

**EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN  
APPROACHES TO CHINA:  
DIFFERENT BEDS, SAME DREAMS?**

David Shambaugh

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2013 G Street, NW, Suite 301  
Washington, D.C. 20052  
Phone: 202-994-5886 Fax: 202-994-6096  
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# EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN APPROACHES TO CHINA: DIFFERENT BEDS, SAME DREAMS?

David Shambaugh

**H**ow do American and European government approaches towards the People's Republic of China (PRC) compare? Although there is a great deal written about U.S.-China relations,<sup>1</sup> and a much smaller, but growing, amount on European-China relations,<sup>2</sup> there is very little by way of explicit comparison offered in the academic literature. The one excellent exception to this rule is a recent study by the German diplomat and China specialist Klaus Rupprecht.<sup>3</sup> The absence of such comparative studies is somewhat surprising given the breadth and depth of European and American ties with China and Taiwan—yet it is important to explore the areas of convergence and divergence in their respective approaches.

This essay first discusses my perceptions of the differences in European and American approaches and policies toward China.<sup>4</sup> This is followed by a discussion of areas of convergence in respective approaches and policies. I conclude with a section building on the areas of (perceived) agreement to set forth a common agenda for Europe and the United States in its future relations with China.

The author is Professor of Political Science & International Affairs and Director of the China Policy Program in the Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University. He is also a nonresident Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies Program and Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C.

## *Differences of Degree and Context*

The United States and West European governments, as well as the fifteen member EU, have long had overlapping and reinforcing policies and approaches toward the PRC. At the same time, differing interests, assets, and diplomatic style have been apparent in recent American and European relations with China. Official communication and coordination across the Atlantic concerning China and Asian issues has not always been good—indeed it has been considerably neglected at an official level over the past two decades—yet mutual perspectives and policies have converged much more often than they have diverged.

## *The Tyranny of Geography*

Some apparent differences are simply reflective of the history, geography, and strategic context that shape the respective approaches and policies. In Europe geographic distance seems to beget conceptual distance. Asia seems far away for many Europeans (although it is, in fact, physically closer than from the United States) and accordingly seems removed in the European mindset. The biannual Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) was created, in part, to bridge this gap. Nonetheless, China and Asia do not occupy anywhere near the public or government attention in Europe that they do in America.

History and security are also factors. While

European nations were deeply involved in Asia and China long before the United States, the end of the colonial era brought an end to active European involvement and tangible presence in the region. Since then European nations have not possessed many strategic interests or equities in East Asia or China. China was not as central an element of the Cold War for European nations as for America (which led to the U.S. involvement in the Korean and Vietnam Wars), as the U.S. took up many of the roles and responsibilities that Europe had previously shouldered. Today European nations do not maintain security alliances,<sup>5</sup> their navies do not patrol the sea lanes, and they do not station troops in East Asia. Nor do discussions of a potential “China threat” resonate in the European media as they do in the American press.

These observations are by no means to suggest that European nations or the EU are absent from China and East Asia or do not have interests there. As is described below, both the major governments of Western Europe and the European Commission are actively involved on the ground in China—often in concrete ways that go far beyond the involvement of the U.S. Government—and they are involved diplomatically and commercially elsewhere in the region. For example, the EU has become proactive in engaging North Korea, as the Bush administration has disengaged, while the European corporate sector has significant trade and investment interests throughout East and South Asia. Yet, Europe’s commercial and cultural presence in China and Asia still is not nearly as visible as that of the United States, nor is Europe militarily engaged in maintaining the peace and security of the region.

### ***Taiwan***

Another significant difference is that Europe and America do not have the same history and depth

of ties to Taiwan. While neither side has official relations with Taipei, and European governments maintain similar façades of unofficial representation on the island, U.S. ties with the island run much deeper. There is a significant pro-Taiwan lobby in the United States that does not exist in European societies or polities. Beneath the U.S. Taiwan lobby lie strong public sentiment in support of maintaining Taiwan’s democratic political system and way of life, while ensuring its security and not tolerating coercion by the mainland.

