or domestically, economically, what have you.

But let's also not forget to reflect on our own political scene and our own assumptions about the United States, its place in the world, things that are going on here because I think very likely that the answer is probably somewhere in the middle.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Bill?

MR. KIRBY: I would just say that, of course, it's the job of many professionals to worry about everything that can go wrong in the Chinese-American relationship. And I was on some talk show in China last week, and the host asked me, "What can we do about this incredibly tense situation now in East Asia?" I said to myself, "You want tense? Look at the Middle East. Look at five other parts of the world."

This part of the world is doing remarkably well. We've had the longest period of peace since the Opium War, from 1979 to the present. China's prosperity is fundamentally based on this era of peace. Without this peace, there is no foreign investment of the kind that we know; there is no prosperity of the kind we know. In a whole area -- realm of relations, Chinese-American relations are better than they have been in many -- deeper, let's put it this way, in many dimensions.

We will, as two great powers, have tensions. These stupid islands that I think may someday be taken care of by global warming are a problem. (Laughter) But, fundamentally, both countries have an enormous shared interest in freedom of navigation.

And Chinese-American relations have been many times worse than they are today, and I think -- and there are reasons to worry. You have two political systems that have fundamental problems. We have an 18th Century system in this country that is struggling to really function, and China has an early 20th Century European political system that is struggling sometimes to function. So we have bigger challenges, but the rest of the world is even more screwed up.

MR. COHEN: I concede that.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Thank you.

You know, Brookings is in the middle of a big project called, you know, "Order from Chaos," and you know, the Asian part of that -- our concern about that is, you know, don't assume chaos -- that's actually pretty orderly. The question is whether we'll get chaos from order, and we don't want to move in that direction. You know.

So I'd like to associate myself with Bill's comments here.

There was a -- here, Julia.

QUESTIONER: Julia Chang Bloch, U.S.-China Education Trust.

My question is for Professor Kirby. In your talk, you mentioned the current anti-Western values campaign in China but barely. Is that because you think it's just a flash in the pan?

Because my sense is that the intensifying crackdown on civil society of all stripes and against people-to-people exchange in that sense is there for the long haul, and it is endorsed by President Xi Jinping without any doubt, rooted in that internal document, number 9 -- which warned

against seven unmentionables. The top three: constitutional democracy, universal values of human rights, and civil society.

So I saw the magnificent edifices built in cooperation between U.S. international and Chinese higher education institutions. I have no doubt that those institutions will withstand the campaign and also withstand the management of non-Mainland NGO law, the foreign NGO law.

But what about the smaller, the more -- the less exalted civil society groups and NGOs? I doubt -- they will wither away, I think.

So what will these high-status institutions do? Will they stand, remain, or will they stand with those other institutions who will wither away because of the anti-Western values campaign?

MR. KIRBY: Right. So I think that's a really fundamentally important question.

And I'm working on a book right now which is looking at the future of universities -- seven case studies of German, American, and Chinese universities -- with a kind of simple-minded question to begin with. If the Germans set global standards in the 19th Century and the Americans didn't do badly in the 20th Century, what are the prospects for Chinese universities setting global standards in the 21st Century? Because no one is putting more funding into education and no place has more and greater human capital than China.

And this crackdown over the last two or three years has really led me to have a fundamentally more cautious assessment of where things can go because you -- if Tsinghua and Peking University for example, great universities with incredible potential, unbounded potential, except in a political world that has become ever more bounded.

The president of Peking University, a very good man, Wang Enge, was summarily and publically dismissed by the Chinese Communist Party last March, in part, because he did not take part in this sad ideological campaign led by the Minister of Education.

The point is -- and so it's self-defeating in every conceivable way. There's a battle going on within Chinese universities as to how this will go on. There are people who are quietly, and otherwise, pushing back.

But the point is at a world-class university there can't be one thing you cannot talk about,

let alone seven things. So you're right to be concerned.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Yes.

QUESTIONER: Tony Zau a former intern at the China Center.

