the weekly Standard

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THE PARADOX OF THOMAS CARLYLE
GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

CHINA
THE ISSUE

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Books & Arts

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Guess Who Came to Connerly's Dinner

Newt Gingrich made a surprise appearance Feb. 12 at a Washington dinner honoring Ward Connerly, the chairman of the California Civil Rights Initiative. It came just a week after Gingrich alienated many conservatives by inviting Jesse Jackson to sit in the speaker's box at the State of the Union, and then appeared to side with Jackson in an ensuing spat, rather than with fellow Republican J.C. Watts. Connerly had kind words for Gingrich, but also chided him—as Gingrich sat 20 feet away—for "reaching out" to Jackson in preference to standing by his allies.

The real news, though, was in Gingrich's speech. After listening to five individuals movingly recount their experiences with reverse discrimination, Gingrich praised them all and even embraced one of their phrases, declaring "there is no moral defense of affirmative racism once you describe it accurately." Indeed, he went a step further, pledging "to pursue an all-out effort to end affirmative racism." Sounded good to the audience of movement conservatives, which gave Gingrich a standing ovation.

But actions speak louder than words. A few minutes after the event ended, Gingrich was asked by a middle-aged gentleman if he would try to pass legislation sponsored by Rep. Charles Canady of Florida banning federally sponsored racial preference programs. Gingrich said it wasn't a top priority, prompting the questioner to turn to a reporter and exclaim in frustration "Goddamn hypocrite!" Canady, who also attended the dinner, was only slightly more polite to Gingrich, calling the discrepancy between Gingrich's words and deeds "bizarre."

Good News for CCRI

While Washington was feting Connerly, a three-judge "motions panel" of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals was upholding his handiwork in California, restoring constitutional order to that state—and to the national debate over affirmative action. On Feb. 10, the panel unanimously overturned the outrageous ruling by district court judge Thelton Henderson that had blocked implementation of CCRI. A majority of California voters last November had approved the amendment to the state's constitution, which prohibits race and gender discrimination in employment, education, and contracting. Judge Henderson, however, decided in December that CCRI was probably a violation of the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment—and should not be enforced until such doubts could be formally addressed in court.

Last Monday, the Ninth Circuit panel swept aside Judge Henderson's constitutional improvisation with unusual ferocity. California is not like "Serbia or Algeria," where "first they have the elections and then decide whether to honor them," Judge Andrew Kleinfeld reminded an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, which opposes CCRI. The ACLU and Judge Henderson may adopt whatever fancy theory they like, Kleinfeld noted with obvious contempt, but the United States remains a government by the people, for the people—not one by "the people with the highest LSAT scores."

And it gets better. Later the same day, Judge Kleinfeld and his two colleagues on the Ninth Circuit motions panel elected to retain near-term jurisdiction over the underlying constitutional litigation surrounding CCRI. The case will not now return to Judge Henderson's court, as expected. Instead, the Ninth Circuit panel will itself—soon, probably by mid-March—make a formal determination whether CCRI may be constitutionally enforced by California's state and local governments. If, as appears likely, they decide the answer is yes, Gov. Pete Wilson will be freed immediately to begin requesting that state appellate courts hold California's myriad affirmative action programs unconstitutional.

Meanwhile, the Clinton administration, after promising to intervene in the case on the ACLU's side, has decided merely to file pro forma "friend of the court" briefs. There's still no telling how this whole mess will turn out in the end. But all the latest news is good.

Thompson Gunner

Senate Republicans are worried about Democratic efforts to thwart Fred Thompson's investigation of Clinton campaign fund-raising shenanigans. But they're also anxious about Thompson himself, fearing the Tennessee Republican may bend over backward to accommodate Democrats, spend too much time probing Republican fund-raising, and pave the way for sweeping campaign finance reform. One conservative GOP senator was recently approached by senior colleagues, including members of the leadership, and asked to join Thompson's committee. The mission: Keep an eye on Thompson so he

Scrapbook

doesn't get too squishy in dealing with Democrats. The senator declined. You might think Senate majority leader Trent Lott would intervene with Thompson; but word is that he's lost control of both the senator and the progress of Thompson's investigation.

Already, Thompson has agreed to look into soft money, independent expenditures, and "the misuse of charitable and tax-exempt organizations," such as those connected to House speaker Newt Gingrich. Republicans fret he'll let the spotlight drift from Democratic wrongdoing, especially illegal foreign contributions, to focus on fund-raising at the Republican National Committee and the National Republican Senatorial Committee when headed by Sen. Al D'Amato from 1994 to 1996.

Worse, the Thompson hearings may increase pressure for passage of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill, supported by Clinton and most Democrats. Only one Republican senator besides John McCain backs it—Fred Thompson. To forestall hearings that may wind up helping Democrats more than the GOP, some Republican senators hope a Democratic filibuster against Thompson's $6.5 million budget for his investigation will succeed, killing the hearings and damaging Thompson's presidential plans in 2000.

1-800-Rat-on-the-Left

Sure, Fred Thompson's committee says it will investigate the "misuse of charitable and tax-exempt" groups. But that doesn't mean that concerned citizens—especially readers of The Weekly Standard—should be content merely to sit back and watch the fireworks on C-SPAN. You can help to root out tax fraud, too.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported last week that the IRS is gearing up to audit *lots* of nonprofits. Many conservative and right-leaning groups are reportedly already under the auditors' microscopes. Why the one-sidedness? According to the IRS battle plan, "During the election cycle of 1994-96, numerous news articles were published concerning exempt organizations' intervention in political activities and their increased electioneering efforts." The IRS, in other words, is following up on leads it gleaned from the media, which tend to be more interested in the abuses of conservatives.

In the spirit of "public journalism," then, we propose to balance the playing field. Send your candidates for left-wing "charities" most needing an audit to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Dept. VM, Washington, DC 20036. We will forward them to the IRS and publicize favorites. Readers whose tips lead to audits will receive the gratitude of their fellow citizens.

Weakly Standards

The Clinton administration's new education initiative brings a sticky challenge for the president: how to combine his cherished role of National Empathizer and Repairer of the Breach with the unavoidably painful business of enforcing standards? When kids start taking the new math and reading tests, won't some of them fail?

Never fear. In Annapolis last week, the president proved once more that his agility can be relied on. "Keep in mind," he explained, "we don't want Johnny to make a better score than Mary on this test; we want 100 percent of our kids to pass this test. And then when a lot of them don't, we don't want to give them an F, we want to give them a hand up. We want to say we haven't done what we should and we're going to do this."

So *that*'s what having high standards means.

Casual

Past Tension

Despite reelection, a lofty public approval rating, and discombobulated opponents, President Clinton is in a funk. He whines that the cynicism of the press has finally gotten to him, and that he has grown cynical too. Newt Gingrich is no better off. He can't decide what the Republican agenda should be, or even if there should be one. Meanwhile, a prominent columnist and TV commentator says he wouldn't know some of the new U.S. senators if they sat on his lap. He used to care about such things, but no more. Me? Like Bill Bennett says of Republicans, I'm suffering from a bad case of ennui.

I'm not alone. The truth is all Washington has been gripped by ennui. Lassitude and apathy reign. No one bristles with energy or enthusiasm or zip; nothing seems to matter very much. America isn't threatened anymore. There's nothing at stake. The big goals—banning abortion, reforming the tax system, taming entitlements—aren't attainable any time soon. What's achievable now is mostly small stuff like hooking up kids in the hospital to the Internet.

So what's the problem? Maybe there isn't one. Maybe after 60-plus years of turmoil and passion and alarm in Washington, we've returned to what Warren Harding promised: "normalcy." And normalcy turns out to be pretty slow-paced and dreary. No depression, no New Deal, no world war, no Cold War, no civil rights movement, no Great Society, no Watergate, no Republican Revolution—all we've got is . . . sorry, the best I can come up with is Coffeegate.

What's palpably missing in Washington is tension. Remember when George Bush described his square-off with Dan Rather on the *CBS Evening News* as "tension city"? That was a howler, but at least people understood what he was getting at: a battle of importance between titans. In those days—it was 1988 when Bush and Rather clashed—there was a real struggle between America and the Soviet Union, and it produced real anxiety in Washington because there was something very large at stake, namely the survival of human freedom.

I'm glad we won the Cold War, but I miss the tension. For decades, the White House press dutifully maintained a "body watch" on the president. Wherever he went, they went (or tried to go). The reason was the president might be called upon at a moment's notice to respond to a nuclear attack by the Soviets. A military aide carrying the "football," a briefcase containing the nuclear codes, was always near the president.

All this was great for journalism. It made stories from Washington about foreign policy or military affairs seem all the more significant. And if you actually went to the front of the Cold War to cover, say, the anti-Communist contras in Nicaragua, your story might truly be important. In those days, when I drove home to Virginia each night, I'd notice the parking lot at the Pentagon. There were invariably plenty of cars. I'd imagine the war room in the Pentagon, brimming with officers assigned to track military movements and ominous events around the world, all through the night, every night. Now when I drive by, the parking lot is practically empty.

All politics in Washington today is either personal or about money. What, for example, do the prospects for a balanced budget agreement depend on? The efficacy of the relationship between Clinton and Senate majority leader Trent Lott. And what's the most divisive issue facing Congress? Newt. Democrats still want to drive him from Congress, but I suspect their main motive isn't ideological. They want to beat him, even as he tries to make himself more ideologically palatable to them. They just hate the guy.

Money is Washington's dirty little secret. Power, as Henry Kissinger said, may be the ultimate aphrodisiac, but money is the motivating force behind a lot of what happens, now more than ever. Journalists (that means me) want more money, so they fight their way onto TV and give paid speeches. Pols want money, so they quit and become lobbyists or write books. It was a book deal, remember, that initially got Gingrich in hot water. Clinton and the Democrats wanted money, so they did whatever it took to raise it. Hence, Coffeegate.

The last great moment in Washington was Desert Storm in 1990 and 1991. Then, decisions made at the White House and Pentagon and on Capitol Hill mattered. America's survival wasn't at stake, but our role in the world was. It was exciting to follow and write about. Every morning, I turned to the *Washington Times* to find out which anti-war wussies it had put in its Desert Storm Hall of Shame. Every press conference, I watched. Desert Storm was all I thought about or talked about. My stories concentrated on President Bush's heroic role in the war. As best I recall, he wasn't in a funk, not even for a single fleeting moment.

Fred Barnes

Slavery in Our Founding

Regarding Dinesh D'Souza's "Slavery and the Founders" (Feb. 3): D'Souza's defense of the Constitution's recognition and sanction of slavery, and his associated attack on blacks who criticized it, is also misguided. There is no heresy inherent in saying that the Constitution was not a perfect document. The founders were wrong to have sanctioned slavery, and the Constitution would have been better if they had grasped the nettle and outlawed slavery from the start.

Furthermore, Black History Month is an innocuous month when the government issues stamps honoring distinguished black Americans, and when school children learn about blacks who helped America fulfill its promise. Given our nation's persistent and tortured struggles with issues of race, taking some time to honor the likes of Harriet Tubman and Jackie Robinson is appropriate.