Although it is doubtful that Europeans would sit comfortably by if China used force against Taiwan, neither has the EC or any European government indicated (to Beijing or otherwise) what it would be prepared to do in such an instance.<sup>6</sup> For example, would Europe be prepared to downgrade diplomatic relations with China? Would it be willing to invoke sanctions (such as in 1989) and counsel European firms against investing in China? Would they consider freezing Chinese assets in Europe? Would they issue travel advisories to limit Europeans from traveling to China? Would European governments be willing to make collective statements condemning coercive action by the PRC? If such coercive action involved naval blockades, would European navies be willing to be part of a multinational force to run the blockade?

These are, of course, hypothetical questions, and ones that might arise under the most extreme circumstances, but it nevertheless seems clear from discussions with European officials that no thought has been given to, or planning undertaken for, such contingencies. The lack of such planning is symptomatic of the reality that Taiwan is primarily a commercial entity for Europeans. Although there is an increased appreciation of Taiwan’s democratization in Europe,<sup>7</sup> the broader range of political and security concerns that animate

American ties with the island, and cloud U.S. relations with the PRC, are simply absent in Europe's case. Forging and articulating (whether privately or publicly) European positions on the above questions before such a crisis erupts would definitely be a deterring factor in China's coercive calculus against Taiwan. At present, it is very likely that Beijing only considers the potential reaction of the United States and Japan, having concluded that it has successfully isolated all other countries from the Taiwan equation.

Of course, the United States continues to be a significant—and the sole—foreign supplier of weaponry, defense technology, and other forms of military assistance to the island. Since the 1994 “Balladur Agreement” with Beijing, France has declined to supply Taiwan with military equipment, technology, materiel or services (although the secret Annex to the agreement apparently stated that France would not supply any *offensive* systems to Taiwan, thus leaving the door open to “defensive” equipment in the future). No other European government is willing to do so either—witness the abortive supply of conventionally powered submarines in the last year (see below)—for fear of contravening its “One China” pledges and aggravating the PRC.

European governments seem content to merely maintain trade, cultural, and academic ties with the island—although it is evident that Taipei continually tries to exploit these ties to improve its diplomatic standing in Europe. Taiwan currently has 25 representative offices in Europe, and is engaged in a constant process of attempting to change their names and upgrade their status in order to acquire quasi-official standing. Two-way trade between the EU and the island is now in excess of US \$40 billion per annum.

While Taiwan's stature has risen in recent years in Europe, it is also apparent that there is no intra-European intergovernmental dialogue

concerning relations with Taiwan—the result being that each government goes its own way with an eye on the other. For its part, the European Commission (EC) in Brussels has never articulated any policy priorities toward Taiwan (beyond reiterating the One China Policy), although the EC is planning to open an office in Taipei. It is an important opportunity for the EC to formulate and articulate a more systematic set of policies concerning its unofficial relations with Taiwan, its assessment of political and economic changes underway on the island, its position on cross-strait relations, and on Taiwan's position in the international community. All of these could, and should, be incorporated into an official position paper (“Communication”) issued by the EC, similar to those previously issued on China.

### *Integrating China*

Another apparent difference in approach between Europe and the United States, which has emerged during the Bush administration, concerns China's role in international institutions and regimes. The Clinton administration (particularly in its second term following the 1994-95 China policy review) adopted the concept and strategy that the best way to hedge against a potentially disruptive China in the world was to enlist China's membership in as broad a range of international and regional institutions and regimes as possible. The idea was that such involvement would:

- give China a stake in the *existing* international order across a broad range of functional issue areas, thus increasing China's global role as a status-quo, rather than revisionist, power;
- that such involvement would make it far more costly for China to transgress the rules, regulations and norms of these institutions;
- that the incentives for China to play an active and constructive role in these issue

areas would substantially increase—thus genuinely integrating China back into the global order;

- that these international regimes would “socialize” China into the existing and acceptable ways of the world;
- that this socialization would, in turn, have potential to transform China internally in a more liberal direction.

Intellectually this concept/strategy derives from Liberal neo-institutional international relations theory, but practically was motivated by the realization that as recently as a decade ago China still stood outside of the international institutional order in many areas (particularly security), and, secondly, China had great potential to pursue policies that were disruptive to the existing order and detrimental to Western interests.