I guess my question is for Professor Kirby. I like your perspective on how education has influence U.S.-China relations, but I would like to hear more of your opinion on the impact of U.S. institutions educating Chinese officials and the party cadres because within the history, you know, as early as the Qing Dynasty the imperial family sent four princes to Western countries to study constitutionalism when the Qing Dynasty was drafting its constitution.

So about 100 years later we see Harvard University opening up the New World Scholarship Program --

MR. KIRBY: Yes.

QUESTION: -- which educated very high-level leaders in the Chinese government, including Vice President Mr. Li Yuanchao.

So I'm just wondering now as we can see almost every major university in the United States is educating delegations of Chinese officials and party cadres. I'm just wondering; what's your opinion on the impact of that on U.S.-China relations?

Thank you.

MR. KIRBY: I think the impact is very positive. Let me put it this way: The impact has been positive so far. It's something that we won't be able to measure for 20 or 30 years in all likelihood, what difference it makes. But, again, the perspective of being in another country and dealing with issues with colleagues who may be professionally similar to you but from an entirely different background can be very helpful.

You know, I can imagine it might be useful, but it's probably difficult to do. Maybe this happens. Do any American mayors or governors go and spend a couple of months at the 中央党校 Zhongyang Dangxiao, the Central Party School? It might not be a bad thing, to learn certain types of governance. You know.

MR. COHEN: How about Governor Walker? (Laughter)

MR. KIRBY: Anyway, Governor Walker. We can send some of them. You know.

And so these -- we had a -- several years ago, in the 1990s, a program also with senior colonels from the People's Liberation Army and the United States Armed Forces, who gathered for several months, a year, to learn from each other, to get to know each other more or less, and in some sense that was almost too successful. As I remember, it ended shortly after one of the Chinese colonels ran off with a very beautiful graduate student and -- by every account, beautiful. So -- not his fault. No, kidding. (Laughter)

MR. KIRBY: I'm just kidding. But it did -- it had -- so there are -- I think on the whole these things are good, and it would be interesting to see if there were some possible American counterparts to visit China and learn about local governance in China.

Thank you.

MR. COHEN: How long are they going for? How long is their period over in China? (Laughter)

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Yeah, Jim.

QUESTION: Jim Mann, author at SAIS.

I want to know whether you think that the periods of closing and opening over a sweep of history are cyclical or whether there's a trend in one way or another.

And I would just say I served in -- as a correspondent in China in the 80s in Deng's China, and at that time, which was politically -- essentially, politically and economically much like now, but the attitude toward the outside world was dramatically different. And the symbol historically, to me, was one day when the Chinese took the statue of Lin Zexu, who's at the center of the Chinese narrative in the Opium War, and moved it from the center of Guangzhou to the outskirts. It's almost like taking a statute in Eastern Europe and moving it.

There were programs made, like "River Elegy," complaining that China was too closed.

Now was that just a blip, or is this a cyclical pattern?

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Thank you.

Mark?

MR. ELLIOTT: I was going to pass this off to Warren to talk about and make his remarks.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: The answer is yes.

MR. ELLIOTT: The answer is I don't know if it's cyclical or not.

I have to say I'm always --

QUESTIONER: I think his question was -- (inaudible).

MR. ELLIOTT: I'm sorry?

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

MR. ELLIOTT: I'm always struck by the recurrence in so many -- in the remarks of so many people in a belief -- of a belief that China was closed off from the world for most of its history and that it was only after 1979 that suddenly the country opened up.

And from where I sit, it's the period between, I would say, '59 and '79 that's the exceptional period when China is truly isolated, which just happens to correspond to the time that I was being educated. So I can forgive myself if I thought that China was historically always cut off from the outside.

But you know, yes, it's true; in the middle of the 18th Century foreign trade was restricted from a number of ports up and down the east coast to one port, Guangzhou, which is, of course, where all the trouble broke out much later.

But that system worked pretty well for 80 years. That's not bad. No, that's actually pretty good. And it didn't seem to have much of a negative effect on the import/export business out of China.

I was in Providence, Rhode Island on the weekend, visited the home of one of the leading Americans of the colonial era, John Brown. Chinese porcelain all over this house. Statuettes. There was all of the money. There were paintings of Canton there.