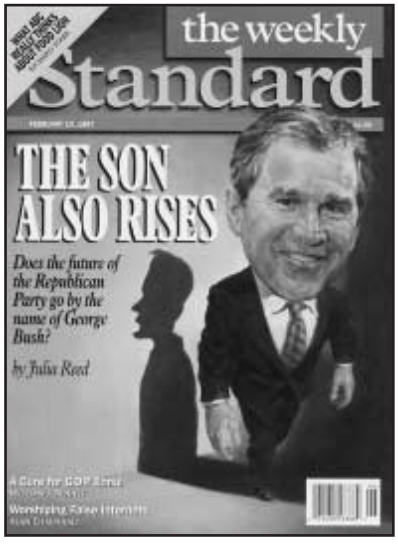
Reg Brown
Tallahassee, FL

Dinesh D'Souza writes incisively about the framers' enlightened language in the Constitution. I applaud his efforts to promote a better understanding of the framers' farsightedness in the face of our politically correct age. But when he moves from Thomas Jefferson and James Madison to Abraham Lincoln, his concern for sympathetic analysis of historical figures seems to carry him away. When he praises Lincoln for "working through rather than around the democratic process" to abolish slavery, he has gone beyond sympathetic analysis and headlong into historical revisionism.

Abraham Lincoln won the presidency with only 40 percent of the vote. That meager plurality was won by promising that he had "no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists" and acknowledging that he had "no lawful right to do so, and . . . no inclination to do so." When some of the southern states decided that they didn't believe this promise and seceded from the Union, Lincoln took action to prevent the secession of Maryland by arresting and imprisoning 19 state legislators and the mayor of Baltimore. This could hardly be described as "working through the democratic process."

When Lincoln finally broke his campaign promise and issued the Emancipation Proclamation, he applied it not to the states that elected him (several of which still allowed slavery), but only to those states he was seeking to subjugate by military force. Once again, it is hard to see how D'Souza could characterize this as a "democratic" act.

Stanley J. Watson
Helena, AL



Ennui, Not For Me

I believe Republicans have become diffident rather than stricken with ennui, as William J. Bennett claimed in "A Cure for GOP Ennui" (Feb. 10). It is largely due to the successful scorched earth strategy invoked by President Clinton and the Democrats in Congress last year. After the government shutdown in the early part of 1996, the president was able to coopt Republican ideas and at the same time hang on to a few governmental Golden Eggs. The final assault came in the form of the "Mediscare" tactic that sent Republicans reeling back to their districts hoping to avert an electoral disaster. Shortly after hanging on to Congress for the first time in 68 years, Republicans found themselves in another fix when their leader, Newt Gingrich, was harassed with allegations of ethics violations. All these issues have the Republicans thinking very negatively about what they can accomplish.

Michael J. Maher
Stony Brook, NY

Bill Bennett's article was a thoughtful reality-check for Republican leaders and activists even at the state and local levels.

Not to nitpick one of our movement's leading thinkers, but Bill Bennett was wrong in an assertion about Newt Gingrich. Bennett writes that "when he [Newt Gingrich] talks about issues of race . . . he reserves his greatest praise for Democrats like Charles Rangel and Eleanor Holmes Norton instead of colorblind Republicans like Ward Connerly."

In fact, Newt recently described Ward Connerly as "a genuine American hero." After describing him at length, Newt placed Connerly "in the same league as Havel, Dubcek, or Mandela or any other courageous person."

Never has Newt showered Rangel or Norton with these accolades. Ward Connerly is in a class by himself, and Newt has pointed this out.

Michael A. Ciamarra
Montgomery, AL

Newt and the Truth

Given the fact that William Tucker writes the truth in "The Truth About Newt's Class" (Feb. 3), how is it that the Republican members of the 104th and 105th Congress did not stand up and fight against an obvious miscarriage of House justice?

I for one applaud the speaker's drive to achieve a realistic, supportable government that benefits all Americans. We need leaders of vision and character who have long held honest principles. Considering the abuse heaped on the speaker over the past two years, it is no surprise that he decided to accept the judgment and get on with governance.

Richard J. Christofferson
Chester, CT

One Last Shot

On sports and politics, the more things change, the more they stay the same. In God's great scheme of life, sports have always trumped politics—

from America to ancient Greece.

Modern American life is very different from ancient Greek life. For one thing, they're all dead now, and we're not. (A fact not without historical significance.) Whereas the Acropolis was the epicenter of Greek society, Wal-Mart is the epicenter of ours. Whereas the Greeks esteemed truth and justice, we esteem Elmo. While they went gaga over columns, we go gaga over columnists. But there is one thing our two cultures have in common: In Bill Gates's America, just as in Alexander the Great's Greece, sports trump politics.

They always have. Yogi Berra, the Dan Quayle of baseball, predated Dan Quayle, the Yogi Berra of politics. (Yogi proclaimed that 90 percent of baseball is half mental long before Dan proclaimed that it's a terrible thing to lose one's mind.) Indeed, sports's dominance over politics predates the Constitution. Why do you think the First Continental Congress chose to meet in Philadelphia in the fall of 1774? The '74 World Series, a classic match-up between the Philadelphia Phillies and the New York Yankees, might have had something to do with it. Scholars say George Washington's own diary confirms it: "Great seats along the first-base line. Best chili dogs of any ballpark north of Williamsburg," Washington wrote. (And speaking of the Continental Congress, was it any accident that members chose to call themselves *patriots*? Of course not. The New England delegation always got its way.)

Although professional athletes might act like money is everything, it isn't. Television is. And what message does the Medium of All Media send?

Let's deduce. What is the official sports network? ESPN. And what is the congressional network? C-SPAN. So it really comes down to Chris ("HE . . . COULD . . . GO . . . ALL . . . THE . . . WAY!") Berman versus Brian ("Caller, you're on. Caller? Caller?) Lamb, doesn't it? Easy call.

Not until C-SPAN can come up with a zippy PoliticsCenter to rival ESPN's SportsCenter can they even be considered in the same league. (If Congress is so hot, why don't any of its color commentators—like, say, Lisa Meyers—use a telestrator to chart its action? And furthermore, who ever heard of the All-Meyers Team?)

Beyond the prima facie evidence of preferential media coverage, there's the broader, more damning case of general language usage. James Fallows, the newly installed editor of *U.S. News & World Report*, criticizes journalists in his book *Breaking the News* for, among many other things, appropriating the lingo of sports. "For years journalists have talked about public affairs using sports metaphors," says Fallows.

"They cover 'horse race politics.' Strategists lay out their 'game plan.' As election time nears, the campaign that is behind faces a 'fourth and long' situation with the 'clock ticking down,' so in desperation it tries a 'Hail Mary' play.

This is done by habit, and no one takes it seriously. But there is a more serious point. For the American media in the 1990s, public life *is* sports The entire press has become the sports page."

We should be so lucky. Sportswriting (as practiced by such masters as Tom Boswell and the late Red Smith) is some of the best writing there is. If anything, journalists—political journalists in particular—use too little sports lingo. Political campaigns would really come to life if the journalists covering them more freely employed such literary gems as "tater" and "wormburner" and "kidney punch."

Let's not kid ourselves. Everybody speaks the language of sports. Sports are important. Sports are real. "That presentation was a *home run*," we say. "You need to take a *time out*." "I *struck out* again." "We *won*." Such language is as natural as the air we breathe in 20th-century America. By contrast, it defies the laws of nature and of nature's God to drop political buzzwords like "filibuster" and "recuse" into normal conversation. (Case in point: "Dang, I got stuck in a bad *filibuster* up there north of I-64." It's just not done.)

People do not go around saying, "That's as American as *Capitol Hill* and apple pie." Rather they say, "That's as American as baseball and apple pie." There's a reason for this. Sports trump politics. The Greeks knew it. Even George Washington knew it.

CHRISTOPHER SLONE
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

the weekly
Standard

China: The Issue

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Americans have faced a pleasant but eerie international situation: Not only has there been no other power capable of challenging U.S. preeminence in the world, it has been hard even to imagine where such a threat could possibly emerge. The nations rich enough to pose a geopolitical challenge, like Germany and Japan, are our friends. The nations hostile to American leadership, like Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea, lack the wherewithal to challenge the international order we uphold. The newly democratic Russia is both too weak and too attracted to the success of Western democratic capitalism to seek the reconstitution of the empire Mikhail Gorbachev lost.

And China? Until recently, everyone knew that the reforms instituted by Deng Xiaoping in the late '70s and '80s were transforming the ancient Middle Kingdom into a modern capitalist and democratic society. The Chinese, it seemed, wanted nothing more than to join this new world order.

Well, they don't. And it is increasingly clear that the policies of the Chinese regime are *the* leading threat to that peaceful order. Things in China haven't turned out the way the optimists predicted. Yes, China has gotten richer, but it hasn't become democratic. On the contrary, President Clinton's State Department recently reported that the Chinese government has stamped out every last bit of an already-decimated dissident movement. Within the next five months it will begin doing the same in Hong Kong.

Meantime, China is the only major world power increasing rather than decreasing its defense spending. It has proven itself willing to use force or the threat of force to get its way, around Taiwan and in the South China Sea. It has provided nuclear weapons materiel, technology, and missiles to Pakistan, Iran, and Iraq in violation of agreements. Most experts agree that China aims in the near term to replace the United States as the dominant power in East Asia and in the long term to challenge America's position as the dominant power in the world. We have spent the last few years fretting, correctly, about the smaller "rogue" nations. But how will we handle the next "rogue" superpower?

In recent years, an increasingly stale bipartisan consensus has supported a policy of "engagement" with China, an attempt to coax that ambitious power into responsible international and domestic behavior. The Bush administration tried it without much luck; former secretary of state James A. Baker, III acknowledges in his memoirs that the policy left us "treading water." The Clinton administration, after flirting briefly with a tougher approach, fell back to "engagement" in the absence of any other ideas. A few weeks ago, the president admitted that the strategy wasn't working. But by the force of dull inertia, "engagement" still plods ahead.

It won't, we think, be able to plod on much longer. The unhappy fate of Hong Kong promises to reshape the course of U.S.-China relations over the next five months. And over the next few years, we are likely to see more confrontations over Taiwan like the one in March 1996 that required deployment of two American carrier task forces.

Maybe Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's trip to Beijing this month will garner a human rights "gift" from the Chinese. But there is no evidence that recent U.S. policy is having any success at reversing the general trend of increased Chinese authoritarianism at home and aggressiveness abroad. As the strategy of "engagement" is discredited by events, we will need fresh thinking that is more hard-headed and morally grounded. Some of that fresh thinking will come from the authors we publish in this special issue. And the means of changing American policy are in the hands of politicians like the three Republicans whose articles appear here as well.

The dream of a world that would not require American moral and strategic leadership has been a pleasant one. In the past few years, when it came to such thorny issues as spending money to preserve our defense capabilities, funding our diplomatic efforts overseas, and asserting the kind of leadership that could preserve the present happy state of affairs, the response of leaders in both parties has been: "Wake us up if there's any trouble."

Time to wake up. ♦

Broken Engagement

by Aaron Friedberg

In recent months, the Chinese government has handed down harsh prison terms to political dissidents. It has made clear its intention to curtail civil liberties when it takes control of Hong Kong in July. It has redoubled its efforts to restrict the flow of information reaching Chinese citizens over the Internet. It has reasserted and, in certain respects, extended its claims to oceans, islands, and resources in the South China Sea. It has been found diverting precision machine tools obtained through a commercial deal with a major U.S. aerospace firm from civilian to military purposes. And it has continued the modernization of its armed forces, especially its air and naval power-projection capabilities. Just over a year ago, Beijing orchestrated massive military exercises aimed at influencing the outcome of Taiwan's first democratic presidential election. This campaign of intimidation culminated with the launching of several salvos of ballistic missiles into the waters off Taiwan's two largest ports. According to published accounts, Chinese officials also took the occasion to remind their American counterparts that, in the end, Americans "care more about Los Angeles than they do about Taipei." The import of these remarks seems clear enough: If it goes too far in defending Taiwan, the United States risks nuclear war with the mainland.