Ironically, though, this concept/strategy did *not* originate with an American initiative. Quite to the contrary, the United States came to it late. It took shape in Japan in the wake of the 1989 Beijing massacre and sanctions, which Tokyo believed ran the risk of isolating China on a permanent basis as a kind of pariah or rogue state. In October 1990, the European Council and European Parliament decided to restart institutional exchanges with China, and in January 1992 made China eligible for the full range of assistance and collaborative programs. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) agreed with the assessment that an isolated China was a potentially dangerous China, and also began to re-engage Beijing.<sup>8</sup> An isolated, defensive, and nationalistic China had few incentives to cooperate with policies or institutions that enhanced Western interests and promoted global stability. Thus, while the EU firmly believed that the military sanctions on China should remain in place indefinitely, by 1992-1993 there was a consensus among America’s key allies and partners that a broad

effort should be made to include, rather than exclude, China in as broad a range of international institutions and regimes as possible. This can be called the “*integrationist strategy*.” Reluctantly, the Clinton administration was brought around to the same view a year or so later—as the integrationist strategy became a core conceptual underpinning of the Clinton policy of “engagement.”

Thus, American policy was harmonized with that of its European and Asian allies and partners and a consensus endured through the remainder of the decade. As a result, China acceded to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), joined the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Committee on Security and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP), signed the two U.N. human rights covenants, participated in Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the ASEAN + 3 forums, promised to “actively study” joining the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and so on.<sup>9</sup>

Today, however, the Bush administration does not seem to subscribe to the integrationist strategy with respect to China, although it has come around to accept the strategy of bilateral engagement—thus recognizing reality and bringing the Bush administration’s China in line with its six predecessors.<sup>10</sup> Ironically, the Bush administration itself seems to be unilaterally walking away from a number of the very international institutions and regimes that, under Clinton, the U.S. Government sought to integrate China into. The stark irony of this is that China now finds itself, along with other nations (principally in Europe), pursuing an integrationist strategy vis-à-vis the United States!<sup>11</sup> It is not clear that China fully shares the underlying norms that underpin these regimes, but as a member, they are loathe to see the institutions

themselves undermined by unilateral American withdrawal. After all, the *sine qua non* of Chinese foreign policy is to counter hegemonism, of which unilateralism (*danbianzhuyi*) is a blatant form.

It must be noted, though, that the Bush administration's reluctance to pursue the integrationist strategy vis-à-vis China does not apply to the realm of trade, as the U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick successfully brought to a conclusion (together with his European counterpart Pascal Lamy) China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. Indeed, following this monumental event, President Bush indicated at the APEC meeting in Shanghai:

"China is a great power. America wants a constructive relationship with China. We welcome a China that is a full member of the world community, and that is at peace with its neighbors. We welcome and support China's accession into the World Trade Organization. We believe it is a very important development that will benefit our two peoples and the world. In the long run, the advance of Chinese prosperity depends on *China's full integration into the rules and norms of international institutions* (emphasis added). And, in the long run, economic freedom and political freedom will go hand in hand."

It is unclear if the president's rhetorical embrace of the integrationist strategy applies only to the economic realm, or whether, in fact, his administration may be returning to a broader embrace of the strategy—particularly in the security sphere. His administration's drift from the integrationist strategy during its first year (aside from the WTO accession) did cause some suspicions and friction in Europe and Asia. If the administration is now returning to the broader policy of integrating China into the full panoply of international regimes, it will be better

harmonized with its European allies and partners. But to do so, requires a fundamental embrace of multilateralism on the regimes concerned by the Bush administration. It is not clear that the Bush administration is prepared for such a fundamental embrace. A multilateral coalition to fight the war on terrorism does not necessarily indicate that the Bush administration is prepared to solve other pressing problems on global agenda—particularly in the areas of security and the environment—in a multilateral fashion. Rather, judging from President Bush's February 2002 visit to China, his administration seems to prefer striking bilateral accords with Beijing on non-proliferation and other issues.