And this is not an exceptional thing. Right? I mean, China was totally integrated into world trade flows from at least the 15th and 16th Centuries on.

So the periods of real closure, it seemed to me, are quite rare, and so that's why it's hard for me to answer whether the opening and closing is cyclical because the periods of closing seem to me both rare and also very, very incomplete. I mean even at times when there's a formal embargo or people

are forbidden from leaving the country, you still have large numbers of people emigrating, moving to Southeast Asia.

So it's a -- I think that the question is hard to answer, in part, because it assumes more closure than has, in fact, historically -- than we can attest, historically. That's how I see it anyway.

MR. COHEN: One of the 20 books that Cheng Li referred to is my *East Asia at the Center: 4,000 Years of Engagement with the West*. So we've got plenty of that.

But I think, Jim, your point is, I would perceive more narrowly, and that is, are we now seeing a trend toward intellectual closure in terms of the question of values, and I think the answer is yes.

Do I think it's going to be forever? That, I have no more way of knowing than Mark does, but I'd say all the signs are pretty awful right now. Like Julia's point, I think we're just going downhill on that side.

And I wish I could be more optimistic that Bill's -- all of these intellectual exchanges and university exchanges that Bill has talked about would have a policy result, but as he said, we can't discern that; we don't know whether it is. And I am certainly not optimistic.

MR. KIRBY: We are all historians, and we're very good and predicting the past.

MR. COHEN: The past, right. (Laughter)

MR. LIEBERTHAL: There's an old line about -- it used to be about the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union, only the future is certain; the past keeps changing.

MR. COHEN: That's right.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Let me jump in on this if I can. I would imagine, and correct me if I'm wrong, that all of you experience the same thing I experience when I go to China and talk to a wide array of, admittedly, mostly intellectuals but think-tankers, people in education, or officials. I mean, that's basically my world. And, media people.

And I hear an enormous array of views about what China needs, where it's doing better, where it's doing worse, attitudes about current policy, and that kind.

From afar, we see official policy, and I would associate myself with a number of the comments here about this is heading in a disappointing direction, to put it somewhat euphemistically, on

things like instead of loosening up censorship, tightening up on censorship. And we see repercussions of this in all of our interactions with China.

But somehow or another China hasn't changed. Right?

And I think the future of China is always like the future of the United States; it's complicated. It can go -- when things tend to move too far in one direction, then pushback becomes stronger internally. And so the future is contingent.

And I get uneasy when I see something like a tipping point which suggests, well, it was here and now it's going to be there instead of it's the product of a lot of things that, frankly, we barely understand but we are participants in, too. And so you do your best to try to, you know, push things in directions that you think are best for us, for China, et cetera, and know that the future is contingent.

So that would be my own take on it.

We only have five minutes left, and we have a lot of hands up. Let me identify two or three people, please, 30 seconds to ask a question, and then we'll open it up to a minute or two for each panelist for any final comments you have, including responding to these questions.

Yes, sir, this gentleman up here.

QUESTIONER: My name is Jardo from McHale International.

A quick question. I just want to take you to Africa, I mean the involvement of China in Africa, and then ask the question whether it is simply in search of resources, of raw materials, or is this part of some vision of this new reincarnation, this imperial incarnation, and whether it actually can be also reflected in the U.S.-China tension.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Yes. And I'm determined to find a -- yes, if we could come up here to this -- I can't see. Oh, yeah. Yes, please.

QUESTIONER: Hi. My name is Liz Gooch, and I work for the USDA, and this doesn't have to do with agricultural.

The Chinese-Uighur relations are long, and I was wondering if -- what you think if Chinese-Uighur conflict is heightening, or is the war on -- the U.S. war on terror being exploited by Chinese media to further disenfranchise the Uighur cause, and any insight into the historical context

would be nice.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Okay. And way in back.

QUESTIONER: Yeah, Mike Mosettig, PBS Online NewsHour.

You all are associated with universities.