These events have led not to a searching debate but to an almost ritualistic reaffirmation of the current U.S. policy of "engagement" with China. Seemingly shaken by last spring's Taiwan Straits crisis, top American officials, including the president and his new secretary of state, have forsworn any intention to confront or "contain" China, proclaiming instead their renewed desire to engage Beijing in trade, bilateral diplomacy, and multilateral institutions. Nor is this a controversial stance. The last few months have also seen a steady stream of reports by prestigious bipartisan study groups and articles by respected China scholars and officials in past Republican administrations urging a similar course and warning of the dangers of deviation. The consensus on this issue is solid, even stifling.

The advocates of engagement fall into two distinct camps: those who hope to transform China and those who say that they seek simply to tame it. The first group emphasizes the profound benefits of economic engagement. Foreign trade and investment will, they argue, promote Chinese development and unleash irresistible social and political forces. As China grows richer, it will become more democratic, and, as it becomes democratic, its foreign and military policies will grow less assertive and less troubling to its neighbors.

The second group of engagers is more cautious in its prognostications and, in any case, more circumspect in announcing its intention to undermine the current Chinese regime. China, in this view, does not have to become a democracy in order to be a good global citizen; its leaders merely have to learn to play by the rules. The proximate goal of U.S. strategy should therefore be to teach China's leaders the benefits of involvement in the full array of international economic and political institutions. The advantages of inclusion and, presumably, the costs of exclusion should be sufficient to induce the Chinese government to moderate its external behavior. If, over time, China becomes more open, more pluralistic, and more respectful of the rights of its citizens, so much the better; but such domestic changes are not essential and they should not be the primary objective of American policy.

"Transformers" and "tamers" differ on the precise ends they seek, but they are agreed on the means: America and its Asian allies may have to nudge China every once in a while to keep it on track, but they should do so discreetly, behind closed doors, and not through public denunciations, the imposition of economic sanctions, or, least of all, heightened military preparations or the formation of anything remotely resembling an anti-Chinese alliance. Such steps would have disastrous, self-defeating consequences. The thing to do is to trade, talk, "engage," and let history run its course.

This is a pleasing story. But is it plausible?

The alleged incompatibility of capitalism and authoritarianism is an article of faith among the transformers and, in the long run, they may be right. To date, however, China's Communist leaders have proven themselves quite adept at promoting market-driven economic growth while at the same time suppressing political dissent.

The link between democratization and peace is also not as simple or as direct as the transformers appear to believe. To the contrary, there are good historical reasons to fear that, as China's political processes become somewhat more open and its rulers are forced to compete more directly for mass approval and elite support, Chinese foreign policy could grow more, rather than less, assertive. This may already be happening. Public expressions of disapproval by student groups and military officers seem to have been one factor encouraging Beijing to

take a harder line in its most recent confrontation with Japan over ownership of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. It is a mistake to assume that a more pluralistic China (albeit one that is not yet a stable, established democracy) will necessarily be a more placid, contented power.

China's domestic transformation may take longer, and it may be more turbulent and less predictable in its course and consequences than the advocates of engagement are willing to acknowledge. The notion that China can be readily integrated into the existing international system should also be regarded with skepticism. It is condescending and ahistorical to assume that China wants nothing more than acceptance into "polite society" and a bigger share of the global economic pie. Nor is it obvious that high-level diplomatic dialogue will be sufficient to close the gap between the Chinese and American visions of a just and stable order. As in the past, the United States will remain committed to preventing any single power from dominating East Asia. But regional hegemony appears to be precisely what China's leaders have in mind. Not all differences can be split, or smoothed over with soothing talk.

The fact that engagement may eventually fail does not mean that it should be promptly abandoned. Adopting a more confrontational stance toward China at this point would be costly and potentially very risky. But the risks and costs are not all on one side. Continued dramatic economic growth, and virtually unlimited access to foreign technology, will permit China rapidly to increase its military capabilities. The balance of power in Asia will likely be far more favorable to China ten years from now than it is today, especially if, in the absence of any acknowledged threat, U.S. strength in the region is permitted to dwindle.

The avidity with which the United States appears to have embraced engagement, and its seeming reluctance to consider any alternative, could also have a number of unintended consequences. A willingness to be accommodating can easily be misinterpreted as weakness, thereby tempting aggression. The engagers worry that confrontation would delay reform and strengthen the hand of China's hardest hardliners, but, taken too far, their preferred policies could have precisely the same effect. Repeated assurances of our commitment to engagement, regardless of provocation, will lend credence to those in Beijing who argue that American pliability is a product of Chinese toughness. And our seeming indifference cannot help but be deeply demoralizing to those who genuinely favor reform.

An overly accommodating stance may also send the wrong signals to our present and potential allies in Asia. If the United States appears reluctant to stand up to China, smaller and weaker states will certainly not be eager to do so on their own, and they may begin to seek reinsurance by cutting separate diplomatic deals with the rising regional power. Beijing's ability to offer economic inducements (including access to its growing market and to lucrative government contracts) could also serve to make its neighbors more compliant. American planners may believe that they can rally a coalition to contain China when the need arises, but they could find this a difficult task if it ever does.

Current policy is also premised on the assumption that the United States will be able to modulate its own dealings with China, rewarding good behavior and punishing bad. This too could turn out to be harder in practice than it is in theory. The American policymaking process is an exceptionally open one. Powerful corporations already have enormous stakes in China, and they will lobby hard to prevent actions that could harm their interests. Any move toward greater toughness would also be met with counterpressures from Asian governments, which fear antagonizing China, and from overseas economic interests. (The fact that Chinese arms dealers can gain access to the White House suggests that Beijing, too, has a variety of ways of making its voice heard.)

Whatever its initial intentions, as engagement proceeds, Washington will find itself increasingly tempted to "define deviancy down," overlooking Chinese behavior that would seem to demand an economically costly, politically difficult, or strategically dangerous response. The engagers think that they are lulling China and coaxing it into accepting their vision of the future. But who is lulling whom?

The Clinton administration has committed itself to two major foreign-policy initiatives: enlarging NATO and engaging China. Of these, the second is at least as important as the first; indeed, given China's dynamism and Russia's decline, it will probably turn out in the long run to be much more so. Where the debate over enlargement has been open, thorough, and spirited, however, the discussion of engagement has been cramped and constrained, and it seems now to be on the verge of premature closure. This is unhealthy, and given the stakes, the complexities, and the uncertainties involved, it is also most unwise. It may be too early to abandon engagement, but it is not too late to begin a fundamental reexamination of its premises and potential dangers.

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A Reaganaut's View

by Gary L. Bauer

RECALL AN ARRESTING IMAGE watched by all the world: that young Chinese student standing alone against a column of tanks in Beijing. As the lead tank attempted to go around him, the fearless young man dodged to the side to head it off. The standoff, which seemed to last forever, was perhaps the most dramatic moment of the clash between the student democracy movement and the ruling Chinese Communist party. That clash ended in blood as nearly 700 students were massacred in Tiananmen Square on June 5, 1989. That brave young man has long since been presumed dead. It speaks volumes about China—and about us in the West—that we do not know for sure.

It did not take long for the U.S. foreign policy elite to rush to China to reassure her aging dictators that we were not responsible for student protests that had almost toppled their rickety regime. Then-national security adviser Brent Scowcroft and undersecretary of state Lawrence Eagleburger were sent on a high-level, secret mission to Beijing. They toasted the men who gave the orders to fire.

In 1992, Bill Clinton denounced President Bush for coddling China's dictators, but as president, Clinton famously "de-linked" China's most-favored-nation trading status from China's performance in human rights. What Clinton and Bush have in common is their mutual disdain for the foreign policy of Ronald Reagan. Reagan understood that American foreign policy must be consistent with American principles. Respect for human rights is not just a matter of Western style, like eating with knives and forks or wearing business suits. Reagan understood that when a regime crushes its domestic opponents, as China does; when it suppresses the Catholic church and jails evangelical pastors, as China does; when it beats and tortures its own people, as China does; or subjects them to a massive campaign of forced abortions, as China does, it is unlikely to be a stable partner in international trade or a force for world peace.

Advocates of *realpolitik* often dismiss a foreign policy based on principle as idealistic and unrealistic, but as long ago as 1976, Ronald Reagan was making it clear that in foreign policy, principle *is* realism.

At the Republican National Convention, where Reagan narrowly lost the presidential nomination to Gerald Ford, the Reagan delegates successfully forced a plank into the party platform that commended "that great beacon of human courage and morality, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, for his compelling message that we must face the world with no illusions about the nature of tyranny. . . . Ours will be a foreign policy that keeps this forever in mind." Solzhenitsyn, it is worth recalling, was not invited to the Ford White House because Henry Kissinger feared his presence would be too upsetting in the age of détente. The Reagan forces were outraged by that capitulation and successfully gained the Republican party's adherence to a foreign policy "based upon our deep belief in the rights of man, the rule of law, and guidance by the hand of God."

This was not just political boilerplate. Reagan understood that resistance to the U.S.S.R.'s global ambitions gave America the best chance of bringing about real change in Moscow. And his vision proved to be not only moral but practical as well. A generation of Republican foreign policy experts Kissinger primary among them, had merely managed the crisis in U.S.-Soviet relations. Without the Reagan vision of liberty, without his famous resolve, we would be managing our relations with Soviet totalitarianism to this day.

That is exactly what we are doing in China now. Beijing's conduct has become more menacing rather than more reassuring as a result of the weak Western response to its violations of the rights of man, the rule of law, and guidance by the hand of God. The rulers in Beijing seem to think that there is nothing they can do that will result in sanctions from the industrial democracies. China's leaders have exported weapons and nuclear technology to Middle Eastern states that are either bent on terrorism or determined to develop an "Islamic bomb." China has intimidated its neighbors, and it has has been linked to international drug trafficking.

No matter. Even though American business is not making much money (if any) from our relationship with China, its chief executives are adamant that nothing interfere with the potential of future profits. As China misbehaves, they lobby relentlessly for *permanent* most-favored-nation status. And China's dictators respond as totalitarians do when they are being appeased. In January, China announced its determination to scrap key guarantees that had been made to Britain about Hong Kong's future. Following the July 1 Chinese takeover of the British crown colony, China will repeal 25 Hong Kong laws. These include key provisions of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights, among them laws touching on freedom of speech, press, and assembly. In addition, many of Hong Kong's schools and charities are run by Christian organizations. Will any of these remain untouched when Beijing hoists its flag over the city?

If we have learned anything from this century of sorrow, it is that the goals of peace and prosperity are not achieved through appeasement and cowardice. Fifty years ago, we feared that Germany and Japan

might arise again to threaten our liberties and our lives. We faced an implacable Soviet Union. We forced the defeated Axis powers to accept constitutional guarantees of freedom and human dignity. Today, Japan and Germany are accepted members of the international community. Facing down the Soviet Union, we have seen a new Russia arise. With this new Russia, we have the hope for a stable relationship.