### *Differences of Degree*

These factors distinguish European and American approaches and policies toward China and Taiwan. China is simply not the same strategic actor—or, some would argue, potential threat—to Europe as it is to America and its interests and allies in East Asia.

Europeans are also more dispassionate than Americans in their approach toward China. I would agree with Klaus Rupperecht's observation in his comparative study that, "The main...difference in approach lies in the more detached relationship the Europeans kept with China, not having been so recently and deeply emotionally involved with China, and not having strategic ambitions in Asia as the Americans."<sup>12</sup> It is true that the United States has long had a proactive agenda to *transform* China (for the U.S. the operative question has never been *whether* to try and change China but *how?*), whereas European governments have been more detached, reactive, and content to interact with China on a normal diplomatic basis. I sense this is changing somewhat in recent years as the European Commission's policy documents are blueprints for changing China by assisting in the improvement

of China's governance (a strategy of domestic capacity-building).<sup>13</sup>

With the possible exception of the integrationist strategy, it is important to note that the differences between European and American approaches to China are not necessarily differences of substance, but rather are differences of degree, style and context. There is little apparent difference of opinion or policy regarding the substance of these issues—indeed European governments often seem supportive of U.S. policies and actions in the aforementioned areas. However, European governments do not always agree with the *tactics* or *style* of the American approach towards China, as they often consider it too public, arrogant, punitive, condemnatory, and confrontational.

Europeans, particularly in France and Scandinavia, are also sympathetic to China's critiques of U.S. "hegemony" (often described as the *hyperpower* in France) and professed desire to build a "multipolar" world. Both Europe and China seek to be principal poles in such a world of diffused power, although their respective predictions that such a world emerge in the post-Cold War period have yet to materialize.

Europeans are also frequently critical of the lack of U.S. consultation and coordination with Europe on China and Asia policy (particularly the enduring reluctance of U.S. officials with Asia policy portfolios to travel to Europe to meet their counterparts). For its part, Washington frequently sees Europe as "free-riding" on American diplomacy concerning the tough issues, while the U.S. believes it has to do the "heavy lifting" or "carry the water" for its European allies. Europeans are, understandably, sensitive to this criticism. Their usual retort is that EU member states support, and abide by, multilateral sanction regimes, but do not feel compelled to observe unilateral U.S. sanctions (e.g. Helms-Burton).

The past criticisms about consultation may be

making a change for the better with now-annual U.S.-EU bilateral consultations on Asia.<sup>14</sup> Briefings and consultations between the U.S. Department of State and European embassies in Washington also seem to have recently improved. The U.S. and EU were able to maintain open channels, good communication, and considerable solidarity during the protracted negotiations over China's accession to the WTO. A few other non-governmental dialogues have also recently begun, processes that can hopefully be continued.<sup>15</sup> More such academic and quasi-official trans-Atlantic dialogue on China needs to take place, as well as increased dialogue within Europe.<sup>16</sup> The European Commission stands to play a key role in catalyzing and financing these dialogues, as well as private foundations.<sup>17</sup>

For such interaction to be fruitful, however, it needs to be more regular and better informed. Episodic contact is better than nothing, but is not sufficient. Further, both sides need to be *informed* about what the other is doing and thinking with respect to China. European officials often complain that they learn of American policy toward Asia after the fact in the newspapers.

Part of the problem is bureaucratic. That is, officials in the U.S. Government responsible for Asian affairs bureaucratically interact with their counterparts responsible for American affairs in Asian governments, while it is the European bureaus of the U.S. cabinet departments that are tasked with interacting with European countries. Hence, if there is need for coordination on an Asian issue, it is usually the European Bureau of the U.S. Department of State that liaises, on behalf of functional bureaus and the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, with the European government concerned. As a result of this bureaucratic norm, there is an institutionalized impediment to routine interaction between senior officials in the U.S. and European governments responsible for Asian or



Chinese affairs. This is not to say that such interaction fails to occur, but it usually requires European officials to visit Washington for consultations.