I just came from another briefing where they said on the pre-trip that if there's a human rights issue coming in the G -- Obama summit, it's going to be the NGO law, particularly the extraterritoriality aspect where, in other words, if something is said on an -- or done on an American campus it could affect the Chinese branch of that campus and there could be retaliation at that end. So what extent have the universities here been discussing and studying that issue?

MR. COHEN: I'm retired.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Why don't we -- I'm serious; we have less than five minutes. So let me ask you to respond what you wish to respond to, and any summary comments you want to make, and limit yourself to one to two minutes if we can. And we'll just go right down the line.

MR. KIRBY: So, one sentence on China and Africa. China is not the first country, of which I'm aware, whose foreign policy has something to do with the pursuit of resources. So -- but I don't see anything imperial in a traditional sense in that way.

Harvard and every other major university has worked very hard to lobby the Chinese government against this new NGO law by putting comments to the National People's Congress Standing Committee on it. We think it's not only a greatly restrictive operation of international educational and other activities in China but also very much are unhappy about the prospect of having such activities under the -- being supervised by the Public Security Bureau as opposed to the Minister -- Ministry of Civil Affairs.

The idea that what we say at Harvard might get us into trouble in Shanghai, that hadn't occurred to me. So I will be much more careful.

MR. COHEN: Too late.

MR. KIRBY: It's too late for today.

But I think it's a very, very unfortunate and really, at the end of the day, self-defeating

operation.

MR. ELLIOTT: I will comment just on the Africa thing and on the question regarding Uighurs.

We just actually ran a conference at Harvard last week -- the Fairbanks Center, the Center for African Studies, and the Asia Center -- on Africa and China, and it's the beginning of a multi-year project that we're doing. We see this as one of the most interesting and important new developments in understanding China's place in the world and in expanding the traditional definition of Chinese studies.

This question came up, and won't surprise you, at our meeting: Is it only all about resources? The answer from people who know a lot more about this than I do is that, no, it's not only about resources, that there is a definite continuation of what used to be the Bandung spirit, Third World -- now it's phrased more as South-South -- relations, and that there are many in China who see this, both in business as well as in the government, see this as an important place for China to take a leading role, similarly for South America.

Interestingly also, Africa has become a site for pretty considerable Chinese out-migration right now. We're still, I think, waiting to see what the full effects of that are, or of the migration of Africans to China.

So this is -- but it's not just about resources.

On the Uighur situation, the -- you know, it's clear, I think, the war on terror has given the government a space in which it can execute policies, implement policies, in the region that are, in the near term, perceived as helping to maintain stability. Wei Wen.

In the long term, I think most observers, including people I know in China who work at think tanks, believe this will be counterproductive and that the criminalization, or the effect of criminalization, of ordinary religious practice and customs of dress and observance and so forth is going to backfire. The question is, I suppose, really when?

That's a complicated question. Given our time, that's the best I can do.

MR. LIEBERTHAL: I think we'll see in the course of the visit that President Xi is making

that many of the issues that we've raised here and discussed here will be components of this visit. Part of the discussion will be about U.S.-Chinese cooperation in Africa on both development issues and public health issues.

There is an issue of counterterrorism cooperation. And what we find is China not only has an increasing set of issues domestically, but China is getting drawn into that part of the world that's more characterized by chaos at this point and, beyond the level of principles, having to make real decisions there. And that is going to lead it into a complicated and very unsatisfying, I suspect, set of challenges that we have been experiencing and, increasingly, where China is a part of that scene.

On the NGO law, I think we and everyone else have expressed very strong views about this, and hopefully, we'll see some modification of that or, better yet, have it tabled and not adopted for an indefinite period of time because it does kind of create complications that no one wants to see, I think. And I'm not sure that the drafters of the law fully understood that, but we'll have to see how that plays out.

In any case, thank you very much. This has been a *tour de force* of various aspects of the long-term relationship and long-term, if you will, assumptions about China that more detailed views of history, or investigations of history, opens up and makes more contingent.

And so, really appreciate your coming here. I hope you all will join me in expressing that appreciation, too.

(Applause)

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