The ideals of the American Revolution are not narrow, culturally limited appeals without relevance beyond our shores. The young students in Beijing did not make papier-mâché models of Chairman Mao, but of Miss Liberty. They didn't quote from Marx, but from Jefferson. Our Declaration of Independence speaks to a universal longing in the soul of man for freedom and dignity. Once our schoolchildren sang: "Thy banners make tyranny tremble." I, for one, am unwilling that the American flag should make tyranny comfortable.

We may not be able to save the life of every brave young student in the world. But we should always make it clear that our prayers and our policies are on *his* side against the tanks of tyranny. And that we should never sell out his cause in order to sell a few more Big Macs.

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Reality and MFNtasy

by Jesse Helms

A REPORT PERSISTS IN WASHINGTON that the Clinton administration will soon seek permanent most-favored-nation status for the People's Republic of China—possibly in exchange for some concessions on human rights or for shaping up on standards for admission to the World Trade Organization. The office of the U.S. trade representative has denied the report, but it is becoming more and more credible considering Clinton's references to his new "inevitability" policy, according to which the United States need not confront China over its human rights abuses or violation of agreements because China's peaceful transformation to democracy is inevitable.

Even if freedom and democracy are inevitable in China, do not expect that I will greet the first elected president of post-Communist China by saying: "I thought about depriving the old regime of economic and political benefits, but since your success was inevitable, I had Jiang Zemin and Gen. Chi over for coffee at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee."

The inevitability theory does have one thing going for it: predictability. We can all fill in our 1997 calendars now. In mid-March, pencil in "U.S. cave-in at Geneva U.N. Human Rights Commission." In the last week of May, jot down "Renewal of MFN." You can be pretty specific about exactly what moment that will occur: Put it down for 6 p.m. the Friday before Memorial Day when the administration traditionally delivers the notice just in time to make the Saturday papers but after members of Congress have left for home.

Needless to say, supporters of permanent MFN look forward to the time when the annual debate over renewal can be avoided. They decry the "sterility" of the debate. Lobbyists for business interests chortle over the "annual exercise" and smugly shake their heads at misguided anti-MFN diehards. Their attitude is that America should put a stop to the annual debate over MFN because the Chinese know we are not serious. This is a variation of the inevitability theory: "Best not to have a debate over principle among elected representatives because when the majority favoring MFN wins, it just confuses the Chinese."

The idea that it would be valuable for China to enjoy permanent MFN status rests on the myth that all trade is a moderating force on repressive regimes and encourages reform. China's MFN status was restored in 1980, yet there is no evidence that this has led to an improvement in human rights in China. The 1996 State Department human rights report, just released, acknowledges that repression in China increased last year. According to the report, human rights abuses were widespread; the government used intimidation, exile, prison terms, and other measures to silence dissent. Persecution of independent Protestant and Catholic churches intensified. Minorities, including Tibetans, who are Buddhists, and Uighurs, who are Muslims, also experienced serious repression. China's human rights performance is dictated by the nature of the regime—an arbitrary, one-party state struggling to maintain as many aspects of totalitarianism as it can while reaping economic benefits for party leaders and the military.

In China, the government controls international trade and the economy. While the United States grants China the same trading terms we give to nations where our businessmen compete on a level playing field, China limits our access to its markets. Rushing to conclude an agreement before Madeleine Albright makes her first visit to China as secretary of state, U.S.

and Chinese negotiators last week cracked open China's markets for drapes and home furnishings. Typically, negotiators declined to specify how much greater access U.S. companies will have under the agreement. The U.S.-China Business Council and other MFN proponents rarely acknowledge that the United States has a $35-39 billion trade deficit with China. (China says the deficit is $10 billion.)

So China is not buying American; *Belgium* buys more U.S. goods than China does. Who benefits from this state of affairs? The Chinese government, of course. When China does buy from the United States, it predominantly buys aircraft, power-generating equipment, computers, and telecommunications equipment. U.S. trade with China is putting sophisticated technology—including machine tools useful in making not just commercial aircraft but bombers and missiles—in the hands of military-owned and controlled companies. The withdrawal of MFN for China is an effective tool precisely because China needs *our* markets. The trade surplus figures show that China relies on our consumers to buy its products.

China's growth is raising living standards, but wealth and property do not in and of themselves enable individuals to resist arbitrary government. Law does. It restrains the government and protects the citizens. But in China, the rule of law does not exist. Entrepreneurs who run afoul of a Chinese business with official connections often find themselves not in court but in jail. American businessmen have been targets of what amounts to official extortion for attempting to enforce a contract. Even companies with an ironclad legal claim against a state-owned enterprise are left holding the bag. Revpower, an American company, has been trying since 1993 to enforce a $6 million arbitral award that China is obligated to honor as a party to international agreements.

Supporters of "engagement" claim that China will be transformed into a responsible law-abiding state by its membership in the World Trade Organization and other multilateral organizations. China's behavior disproves this theory. Receiving MFN treatment for its products has not led to a more democratic, humane, or internationally responsible China, as demonstrated by its failure to respect either its citizens or agreements on issues from intellectual property to nuclear nonproliferation to Hong Kong. Renewing MFN will continue to help China's economy and military expand and modernize, while its citizens look for crumbs.

Jesse Helms, a Republican from North Carolina, is chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

A Tale of Three Firms

by Henry Sokolski

PERHAPS THE MOST SERIOUS ARGUMENT the Clinton administration makes in favor of its "engagement" policy towards China is a strategic one: Beijing's military capability requires it. We want to get China to stop selling strategic-weapons technology, and so we must offer Beijing some carrots —economic relationships with certain Chinese firms—to ensure a safer world. The policy sounds sensible. But it turns out that the carrots we offer are actually feeding firms that are responsible for the proliferation we want to end.

Indeed, the White House has not only held off penalizing these firms, as American law authorizes; it has actually rewarded them with U.S.-subsidized nuclear cooperation and sweetheart U.S. satellite transfers. The administration's hope is that this will get China to buy American and behave. But if the last few years of such "engagement" are any guide, it's not working. A brief look at just three of the Chinese firms benefiting from U.S. largesse tells the tale.

First, there is the case of a Chinese firm that is actively involved in the proliferation of facilities necessary to produce the raw materials for nuclear bombs.

The Chinese National Nuclear Corporation builds China's nuclear plants. Six years ago, it was caught building a large research reactor and a laboratory suitable for making bomb material in a remote, defended location in Algeria.

And in 1994, two years after China signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, press reports revealed that the Chinese National Nuclear Corporation was building a secret military reactor in Pakistan. Then, the firm signed a series of contracts to build two reactors and a uranium hexafluoride plant in Iran for supposedly "peaceful" purposes. Finally, in the fall of 1995, a subsidiary of the firm shipped 5,000 ring magnets—components critical for making bomb-grade uranium—to Pakistan.

How did the White House respond? When asked about the production reactor, then-Pakistani president Benazir Bhutto professed no knowledge of it. For the White House, that was good enough. As for the ring magnets, the administration seemed oblivious. Indeed,

just weeks before intelligence reports about the sale were leaked to the press, the White House gave its blessing to $800 million in loans guaranteed by the U.S. Import-Export Bank to help Bechtel and Westinghouse complete a reactor for the Chinese National Nuclear Corporation. And even after Congress complained about the loan, the administration strained to authorize visas for six of the firm's nuclear engineers to work on Westinghouse's AP-600 Program, a reactor-design project that has already cost taxpayers more than $64 million.

Taken aback by congressional objections, the White House did relent on the loans and visas for a short while. But the State Department came to China's defense. Surely the firm and the Chinese leadership did not sell the ring magnets knowingly; after all, they denied they had ever made the sale. Thus, the Pakistan deal must have been the inadvertent act of an unwitting subordinate. Once the Chinese admitted that the sale had occurred and promised not to sell nuclear items to weapons programs again, the White House heralded the progress, approved the loans, and admitted the firm's engineers to the United States.

The Iran deal is still an open case. Neither the reactors nor the uranium hexafluoride plant has been built, leading the White House to claim success. But China has refused to void any of its contracts for these projects with Iran or to return any of Iran's down payments. Moreover, both China and Iran have publicly affirmed their intention to build the hexafluoride plant—a facility that is inherently difficult to safeguard against and that makes no economic or technical sense unless Tehran is trying to make bombs.

White House officials, however, remain confident. Why? As an administration official explained to the press, "The Chinese have told us that based on their expectations that we would be able to build on our nuclear cooperation program, they will not execute this contract." The nuclear cooperation he is talking about was tentatively agreed to in 1985 but has been held up by Congress until the president can certify that China will not participate in nuclear proliferation. Now, officials at the State Department say they haven't observed any Chinese nonproliferation violations in the last few months and hope the president will certify compliance this summer or fall.

We also have the cases of two firms owned by the Chinese military. The China Precision Machinery Import and Export Co. sells missiles. Its corporate twin, Chinese Great Wall Industry Corp., sells satellite launch services. As a result of their ties to the United States, China's missile technology is getting increasingly sophisticated, and missiles are proliferating elsewhere.

In June 1991, the United States levied sanctions on both these firms for exporting nuclear-capable missile technology to Pakistan. After eight months in which the firms were denied critical U.S. high technology and capital, the Chinese relented and promised to adhere to the internationally agreed-to guidelines on missile-technology control. The State Department declared victory, the sanctions were lifted—and the China Precision Machinery Import and Export Co. continued to export M-11 missile items to Pakistan. In August 1993, after a year of lectures, the State Department again imposed sanctions.

But the newly installed Clinton White House was not fully on board. Sanctions had jeopardized the launch of three U.S.-made satellites by Chinese Great Wall Industries, and both the satellite manufacturers and their Asian customers were furious. The Chinese refused even to talk about missile nonproliferation unless the United States released the satellites and agreed to put U.S. arms sales to Taiwan on the table as well. Whereupon the White House delivered the satellites, agreed to China's negotiating agenda, and lifted sanctions entirely after China again promised to adhere to the provisions of the international Missile Technology Control Regime.

But that was not enough; "engagement" required something more positive. So in March 1995, President Clinton announced a new agreement guaranteeing the bidding rights of Chinese Great Wall Industries to launch more U.S.-made satellites than ever before. At nearly $50 million a launch, the agreement was worth over $500 million—and came even after the firm suffered a series of launch failures.

More important, the new agreement meant that America would continue to help with Chinese development of long-range military rockets. How? Because the very motors and guidance sets that are used to position satellites in space can also be used to target warheads against Tel Aviv, Riyadh, Los Angeles, or Taiwan. The "peaceful" launching of U.S. satellites has inadvertently served as a test bed for China's development of ever more precise and threatening missiles.

Only months after the White House dropped its sanctions against the two firms, U.S. intelligence determined that the China Precision Machinery Import and Export Co. had sent Pakistan 30 "complete" M-11s along with a rocket factory, and that the firm was selling Iran the missile production technology and advanced anti-shipping missiles necessary to target U.S. forces in the Gulf.

In December 1995, the People's Liberation Army announced the completion of the Great Wall Project, a system of missile bases using technology marketed by the China Precision Machinery Import and Export Co.—and three months later aimed those missiles at Taiwan. And, while using satellite launchers owned by

Chinese Great Wall Industries, the PLA has been working furiously to develop a variety of highly precise missiles with multiple warheads.

It's easy to explain away these developments. State Department officials emphasize that some of these deals were made before China's latest nonproliferation pledges. The White House has even denied that China's missile sales to Iran are destabilizing.