For their part, few U.S. officials or China specialists have any idea of the nature or extent of EU programs in China, the mechanisms of intra-EU policymaking on China and Asia, or have read the key policy documents on China issued by the EC.<sup>18</sup> European-China diplomacy has definitely intensified in recent years, but it is not clear that the United States understands this deepened engagement. This interaction is symbolized by an annual EU-China Summit (since 1998), regular exchanges of heads of state and other leaders (such as Hu Jintao's November 2001 trip across the continent), but also involves a number of other governmental and non-governmental initiatives. The U.S. Government and American analysts need to familiarize themselves with the basis of European interactions with China and Taiwan, and to establish regular consultative mechanisms to exchange basic information on such interaction.

One mistake that American officials and analysts could easily make is to expect to find a unified European position or policy towards China. It is quite evident that there exist substantial differences in public perspectives and government policies among the fifteen EU member states. This is both predictable and understandable for several reasons. Given the differing size, influence, and magnitude of interests, it is natural that the larger EU states—Germany, France, and the U.K.—articulate and advocate positions different from smaller and less influential EU states (many of which, in fact, have no China specialists or Chinese speakers in their governments and take no position on many issues related to China). Even among these “Big Three” there exist important policy differences of degree. To some extent, the nascent Common Security and Foreign Policy

(CSFP) machinery of the EU (and the Asia Working Group which meets regularly in Brussels) helps to harmonize these differences and coordinate common policies, yet Americans should not assume that European governments are necessarily of one mind themselves when it comes to forging policy toward China (or any other country, including the U.S.).

### *Similarities of Substance*

Despite these differing contextual factors, similarities in American and European approaches toward China are multiple and deep. Consider the areas.

#### *Trade and Investment*

Both sides seek strong trade and investment ties with China, but on the basis of transparency, reciprocity, and international standards. China is now the EU's third largest trading partner (after the U.S. and Japan), while Europe is China's third largest export market (excluding the Hong Kong SAR). Moreover, for the first time in 2000, the EU was the largest net foreign direct investor in China. China occupies a similar position in America's trade profile, although follows Europe and Japan in FDI.

Europe and America also both run large trade deficits with China.<sup>19</sup> The recent accession of China to the WTO is a major step forward for both sides, which will hopefully help to reduce China's large surpluses. It is also a significant accomplishment in European and American diplomacy—as China did its resolute best, at many junctures, to attempt to manipulate and divide the Atlantic allies. Hopefully such solidarity will be maintained during the implementation phase.

China also tried to sow discord within NATO during the protracted Balkan problem and Kosovo campaign, again failing to do so. As noted below, with respect to the current and unfolding campaign

against terrorism, Beijing has not stood in opposition to Western policy—and has, indeed, been an important member of the international coalition.

### ***Non-Proliferation***

While it is evident that non-proliferation of nuclear technology and ballistic missile components is not a policy priority of the same order of magnitude for the EU as it is for the U.S., European governments have been supportive of American efforts to curb China's proliferation and to tie Beijing into more binding institutional frameworks to control such dangerous behavior. The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), of which France and Britain are members, is one such mechanism—although China has, to date, resisted joining this regime (on the grounds that the MTCR is a cartel rather than an international regime). More recently, the EU has supported American efforts to have China implement the November 2000 U.S.-China bilateral accord, although neither Brussels nor EU member states have any real leverage to exert in this regard. Thus, while non-proliferation is not a high-priority item on Europe's agenda with China, there is a congruence of interests and policies across the Atlantic.

### ***Human Rights***

Promoting human rights in China has been another important area of commonality among the United States and Europe, although the two sides have varied in the relative emphasis it should play in their broader China policies and, particularly, the tactics and forums to be pursued. Promoting human rights in China, and condemning abuses, has not been a difference *per se*—the differences have been over how best to pursue these twin goals.

In brief, European governments, collectively and individually, pursue a more discrete, yet official, dialogue with the Chinese government on

human rights, while the U.S. Government, Congress, and private sector groups have all pursued a much more public and condemnatory approach. During the second term of the Clinton administration, however, the U.S. also initiated a bilateral dialogue with Beijing, although it was subsequently suspended and only recently resumed. Since 1997 three such rounds have been held, while the EU and China dialogue takes place twice per year (in addition, some European states also maintain their own bilateral human rights dialogues). A related difference emerged over the use of the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva as a forum to condemn China's record and abuses. Since 1995 Europe has not been comfortable with this confrontational approach and, one by one, EU member states (along with Australia, Canada and others) failed to offer co-sponsorship or back such a resolution. Finally, after the most recent failure in March 2001, the U.S. approach fully collapsed.