But two things are clear. First, the United States can hardly be credible in opposing Chinese proliferation if its officials spend more time trying to waive sanctions against China than they do trying to deter its proliferating behavior. Second, whether sanctions are levied or not, we should not be subsidizing China's nuclear and missile industries. Period.

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PLA Incorporated

by Richard Bernstein & Ross H. Munro

You can find Spunky the dog and Princess the cat in many American toy stores. They are cute and cuddly. They are also manufactured and imported into the United States by a branch of the Chinese People's Liberation Army or, to be precise, by a subsidiary of Norinco, the Chinese ordnance company that supplies the PLA with most of its weapons.

Many Americans will be surprised to learn that the Chinese military-industrial complex, with the People's Liberation Army at its center, has incorporated many companies in the United States to sell products and obtain technology. Researchers at the AFL-CIO have identified 10 PLA-sponsored business groups in the United States, each of which typically has several subsidiary companies.

The army engages in toy and frozen-fish exports to the United States to earn the foreign exchange that it needs for its military modernization program. And exporting to the United States has, since the late 1980s, become China's surest way of earning foreign exchange. Indeed, in August 1996, the U.S. Commerce Department announced a kind of milestone in Sino-American relations. In June 1996, America's trade deficit with China, growing rapidly for the previous few years, for the first time exceeded its trade deficit with Japan. (China's surplus for that month was $3.3 billion; Japan's was $3.2 billion.) But the gap for August was bigger by far—a $4.7 billion deficit with China, almost $1 billion more than with Japan. These figures, suggesting that the total 1996 American trade deficit with China would probably exceed $40 billion, indicated that the American operations of PLA, Inc., were only one aspect of the Sino-American trade relationship, the fastest growing in the world.

In the late 1980s, China began consciously to model itself on the other East Asian countries that had used export earnings to foster high-tech industries and achieve remarkably high levels of economic growth. China began with a crude and partial form of export-driven growth. Using a policy of mostly indirect state subsidies and other types of favored treatment for local industries, China achieved a huge and rapid increase in exports. In 1989, exports accounted for 12 percent of China's gross domestic product. Five years later, exports represented 23 percent of GDP. In this same period, China began running overall trade surpluses, lapsing back into deficit only once, and by a small amount. It was also during these few years that China's trade surplus with the United States increased tenfold.

Now China is becoming increasingly sophisticated in focusing its subsidies on higher-value-added exports, which are then priced artificially low in the American market, unfairly undercutting what would otherwise have been competitive American-made products. This is one of the more direct ways in which China has learned from earlier Japanese industrial strategy. The method has produced a rapid shift in the nature of Chinese exports, away from low-wage, labor-intensive activities and toward more high-tech, value-added ones. And so, popular perception to the contrary, the share of the American trade deficit with China represented by cheap products made by cheap labor has been declining steadily since 1990.

This surprising fact emerges from our analysis of American trade data over the past several years. We looked at the top 20 imports from China year to year from 1990 to the first half of 1996. We divided these imports into labor-intensive products, like garments and toys, on the one side and, on the other, products involving increases in value because of technology—telecommunications equipment, electrical machinery, and computers.

The trend shown in the resulting figures is strong and unambiguous. In 1990, labor-intensive goods

accounted for 79 percent of our top-20 imports from China; value-added items accounted for 12 percent. By the first half of 1996, the picture had changed dramatically. The proportion of labor-intensive imports had dropped by one-third, to 56 percent. And the value-added imports had more than doubled, to 29 percent. These trends have been constant since the 1980s and, if anything, are now accelerating.

Chinese officials are secretive when it comes to their means of subsidizing value-added exports, but now and then they inadvertently disclose some information about their methods. Zhang Ji is the deputy director of the State Mechanical and Electrical Products Import and Export Office. Boasting in late 1995 that China's exports of electrical and machinery goods were running 60 percent ahead of the previous year, he said an important part of the explanation was that a special government bank had given preferential loans to the industry. In other words, the industry benefits from a financial subsidy.

China's overall economic strategy is not aimed merely at a kind of mercantilist accumulation of foreign exchange via trade practices weighted in China's favor. It is also aimed at enhancing the acquisition of the most advanced Western technology, including "dual use" technology that can be used for both civilian and military purposes. One way China does this is by requiring foreign companies to manufacture in China some of the components that go into the products sold there. To continue doing business in China, an American company is required not only to transfer advanced manufacturing technology to China but also to train a Chinese workforce, thereby protecting profits in the short term but helping to produce an eventual competitor at the same time. The name normally given to this is "offsetting"—transferring a portion of production work to a foreign country in order to secure sales there. Many countries, including Japan, have done this for years. But China is quickly becoming a master at squeezing the maximum benefit out of offsets.

One in-depth report on China's assiduous pursuit of offsets focused on the creation of a factory in Shanghai by the McDonnell Douglas Corporation, the manufacturer of passenger jets as well as of such mainstays of the American Air Force as the F-15 fighter plane. In the early 1980s, eager for a share of the China passenger-plane business, McDonnell Douglas went into a cooperative venture with China's state-owned Shanghai Aviation Industrial Corporation. China assured the company a major share of the sales of narrow-body aircraft. In exchange, McDonnell Douglas agreed to have Chinese workers assemble the planes from kits at the Shanghai factory. The arrangement, as the *Wall Street Journal* put it in an investigation of McDonnell Douglas's strenuous efforts to make money in China, involved "one of the largest technology transfers in history." The company, the newspaper said, "provided enough technical data to fill a library." Moreover, the McDonnell Douglas venture became a model for China's deals with other high-tech companies. "No multinational, be it AT&T Corp. or General Motors Corp., can expect an entry pass without divulging technology early and often," the *Journal* reported.

"Technology transfer" has come to sound ominous, but it is, in fact, a term that covers a wide variety of activities. Some transfers are open, legal, and on balance good for the American economy. For example, Chinese companies sometimes buy, dismantle, and ship to China obsolete American steel mills and pulp mills that are no longer cost-effective and are often heavy polluters. At the other extreme are activities that are against American law. Most technology transfers to China fall in the gray area between those two poles.

But a considerable portion of Chinese efforts in this country to transfer high technology back home are unambiguously illegal. Recently the Central Intelligence Agency named China as one of the three top countries "extensively engaged in economic espionage." More explicit and damning were the conclusions reached by the American Society for Industrial Security, International. In its March 1996 report, *Trends in Intellectual Property Loss*, it named China as the most likely thief of "sensitive economic information."

The operations of PLA, Inc., in the United States signal the final way that China shapes its economic relationship with the United States, both to obtain technology and to earn foreign exchange. In fact, the armed forces are not the only Chinese institution that controls an American branch operation. It is not certain, in fact, exactly how many Chinese-owned companies have been established in the United States, but it's generally agreed that they already number in the thousands. *Business Week* estimates that 100 Chinese-owned companies "have employed sophisticated maneuvers to acquire listed companies in North America, gaining backdoor access to financial markets."

Buying an already-operating American company is another method used by Chinese state-run enterprises either to increase their revenues or to engineer technology transfers. One example is Southwest Products Company, which makes specialized bearings for all the major aircraft manufacturers in the United States. Its bearings are part not only of civilian airliners but also of NASA's space shuttle and the Defense Department's C-17 military transport. Southwest was purchased by Sunbase Asia, Inc., a NASDAQ-listed company controlled by a Chinese-Hong Kong group that

has direct, cross-ownership links with a bearings company in China's northeast. Sunbase executives make no secret of the fact that the intention is to transfer technology from California to the Harbin bearings company, an operation that would be perfectly legal under American law.

Still, it appears that the PLA operates most extensively in the United States for both technology and profit. A study carried out by the AFL-CIO, largely by examining shipping records of companies with direct export rights, found: "Not only are the larger Departments and Military Regions involved in trade, but the PLA Navy, Air Force, the 2nd Artillery, all of the military districts [there are 28 of them], and many of the Group Armies [there are 24] also manage their own import/export entities."

The largest PLA company appears to be an entity owned by the General Logistics Department called the Xinxing Corp., which acts as export agent for goods produced by its own plants in China, and also as an import agent for other military-run enterprises. The value of its trade was just under $16 million in 1994. Norinco has several American subsidiaries—Beta Chemical, Beta Toys, Larin, Forte Lighting, and others—that distribute its products throughout the United States. The overall profits of Norinco in 1994 were approximately $31 million. Jeffrey Fiedler, an official of the AFL-CIO, put the situation succinctly to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in June 1996: "I don't think any member of the House or Senate would say we should support Most Favored Nation status for the PLA. . . . Allowing Chinese military companies to do business in the U.S. . . . is tantamount to subsidizing the modernization of the Chinese military."

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Land of the Un-Free

by Christopher Cox

The Clinton administration, finally and completely converted from candidate Clinton's 1992 attacks on President Bush's China policy, now subscribes religiously to the notion that commercial engagement with the People's Republic of China will leaven the militaristic impulses of nascent hardliners and *ipso facto* lead to political liberalization and rectification of human rights abuses. As Robert Kagan has rightly pointed out in these pages, this naive view exhibits an almost Marxian economic determinism.

But there is an even more fundamental flaw in the thinking behind the "engagement" approach. It is premised on the notion that there is a "free-market communism" with which we can engage. There is no such thing. Communist China is not a free market and shows no signs of becoming one.

Chinese individuals (let alone foreign nationals) are not free to interact on their own in the economic sphere, so a handful of large multinational corporations preponderates in the Chinese "market." Just as in the former Soviet Union—where even under Brezhnev firms such as Pepsico and International Harvester followed Armand Hammer's example and profited—it requires the approval of party functionaries to undertake business transactions.

Just when the Communist government will deign to grant its approval, and when it will not, is inherently unknowable because there is no enforceable positive law in China. Often the most important rules are the unpublished ones—a fact that creates all-too-tempting opportunities for the official corruption that pervades China's "market" economy.

Transparency International, a non-profit watchdog organization, recently rated China the fifth most corrupt nation in the world (behind Nigeria, Pakistan, Kenya, and Bangladesh). Freedom House's latest *World Survey of Economic Freedom* reports that Communist officials "detained or seized passports of foreigners to exert pressure in commercial disputes" and that "kidnappings and other forms of violence" are used to settle debts and enforce contracts.

It is in the area of contracts that we can truly see the heart of the problem. Contract disputes are governed by a hodgepodge of at least five overlapping and inconsistent authorities. An even larger difficulty is the Communist government's frequent preference for relationships (*guanxi*) and personal empathy (*ganqing*) in place of the actual terms of contracts. This anti-legal atmosphere has, in a host of instances, reduced what should be binding commercial arrangements to nothing more than a starting point for further negotiations.

This extends to international agreements as well. After China's initial economic liberalization in the late 1970s, there followed a wave of abrupt, unilateral cancellations of contracts with foreign concerns. Similar

cycles of boom-and-bust contract signings and cancellations have followed regularly. The Communist government's record of enforcing foreign arbitration awards is abysmal. Chinese courts regularly refuse to honor them despite the PRC's accession ten years ago to the New York Convention on Foreign Arbitral Awards.

Similarly, both domestic commerce and international trade are impeded by the arbitrariness and secrecy of Chinese "law." According to a 1996 Clinton administration report, despite Communist China's 1992 commitment to publish all laws and regulations affecting imports, a large number of directives remain unpublished.

Nor does the Chinese government consider international agreements to be binding. Charlene Barshefsky, then the acting U.S. trade representative, was forced in June 1996 to negotiate an intellectual-property understanding with the PRC *identical* to one signed in March 1995.

Freedom of choice in occupation for Chinese citizens is severely limited. Within the state-owned sector of the economy, which employs two-thirds of the working population in urban areas, there is no occupational choice whatsoever. In non-state enterprises, the government regulates access to employment by refusing to grant residency permits (and social and health services) to the hundreds of millions of Chinese who float into urban areas in search of any alternative to working for the state. While the Communist party boasts of making its high-handed decisions about people's lives on the basis of labor "market" prices, its treatment of human beings as state-owned chattel marks one of the key aspects of classic socialist central planning.

Freedom of commercial speech does not exist in China. The Communist regime is working hard not only to censor the PRC's version of the Internet, but also to restrict the availability of financial information and news of commercial affairs even among business journalists. The *New York Times* reported in February 1996 the promulgation of regulations steering the flow of electronic information through monitoring "ports" controlled by the PRC's Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications. In April 1996, the official news agency, Xinhua, announced that no foreign news agency could publish economic information in China without prior government examination and approval.

Nor can an economy that employs so much slave labor be considered a free market. Some 6 to 8 million people are currently captive in the notorious Laogai slave labor camps. According to the latest official statistics, the Laogai operates 140 export enterprises, selling to over 70 nations abroad. Slave labor is responsible for producing many key commodities, including graphite, rubber, and asbestos. One-third of Chinese tea is grown by Laogai prisoners.

Private rights of ownership in real estate are negligible. The result, in combination with state-run enterprises, has been predictable: A recent study by the congressional Joint Economic Committee, *China's Economic Future*, found that state subsidies have dangerously depressed farm prices, shielded unprofitable enterprises from competition, and limited production of food for China's destitute population. Private ownership of land, meanwhile, is simply forbidden in units larger than so-called Township Village Enterprises.

Compounding the lack of market norms in China is the extensive influence of party-controlled businesses that do more than compete with private firms. The children and relatives of top party cadres—known as "princelings" to Sinologists—have routinely been appointed to run the "businesses" created under Deng Xiaoping's order in the last two decades.

One notorious princeling is He Ping, Deng's son-in-law, the president of the Poly Group—an enormous conglomerate run by the People's Liberation Army that is engaged in arms sales as well as commercial enterprises. Through Poly and similar firms, Deng has found a "free market" means of subsidizing the Communist Chinese armed forces, now allied with Iran and Syria. But the damage these "market" activities inflict extends further: Last year, He Ping's company was indicted in San Francisco for smuggling thousands of AK-47s to California street gangs and offering for sale machine guns, mortars, and shoulder-fired missiles that could "take out a 747," in the words of one Poly agent.

In the teeth of such overpowering evidence that the Communist Chinese economy is anything but a free market, many—and not just apologists in the Clinton administration—argue that its economic progress is miraculous. If China still has a Communist economy, they insist, then how has it managed to double its GNP in a decade?

Well, just how significant is that, in fact? It sounds impressive only because of the base of impoverishment against which it is measured. Even at its current level, Communist China's per capita GNP in dollars ranks *below* such emblems of Third World poverty as Lesotho, the Congo, Senegal, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Nor should China be judged by a different standard because of some inherent strain in the Chinese national culture. The Chinese who live across the strait on Taiwan have a thriving free-enterprise economy with a per capita GNP over 20 times that of the Communist mainland. It is a sobering and sad fact that the PRC purchases far less from the United States

than does tiny Taiwan, despite the fact that the Communist giant has over 50 times its population.

A few glib observers have characterized China's economy as "market Stalinism." This is half right. Communist China's economic order is indeed Stalinist. Just as Stalin's Gulag added massive slave labor to a centrally planned, state-controlled system and relied extensively on Communist-controlled "enterprises," China's Communists in the late 20th century continue to burden their economy with a repressive statism only slightly ameliorated by the heavily publicized Special Economic Zones.

None of this means that American influence cannot work to change things for the better. But instead of encouraging progress, the Clinton administration's passive China policy has coincided with the Communist government's alarming moves against civil and economic liberties, against dissidents like Wei Jingsheng, and against Hong Kong.

The trend is away from, not toward, the rule of law in China. This year's State Department human rights report offers a grim assessment: "All public dissent against the party and government was effectively silenced by intimidation, exile, the imposition of prison terms, administrative detention, or house arrest. No dissidents were known to be active at year's end."

The antidote to Communist corruption, slave labor, and denial of commercial freedoms in China is free enterprise, and U.S. policy toward China must be premised on promoting it. Our most significant lever to accomplish this is not most-favored-nation status, but China's pending application to enter the World Trade Organization.

If China wants WTO membership, it must first meet the organization's standards: minimal central planning, private ownership, free-trade policies, and the determination of economic decisions according to comparative advantage.

But instead of insisting on these requisites, the Clinton administration is ploughing on with negotiations to bring China into the WTO now, as is—the world's largest Communist country. Charlene Barshefsky observed on January 29 that in WTO accession talks, "China's offers thus far have been largely inadequate." But by naming China soft-liner Lee Sands as chief negotiator with China on its admission to the WTO, the Clinton State Department has signaled Beijing that America won't press hard for economic, political, or human rights reforms.

Last spring, President Clinton's assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, Winston Lord, paid a visit to my Capitol Hill office. I asked him why the State Department and our president could not say clearly that we hope China will rid itself of communism. He told me he agreed, of course: It would be better if China were not Communist. But *we just can't say so publicly*, he added knowingly. Thus, with a silence as eloquent as President Reagan's international appeals for freedom that helped topple the Soviet Empire, the Clinton administration made clear it was forswearing a policy of anti-communism.

The Clinton policy ostensibly supports free trade. But in fact it will have the opposite effect. Not until the demise of communism and the advent of genuine free enterprise in China will we truly witness the kind of vibrant trade between our two countries that we, the Chinese, and the world deserve.

Christopher Cox, a Republican from the 47th District of California, is chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee.

Waiting for Al

by William C. Triplett, II

Vice President Al Gore won't defend the integrity of his own legislation. Consequently, 15,000 American servicemen and women are threatened by modern Chinese cruise missiles in the hands of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Navy.

The legislation in question is the Iran-Iraq Arms Non-proliferation Act of 1992, commonly known as the Gore-McCain Act for its principal Senate sponsors, Al Gore and John McCain. Sections 1604 and 1605 of the act prohibit companies and foreign governments from transferring advanced conventional weapons to Iran or Iraq. Section 1608(a) defines "advanced conventional weapons" to include "cruise missiles." The act grants the president discretionary authority to impose a wide range of sanctions, from denial of foreign aid to a full trade and investment embargo.

The Chinese call their cruise missile the Eagle Strike, but the NATO designation is the C-802. Four C-802 missile systems are aboard each of the 10 Hudong missile boats the Chinese have delivered to Iran. The Chinese have also back-fitted five older French missile boats in the Iranian inventory with the

C-802, for a total of 60 launchers.

The C-802 is a very dangerous anti-shipping weapon. An Argentine Exocet, which the C-802 resembles, sank the *H.M.S. Sheffield* in the Falklands War, and in 1987 two Iraqi Exocets badly damaged the *U.S.S. Stark*, killing 37 American sailors.

There may be worse to come. The China Precision Machinery Import-Export Corporation is already offering for sale a third-generation cruise missile, the C-101/301 series. This weapon is ramjet powered, giving it a speed in excess of Mach 2. It also has an armor-piercing warhead twice the weight of the C-802s. The Exocets that struck the *Stark* were not supersonic, but the American sailors still had a response time of only 14 seconds. In the close confines of the Persian Gulf, it's doubtful the Navy could protect itself against a surprise attack from a barrage of supersonic cruise missiles.

It is not a state secret that Chinese military companies have transferred the C-802 to Iran. In full view of its neighbors, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Navy test-fired two of them in 1996—one off the back of a Combattante II and one from a Hudong. CIA director John Deutch complained about Chinese cruise-missile sales to Iran at an open Senate Intelligence Committee hearing last February. In June, undersecretary of state Lynn Davis told the House International Relations Committee of the "evidence" of the sale.

This should be an open-and-shut case for the most severe sanctions. However, in answer to a question from Sen. Robert Bennett of Utah last month, the State Department said, "The administration has concluded at present that the known transfers are not of a destabilizing number and type."

This doesn't wash with the Navy. In the first seven months of 1996, Fifth Fleet commander Admiral Scott Redd held three news conferences to denounce Chinese cruise-missile sales to Iran, and it is known all over Washington that the Navy is seething about the Clinton administration's failure to act. The admirals are fully aware of the threat these weapons pose to their sailors and airmen and the quantum leap in capability they give the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Navy.

Why is the vice president silent? He was the principal drafter of the sanctions legislation. When his legislation was being considered in 1992, he addressed the president of the Senate as follows: "Mr. President, it is abundantly clear that we need to raise the stakes high, and we need to act without compunction if we catch violators."

So where is the vice president? Why is there no indication at all that he is standing up for his own legislation or for American servicemen? Is the administration so committed to accommodating China at all costs that the vice president is rendered speechless?

William C. Triplett, II, former chief Republican counsel to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is writing a book on the Chinese military.

Questions About Sanctions

by Chris Smith

As a candidate for president, Bill Clinton said America should stop "coddling dictators." He promised that U.S. trade relations would be driven by human rights policy, not vice versa. Many Americans believed him, but the Chinese dictators never did. On a visit to China in early 1994, I reminded Chinese officials of Clinton's ultimatum that most-favored-nation status would be denied unless China showed "substantial progress" in a number of areas, including the release of political prisoners and the elimination of such practices as slave labor and torture. They told me they were not worried: Clinton would back down.

A few months later, Clinton announced that MFN would be "de-linked" from human rights. Instead, the United States would pursue a strategy Clinton called "comprehensive engagement." This policy (since renamed "strategic engagement") consists primarily in trying to have a diplomatic and economic relationship with Beijing that is as similar as possible to those we have with governments that do not kill, torture, and imprison innocent people. In theory, this relationship should give us frequent opportunities to remind Beijing firmly and politely that it should discontinue these practices.

The ensuing debate in Congress and elsewhere has mostly been not about the morality of this policy—or even about how it differs from coddling dictators—but about whether it works. On one side are the Clinton Democrats, Kissinger Republicans, and business lobbyists who argue that "isolating" Beijing would make the regime angry and thus make things even worse for the very people we wish to protect. This is also the nearly unanimous position of the career bureaucracy at

the State Department, whose institutional culture strongly prefers agreement to disagreement.

On the other side is an even more diverse bipartisan coalition, including many of us who supported Clinton in his original policy of linking trade policy to human rights. We argue that it is time to admit that engagement with Beijing is an experiment that has failed. Since 1994 there has been regression, not progress, on every single important human-rights question: There are more political prisoners, more summary executions, a more brutal regime in Tibet, tighter controls on political and religious expression. Nor can we help but notice that when the strategic-engagement faction decides something is really important—most notably the effort to get China to respect international copyrights—it quickly resorts to the very trade sanctions that same faction declines to use as a weapon in the struggle for human rights.

Almost everyone now agrees that economic sanctions played an important role in bringing about an end to apartheid in South Africa. It appears that they also work—or at least work better than the alternative, which is neither to impose nor threaten sanctions—in persuading the Beijing government to change its policies on videocassettes and computer software.