A third difference with regard to the tactics of promoting human rights in China has to do with funding and running programs on the ground in China and expending government monies to promote the training of personnel outside of China. Since the mid-1990s, the EU has expended considerable funds to promote both rule-of-law and human rights programs inside China, and many EU member states fund and sponsor the training of lawyers and judges in Europe. Many of these activities fall under two institutionalized bilateral programs: the EU-China Human Rights Cooperation Program and EU-China Legal and Judicial Cooperation Program. Regrettably, because of the refusal of Congress to appropriate the funds, the United States Government has to date not committed *any* resources in a comparable effort.<sup>20</sup> The EU's approach is commendable and should be replicated by the United States.

While the U.S. and Europe have pursued

different tactics in dealing with China on human rights, their cumulative effect has been reinforcing. Without such pressure—both subtle and overt—it is doubtful that China would have signed the two U.N. Covenants in 1997 and 1999.

European and American perspectives on the Tibet issue are not dissimilar, and there are strong domestic lobbies that influence government attitudes and policies on both sides of the Atlantic. In Europe, such lobbies are particularly active in Britain, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden.

### *Improving Governance and State Capacity*

The EU approach to improving human rights in China is anchored in a broader conceptualization and policy of improving Chinese civil society, governance, and state capacity at the local level. Many of these efforts are described in the *1998 Communication* and some are codified in the EU-China Village Governance Program.<sup>21</sup> The European Investment Bank (EIB), European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), and other EU agencies also play important roles. These efforts involve a wide range of EU work, including: poverty reduction and sustainable development; promoting civil society; improving environmental quality and regulation; training civil servants and local officials; improving accounting and auditing procedures; improving women's and children's healthcare and welfare; setting up public health clinics, training paramedics and counselors; improving awareness of HIV/AIDS and other programs.<sup>22</sup>

While the U.S. Government has failed to fund similar initiatives, the work of the Peace Corps and a variety of private sector organizations has helped to fill the void. The Ford Foundation has been particularly active and important in funding and sponsoring a number of governance initiatives similar to those areas noted above. The Carter Center, International Republican Institute, and the

National Democratic Institute have all been deeply involved with China's village-level election experiments.

### *Towards a Common Agenda*

In addition to these aforementioned issues, there are a variety of other areas in which the perspectives and policies of the United States and EU states converge. Both sides are in China for the long haul, and both should seek a series of broad goals. I would posit these as follows:

- A China that does not militarily threaten its neighbors, including Taiwan, and keeps its military modernization program at a slow to modest pace. (It remains in the interests of the United States or Europe not to facilitate the modernization of the Chinese military, particularly in ways that would improve its power projection capabilities—hence the existing sanctions and embargo of military equipment and technologies should be maintained indefinitely.)
- A China that does not seek hegemony over the Asia-Pacific region and does not challenge American strategic preeminence and alliance system in the region.
- A China that is a full and constructive participant in the East Asian and Central Asian regional security forums and architecture.
- A China that actively pursues policy of peaceful coexistence and integration with Taiwan.
- A Chinese government that does not unnecessarily stoke extreme popular nationalism.
- A China that does not contribute to the proliferation of weapons-grade nuclear material or weapons of mass destruction, or ballistic missiles, to other countries.
- A China that is fully integrated into, and

fully adheres to the norms and regulations of international trade and investment as embodied in the WTO and other related financial bodies.