Indeed, one of the few areas in which both parties and all factions agree is that sanctions were appropriate and effective in the matter of Chinese video and software piracy. After all, whatever else the people who run the Chinese government may be, they are not stupid. The value they attach to the United States as a market for their expanding economy is apparently great enough to outweigh whatever reluctance they may have to lose face by publicly yielding to the threat of sanctions when it comes to software piracy.

So it seems reasonable to ask for an explanation from those who argue that sanctions will be ineffective in persuading the very same government to change its policy on, say, torture.

Perhaps such an explanation exists. Perhaps Beijing is simply more attached to torture than to software piracy. Or perhaps the administration and its supporters would agree that economic sanctions can work to modify Beijing's behavior, but only if they are held in reserve for occasional use on particularly urgent issues. In this view, the very multiplicity of human rights violations in China could be seen as an argument against the effectiveness of sanctions. Indeed, the breadth of the term "human rights violations," along with the frequency with which some of us in Congress have found it necessary to invoke the term when discussing China, may have helped to lull the strategic-engagers into viewing such violations as mere abstractions. This makes it possible to avoid case-by-case analysis of whether a serious threat of sanctions might help to end particularly egregious human rights abuses—or of whether some practices are so loathsome that it is immoral to continue business relationships with those who engage in them, even if terminating the relationship will not stop the practices.

This suggests the basis for a useful dialogue on China policy. We in the human rights coalition should begin by asking our counterparts two questions:

1) Do you believe that economic sanctions (and similar measures such as denying visas to foreign government officials) should *never* be used to deter, punish, or protest unacceptable non-economic conduct by other governments?

2) If not, exactly what sorts of conduct would justify the imposition of sanctions?

Once we have the answers to these questions, the debate will be focused where it ought to be: on the application of agreed principles to what is really happening in China. The remaining questions ask themselves:

3) Are sanctions appropriate, for instance, against a government that has sentenced Wei Jing-sheng, Wang Dan, and hundreds of others to long prison terms for the crime of expressing political opinions?

4) What about a government that orchestrates the arrest and disappearance of a six-year-old boy? Gendun Choekyi Nyima was six years old at the time he was recognized as the eleventh Panchen Lama, and at the time of his arrest. Now he is seven, assuming he is still alive.

5) Are sanctions justified by the recent announcement of a systematic attempt to eradicate the Roman Catholic church by imprisoning priests, bishops, and lay people who refuse to renounce the pope and swear allegiance to the "Catholic Patriotic Association" run by the government?

6) Are they justified by the similar persecution of many thousands of Protestant "house church" members, Tibetan Buddhists, and Muslims in Xinjiang and elsewhere?

7) What of the routine use of torture—including but not limited to electric cattle prods—on political and religious prisoners?

8) Are sanctions justified by a population-control program that not only requires women to have abortions if they become pregnant with an illegal child, but sees to it that those who refuse are often dragged physically to the abortion centers?

9) Are they justified by an entrenched military that remains unrepentant for the killing of hundreds of peaceful demonstrators eight years ago and whose top general recently announced on a tour of the United States that "nobody died at Tiananmen"?

Even after a detailed discussion of these things that the Chinese government does to its people, some will

argue that trade is still the surest route to human rights because a free economy will inevitably lead to a "demand" for other freedoms. The biggest problem with this argument—aside from the Chinese military's previous responses to such demands at Tiananmen and elsewhere—is that what is emerging in China is *not* a free economy. There is money to be made by foreign businesses, but only under strict government control and usually in partnership with government-owned entities.

Far from encouraging the development of a free-enterprise system, in other words, the Chinese government seems to be engineering a far more natural transition from communism to a system that bears a remarkable resemblance to fascism. Foreign businessmen made money in Nazi Germany in the 1930s, but they usually had the good taste not to argue that human rights were just around the corner.

Perhaps this is the fundamental basis of the disagreement on China policy: Some think the men who rule China are more like businessmen, and others think they are more like Nazis. But this is at least a disagreement we can try to resolve by discussing the facts. Such a discussion can surely improve a foreign policy that treats torture as an abstraction and only software as worth fighting for.

Chris Smith, a Republican from the 4th district of New Jersey, is chairman of the House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights.

Hong Kong into China's Jaws

by Martin C.M. Lee

When midnight strikes on the last day of June, Hong Kong will be delivered into the hands of Communist China, ending 150 years of British colonial rule. For years, some hoped that this event would mark China's readmission into the family of nations and that Hong Kong would make China friendlier to human rights, the rule of law, and international trade. But it is no longer possible to hold any illusions. China has repeatedly broken its agreements to allow Hong Kong's people to keep their elected legislature and the laws guaranteeing their freedoms. China is not becoming more like Hong Kong; China is methodically remaking Hong Kong in its own image.

On December 21, Beijing appointed a puppet legislature to replace the last institution in Hong Kong that it did not control: the Legislative Council. Fourteen months earlier, over a million Hong Kong citizens had gone to the polls to elect a legislature for what was supposed to be a four-year term. In the face of Chinese threats, they overwhelmingly chose candidates who had pledged to stay in Hong Kong and fight for Hong Kong's freedoms, rule of law, and way of life. China has now irrevocably reversed the results of those historic elections by appointing a 60-member "provisional legislature" that will serve as the principal vehicle for the mainland's repression of Hong Kong.

There is nothing very provisional about this sham legislature. It held its first meeting at the end of January in China and will function there until next June's transfer, taking over once Hong Kong's genuine representatives are turned out. It is set to operate for an additional year, during which time an incalculable amount of damage can be done.

We have already received a sneak preview of what to expect from Chinese rule in Hong Kong and an insight into why China's rulers felt it imperative to install a rubberstamp legislature. In January, another of the ubiquitous Beijing-appointed bodies, the Preparatory Committee, announced that Hong Kong's most important law, the Bill of Rights, would soon be effectively repealed and that new laws on "subversion" would be imposed, along with the restoration of old colonial laws against demonstrations and organizations. The Bill of Rights is the most important statute ever enacted by Hong Kong's legitimate legislature. Passed in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre, it gives Hong Kong courts the ability to guard the rights of Hong Kong's 6.3 million people, including freedom of speech, the right to assemble, and protection against arbitrary arrest. Beijing's proposed gutting of the Bill of Rights provides a chillingly clear picture of Hong Kong's future under Chinese control.

It was not supposed to be this way. When Great Britain and China signed the Joint Declaration in 1984, the treaty was registered at the United Nations and hailed by the United States and all around the world. The treaty promised that Hong Kong's people would have their own elected legislature, an executive accountable to that legislature, an independent judiciary, and a "high degree of autonomy." The basis of the transfer of Hong Kong to China was "one country, two systems"—that is, China would not efface Hong Kong's distinctiveness.

Over a decade later, this agreement is in tatters. The "provisional legislature" violates the Joint Declaration's guarantees and breaches Beijing's own constitution for Hong Kong, the Basic Law. Indeed, the Chinese government did not appoint this body in Hong Kong itself because I, in my capacity as an elected legislator and party head in Hong Kong, threatened to get an injunction from Hong Kong's High Court to block its establishment and operation within Hong Kong.

Even some of China's defenders are shocked by Beijing's brazen decision to set up a parallel legislature in China. To aggravate the injury, 10 of the 60 legislative appointees are pro-Beijing figures who had been rejected by Hong Kong citizens at the polls in 1991 and 1995 and who now have every incentive to invent new electoral laws that will protect them from further humiliation in legitimate elections. The appointment of the legislature signals the end of the rule of law in Hong Kong and the beginning of China's rule of man—*yahn ji*—in which the state is above the law and dictates to individuals. C.H. Tung, the chief executive tapped in December by Beijing, has unsurprisingly endorsed China's plans to negate Hong Kong's Bill of Rights.

What shocks the people of Hong Kong as much as the appointed legislature is the refusal of the United States and other democratic countries to object. The world has an interest in the continuance of Hong Kong as a free society. Nations eager to expand trade with China should not forget that Hong Kong provides the rule of law, level playing field, and free flow of information that make doing business in China itself viable. American and other businessmen who are otherwise unconcerned about Hong Kong's fate should consider the difficulties of trade if economic information, for example, is radically restricted in Hong Kong after the transfer, as it is now in China. (When investing in China, it is the bad news that is the hardest, but the most important, to get.)

The world looks the other way at its peril. No other single factor will say more about the future direction of China than its handling of Hong Kong. President Clinton and his new secretary of state are said to be rethinking America's China policy. China's rulers can and must be convinced to honor their international promises. The U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act, passed by Congress in 1992, in fact commits the United States as a matter of law to support democratic institutions in Hong Kong and should be used to encourage Beijing to put an end to its puppet legislature.

The bosses in Beijing clearly hope that by sacking Hong Kong's legitimate leaders and replacing them with proxies, the people will be silenced. In this, they will not succeed. My fellow elected legislators and I intend to stay in Hong Kong no matter what. We will fight to keep our home the free and prosperous society that it is today. Hong Kong's people have known democracy—they have seen it at work—and although representative government may be briefly shut down after 1997, our citizens will continue to carry their aspirations in their hearts. The flame of freedom may flicker; but it will not be snuffed out.

Martin C.M. Lee is chairman of the Democratic party in Hong Kong.

Stirring Nationalism

by David M. Raddock

Even as the Chinese government was telling the Walt Disney Co. to do business elsewhere if one of its subsidiaries proceeded with a movie about the Dalai Lama, it was arresting and executing tens of thousands of Uighur minority separatists in its far northwest province of Xinjiang. Now, perhaps more than ever since Mao's revolution, the Chinese government is doggedly protective of its sovereignty over the territory and minority peoples in its border areas. This issue of national integrity is China's most sensitive nerve. Tweak it or impinge on it even indirectly, and the Chinese authorities will react heavy-handedly, even irrationally. A desperate sort of nationalism has become the political system's new ideology, its triage for the erosion of the Communist party's legitimacy and the decay of Maoist social values.

China's new mixed socialist-private economy and the feverish modernization propelled by foreign investment are reminders of how hastily Mao's Communist theory was dismantled to make way for this progress. China urgently requires an ideological cement to hold itself together geographically and bind its people together with some sort of common purpose. To avoid delegitimation of the regime, Chinese ideologues still cling to the notion of an ideal Communist era in the future, but the desiccation of ideology and any sort of social conscience suggests that "socialism with Chinese characteristics" now stands for little more than a mixed economy with a dash of cultural

chauvinism. In the absence of a consistent and positive ideology, the Chinese are mixing a cocktail with unpredictable results. Make nationalism the prime ingredient, and the cocktail can easily turn into something more troublesome.

On a trip to China in November, I was told by both a vice foreign minister and the vice chairman of an organization of non-Communists that China is being treated unfairly by the rest of the world, that it is being encircled by Western powers and its very sovereignty is being threatened. When he was asked simply about China's making some effort to redress the balance of trade with the United States, Wan Guoquan, chairman of the People's Political Consultative Council, offered this curious rejoinder: "We don't hold a grudge against the Americans for occupying parts of China in the last century and a half. Why put pressure on us? Foreigners say that we have expansionist tendencies and want to be a model to other countries. We just want to develop into a self-reliant nation."

Many Chinese truly believe they are being "dissed," to use the inner-city term. The Chinese regime harnesses among its people a subcurrent of xenophobia and a strain of narcissistic cultural pride to depict the new China as the unjustly vilified victim of powers like the United States and Japan. Legitimate pressures from the outside to conform to international rules and criteria of behavior are treated as unreasonable demands on China per se. Any complaint, any obstruction that impedes China's entry into the mainstream of international commerce, is considered hostile to China as a nation. "We want more cooperation and fewer sanctions from the United States," the vice chairman said. "The people's standpoint is that through trade sanctions the United States has been trying to hinder China's development."