- A China that is thoroughly integrated into the full range of international organizations and institutions at governmental and non-governmental levels.
- A Chinese government that effectively and humanely governs China, and maintains unity and stability of the nation.
- A China that respects and enforces international standards across the whole range of human rights: civic, political, labor, gender, child, and religious rights.
- A China that rapidly builds the rule of law, as distinct from the rule by law.
- A China that constructively and fully participates with other nations in combating terrorism, transnational and organized crime, smuggling and piracy, public health, and other non-conventional security threats.
- A China that cleans up its environment and pays more strict attention to environmental quality as the nation continues to modernize.
- A China that pursues policies of political liberalization and building of civil society which, over time, will lead to a more representative and democratic form of government—not necessarily controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

These would seem to be a set of broad policy goals that are acceptable to the U.S. and European governments, even if they are rarely articulated as such. Indeed, many are evident in on-going policies and statements of the U.S. and EU.

Yet, underlying these goals requires the assumption that there is a common *vision* of how Europeans and Americans would like to see China evolve. Such a vision in itself presumes a desire to change China—or put more realistically, that the U.S. and Europe contribute to changes

underway in China and try to nudge this great nation in the “right” directions. Although Westerners have tried for centuries to change China,<sup>23</sup> it has long been clear that such efforts can only be supplementary at best. Real change must be indigenously rooted.

Americans have long held a vision and have pursued a broad agenda of change in China. Call it a latter-day “missionary complex.” Call it a “superpower complex.” Either way, the United States has not been content to just “let China be.” Americans have seemingly had a special mission to remake China in its image since the 1870s.<sup>24</sup> That is why the 1989 Beijing massacre had such a profound effect on Americans—it was not so much that the army killed civilians as the PLA was assaulting what was perceived to be the culmination of the American transformative mission.<sup>25</sup> The symbols of American democracy and freedom, as embodied in the Goddess of Democracy, were demolished in a wave of tanks, bullets, and totalitarian repression. These images are not easily forgotten in the United States, and continue to infuse the American approach towards China. To be sure, West Europeans also watched the repression with shock and horror, and European governments were quick to condemn it and invoke a range of sanctions, yet it did not seem to sear the European psyche as deeply as it did in American society.<sup>26</sup>

### *In Sum*

A comparison of European and American approaches and policies toward China reveal some divergences, but many commonalities. The commonalities can be effectively pursued in parallel, and need not necessarily be extensively coordinated. They involve not only the respective governments and officials, but also the full panoply of non-governmental actors. Yet the effectiveness of respective European and

American policies can be considerably improved through better and more regular communication and consultation, both at the official and unofficial levels. The divergences between the two sides are not great, and are often more a matter of tactics and style than of substance, but they too can be narrowed through enhanced dialogue across the Atlantic.

In the final analysis, both the United States and Europe have significant stakes and equities involved in China's internal and external evolution—it behooves both to consult and coordinate their approaches and policies in a better fashion. If they do not improve their coordination and consultation, the effectiveness of their respective bilateral efforts will be diminished.

NOTES

\* An earlier version of this study was presented at the conference "Shaping China's Future: The Contribution of American, European, and French Policies," Centre Asie, Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI), Paris, France, January 10-11, 2001. I am grateful for comments on the earlier version offered by several participants at the conference, particularly Hervé Dejean de la Bâtie. An expanded version will be published in *Perspectives Chinoises*, No. 70 (March-April 2002) and *China Perspectives*, No. 41 (May-June 2002).

1. Among the many studies published, see David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (University of California Press, 2001).
2. See Michael Yahuda, "The European Union: A Separate Voice," in Ramon Myers, Michel Oksenberg, and David Shambaugh (eds.), *Making China Policy: Lessons From the Bush and Clinton Administrations* (Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 2001), pp. 223-240; Michael Yahuda, "China and Europe: The Significance of a Secondary Relationship," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh (eds.), *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory & Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 266-282; David Shambaugh, *China and Europe, 1949-1995* (London: SOAS Contemporary China Institute, 1995); Hervé Dejean de la Bâtie, *La Politique Chinoise de l'Union Européenne: En Progrès, Mais Peut Mieux Faire* (Paris: IFRI Centre Asie, 2002). The recent study by de la Bâtie is, by far, the most comprehensive and up-to-date analysis available. Also see the special issue of *The China Quarterly* (March 2000).
3. Klaus Rupperecht, "European and American Approaches Towards China as an Emerging Power," *China Aktuell* (Institut für Asienkunde, Hamburg), February 2001, pp. 169-179.
4. Throughout this article the use of the term "European" is taken to mean the collectivity of European states (which may not be fair as it submerges differences in perspectives and policies). When I refer to the "EU" I specifically have the European Commission and Brussels in mind.
5. Britain's role in the Five-Power Defense Pact being the exception to this rule.
6. In a recent article Michael Yahuda addresses this issue. See Michael Yahuda, "EU Has Important Role to Play in Strait," *Taipei Journal*, December 7, 2001.
7. See Yahuda's "Taiwan's Human Rights and Democratization Further its Efforts to Develop Ties with Europe," *Taipei Journal*, December 28, 2001.
8. Alastair I. Johnston and Robert S. Ross (eds), *Engaging China: Management of an Emerging Power* (London: Routledge, 2000).
9. For a study of the process of China's accession to these, and other, international regimes see Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenberg (eds.), *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1999).
10. David Shambaugh, "From the White House: All Zig-Zags Lead to China," *Washington Post*, February 17, 2002.
11. It should be noted, however, that the U.S. and China both oppose the International Criminal Court and Ottawa Convention on Landmines.
12. Klaus Rupperecht, "European and American Approaches Toward China as an Emerging Power," op cit.
13. See European Commission, *A Long-Term Policy for China-Europe Relations* (Brussels: EC, 1995); European Commission, *Building a Comprehensive Partnership with China* (Brussels: EC, 1998); and two subsequent "Communications" concerning the implementation of the 1998 document. All are available at: [http://europe.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/china](http://europe.eu.int/comm/external_relations/china).
14. These take place between the rotating EU troika and U.S. Department of State.
15. One recent initiative involves the Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington, D.C. and the Research Institute of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP). Another links the China Policy Program of the Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University to institutional partners in France, Germany, and the U.K. A third recently was organized by the Europe Program of the Center for Strategic & International

- Studies (CSIS) and involved a number of German counterparts: see Simon Serfady (ed.), *Conference Report: U.S.-German Bilateral Dialogue on China* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, January 2002).
16. The European China Academic Network (ECAN), a successful endeavor that has been financially supported by the EU since its inception in 1996, is an appropriate institutional sponsor for such interaction among experts.
  17. The German Marshall Fund plays a unique role in this regard.
  18. See European Commission, *Communication: A Long Term Policy for China-Europe Relations* (Brussels: Office of Official Publications of the European Commission, 1995); *Communication: Building a Comprehensive Partnership with China* (ibid, 1998).
  19. The most recent available EU-China trade figures are for 1999, which reached Euro 77 billion (approximately \$68 billion). Figures for the first nine months of 2000 showed 16 percent growth. The EU ran a collective trade deficit of Euro 30 billion and 32 billion, respectively, during these periods. The United States had a total of approximately \$121.5 billion in bilateral trade in 2001, with a deficit of approximately \$83 billion (U.S. Department of Commerce, February 21, 2003). Final figures for EU-China trade in 2001 are not yet available.
  20. During President Bush's February 2002 visit to Beijing he promised \$10 million in annual funding for a rule-of-law initiative. To date, the only such funding was private and corporate—largely funded via the U.S.-China Business Council.
  21. This strategy is elaborated in detail in the 1998 *EU Communication*, *op cit*.
  22. For further details on these programs, and amounts of Euros allocated, see de la Bâtie, *op cit*. Also see European Commission, Directorate General I, External Relations, *European Union-China Relations* (Brussels: European Commission, 1999).
  23. The writings of Jonathan Spence are particularly germane here. Most recently see his *The Chan's Great Continent: China in Western Minds* (New York: Norton, 1998).
  24. There is a lengthy and excellent literature on this subject. See, for example, T. Christopher Jespersen, *American Images of China, 1931-1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Warren Cohen, *America's Response to China* (New York: Columbia University Press, multiple additions); Michael Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China* (New York: Bantam Books, multiple editions); James C. Thomson, *While China Faced West: American Reformers in Nationalist China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969).
  25. See Richard Madsen, *China and the American Dream* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
  26. This is a personal observation from living in the U.K. and traveling in both Europe and the U.S. immediately after the massacre.