The official posture toward the industrialized countries, and the United States in particular, reverberates with a latent anger I detected in conversation in November with members of the post-Tiananmen generation of young Chinese. One 20-year-old student at the Shanghai Drama Institute told me that he is impatient with China's manufacturers for continuing to produce for New York's fashion designers under foreign labels rather than their own. I did not bother to explain or argue the whys and wherefores of intellectual-property safeguards or the need for the Chinese to acquire education in techniques and marketing—why the fashion capital of the world can't be shifted to Shanghai or any other city overnight.

As the specialist accompanying a high-level American delegation of politicians to Beijing and Shanghai, I was struck by how consistently the Chinese politicized everything we Americans said, and yet felt free to deny that any other entity could think and act toward China in terms of its own subjective interests. A former undersecretary of state during the Reagan administration pleaded with the Chinese officials he met on every occasion to help close the trade gap between our two countries. The response was that the United States needed to show more ingenuity in competing in world markets. "China will choose other bidders" if the U.S. makes too much trouble about its trade deficit with China, Chinese officials said.

A member of the Standing Committee and Finance Committee of the National People's Congress, nibbling on a delicate morsel of pine-cone fish at a banquet table, admonished our delegation to inform U.S. companies to *invest* in China and thereby *create* a market for products and services locally. The overarching attitude resembled the ancient dynastic perspective of treating international trading partners as bearers of tribute to the *Zhongguo* (literally, the Middle Kingdom).

Routinely, China resorts to petty bullying, like delaying visas and detaining merchandise at customs, in retaliation for the failure of the United States to behave as it wants. Although South China would benefit economically from a Disneyland-like facility, it has the political will to halt negotiations by denying Disney's right to film a movie about the life of the Dalai Lama. China will continue to treat U.S. sovereignty and artistic freedom dismissively if the glorification of an opposition figure should happen to conflict with China' s policies.

The Chinese regime's unofficial position is that, out of fear, jealousy, and prejudice, foreign powers are trying to contain the People's Republic of China both economically and politically. If we question their sale of nuclear weapons to "irresponsible" countries, officials point out that the United States has exported such technology in the past *with really dire consequences*. "The U.S. cannot corner the market," one high-level official told me.

A recent bestseller, *China Can Say No*, written with seeming irony by a young veteran of the 1989 Tiananmen movement, has virtually sold out in Beijing. In it, Americans are described as incapable of leading anyone but themselves. And China "only wants to lead itself." What seems to have happened in the seven years since Tiananmen is that, at an unconscious and sometimes even at a self-aware level, the younger adult generation has projected its defiance of immovable authority in domestic society onto the Western powers. Its persecutors are no longer perceived as intractable fathers in the household or dismissive and repressive leaders who fail to yield to cries from below for greater freedoms and legal guarantees. The more fundamental individual battle of China's citizens for upward mobility and respect is being fought less on

home ground now and more at a societal and national level.

Even some of my intellectual friends, erstwhile humanists and cynics in their late thirties and forties, are moved by these nationalistic writings. The tragedy of such nationalism is that not only does it fire jingoistic emotions toward outside nations and peoples, but it fosters repression internally. One friend with whom I talked, a man who actually had deplored at one time both the Tiananmen massacre and the wanton arrests of dissident intellectuals, now finds himself angry at persistent protesters. As he rails against intellectuals whom at one time he would have praised, he blames the ascendancy of forces of repression in China on U.S. support for Taiwan in 1995.

Given China's preoccupation with national integrity and the recovery of territory on its periphery, it comes as no surprise that a young foreign-ministry official would tell me that, in spite of the more conciliatory approach, the willingness to "set aside" differences between nations, the Chinese remain inflexible over Taiwan. But I was startled when an avant-garde artist in Shanghai, like a true believer, repeated to me President Jiang Zemin's warning that the positive resolution of the Taiwan question was inevitable: Taiwan will be despatched, one way or another, by negotiations, blockade, force of arms, or nuclear attack ("That means no Taiwan at all!" my friend sneered).

In China, the xenophobic blaming of outsiders resonates with the broad-based memory of two centuries of imperialist depredations, isolation, and efforts to drive foreign aggressors from Asia. It is as much directed against Japan as against the United States. As I listened to my artist friend's words, I imagined the iconoclasm of his paintings, his fashionable personal appearance, and the Bohemianism of his 17th-century stable-atelier peeling away like a pentimento veneer. I recalled an earlier vision, which I had put out of my mind, of the same young artist standing over a dog-eared photograph of his deceased father, a high-ranking officer in the People's Liberation Army, his foot resting on the head of a dead American soldier in North Vietnam.

If China is looking to nationalism to forge national unity and to complement the rocky tides and uncertain promises of rapid modernization, a rallying cry that is hollow at the core and does not convey a sense of national identity will neither legitimate the regime nor provide a necessary sense of transcendental purpose. In the absence of ideals, goals, and behavioral norms that mesh with custom and give order to change, the regime will continue to stand for little but dictatorship.

This new nationalism, devoid of substance and limited by resentment, can stir the Chinese in the short run—particularly as a diversion from underemployment and unemployment and the other pitfalls of rapid modernization and conversion to a more privatized economy. It will bolster the position of the military and public-security apparatus. And it will either disintegrate into domestic factionalism—or, more worrisome, find an outlet through an escalation of aggressive activity in Tibet, the Taiwan Strait, or elsewhere.

***David M. Raddock is working on a book on political values and behavior over generations in China. His most recent book is* Navigating New Markets Abroad.**

No Tyrants Allowed

by Michael A. Ledeen

China is the litmus test for American foreign policy, indeed for the will and wisdom of the West. For China is the last of the great dictatorships of this century of wicked dictators, and if we fail in this final challenge it will call into question our previous triumphs.

We should have learned—from the war against fascism and then the long cold war against Soviet communism—that our struggle against tyranny is inescapable, because our very existence threatens its legitimacy. Other nations may design their policies solely on the basis of *realpolitik* and the balance of power, but America is not a traditional nation. We stand for an idea—the advance of freedom—that drives the tyrants to attack us, however fervently we may wish it were otherwise.

The history of this century is replete with sudden attacks by tyrants against us and our friends, dragging America into unwanted wars, first against expansionist Germany under the Kaiser, then against the Axis and the Soviet Empire, and more recently into the Persian Gulf. We did not seek these conflicts; our enemies sought us out, knowing that they would have to face us sooner or later.

Yet we did not learn this most fundamental lesson about our international destiny, and after each triumph we weakened ourselves and armed our future

enemies, believing that peace is the normal condition of mankind.

This naive self-deception underlies the folly of our China policy. So long as China remains a ruthless Communist dictatorship, whatever the mercantile energies of the oppressive gerontarchs in Beijing and their billion worker bees, the inevitability of conflict must inform all our thinking and planning. Our historic mission and simple prudence dictate a strategy to keep China militarily weak and to challenge the hegemony of her tyrants. Instead, we and our allies pretend that we can tame China by enriching her, thereby repeating the costly error of détente, when we dreamed of taming the Soviet Union by luring her into an intricate web of commercial relations that would eventually sap the Communists' revolutionary zeal and convert them to peaceful trading partners in a stable bipolar world. The advocates of this policy warned against an aggressive challenge to Soviet communism, even in word, and our leaders and diplomats devoted great care to Soviet sensibilities, just as today they warn against actions, and even language, that might annoy the Chinese.

Ronald Reagan was accused of irresponsible lunacy for speaking the simple truth about the evils of the Soviet Empire, and today our leaders are largely silent about the evils of Chinese oppression. We paid a great price for our illusion about the Soviet Union when, on the heels of the sudden expansion of Soviet military power into Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and Central America, we were forced to spend our wealth on a massive military program. If we practice détente with the Chinese, we risk similar costs, perhaps including the blood of our soldiers.

The policies that brought about the fall of Soviet communism are the same that should be directed against the evil Chinese Empire today: Speak the truth about it, challenge the tyrants to grant greater freedom to their people, and ensure that our military superiority is so great that they dare not challenge us, even when the very survival of their regime is at stake.

Alas, we are doing the opposite. Instead of insisting on greater freedom for the peoples of China, we speak of the wealth to be derived from joining in the exploitation of Chinese workers. Instead of denouncing the systematic repression of Christians and other religious people, we pretend it does not exist. Instead of condemning Chinese infanticide—practiced primarily against baby girls—we send Hillary Clinton to Beijing to celebrate the liberation of women. And instead of ensuring that advanced weapons and lethal technologies are kept out of the hands of the vast armed forces of the People's Republic, we have abolished the export controls that doomed Moscow's Red Army and the armed forces of the satellites to a state of inferiority compared with the modern armies of the West. Now, Western armies are smaller and weaker with each passing year, while the Chinese and their rogue allies, from Iran and Iraq to Libya and North Korea, steadily amass greater power.

We must return to the practice of linkage: Western largesse to China must be tied to increased freedom for the Chinese people. One model is the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which denied most-favored-nation status to the Soviet Union so long as the Kremlin refused to grant freedom of movement to Soviet Jews. Because of Jackson-Vanik, China's most-favored-nation status must be renewed by vote every year. If the nation can be awakened to the injustices in China and the threat posed by China, perhaps the denial of MFN status can once again become a useful political tool.

Linkage also means denying China access to our scientific and manufacturing innovations. Our university and industrial laboratories are flooded with Chinese "students," many of them funded by the warlords who depend upon these agents to provide Beijing with our latest discoveries. Student visas should be slashed, and those who are admitted should be denied access to sensitive research facilities where our future military power is being developed. In like manner, American companies must be prevented from trading with Chinese corporations that are little more than extensions of the military complex. We do not want to enrich the men who launched cruise missiles to intimidate their brethren on Taiwan on the occasion of the first free election of a Chinese leader in some 5,000 years.

It will be objected that these policies are unduly confrontational and that they will so antagonize the Chinese that greater freedom will become less likely, and conflict more probable. The response is simple: Greater freedom is the greatest guarantee of peace, and the failure to challenge tyranny only encourages its malevolent expansion. Moreover, the American people will not indefinitely support the embrace of tyranny. Public opinion has repeatedly turned against alliances with the friendliest of dictators, such as the shah of Iran and Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, and they were more important to our global strategy than China is now. The coherent pursuit of our ideals is the best way to enhance our national security and the only guarantee of the public support necessary to sustain our policies.

To continue to appease Chinese communism is to betray the democratic revolution that has swept much of the world for the past quarter-century, to ensure the ultimate rejection of our policies by our own people, and to risk placing ourselves once again in danger.

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The Paradox of Thomas Carlyle

How to Read a Provocateur—and Why We Should

By Gertrude Himmelfarb

More than half a century ago, Lionel Trilling wrote an essay on T.S. Eliot's *The Idea of a Christian Society*, calling upon his liberal and Marxist friends to be more appreciative of a mode of "religious politics" that was familiar in Victorian times but that was now regarded as reactionary. "When he [Eliot] says that he is a moralist in politics," Trilling explained, "he means most importantly that politics is to be judged by what it does for the moral perfection, rather than for the physical easement, of man." Trilling's essay, "Elements That Are Wanted," took its title from that Victorian eminence Matthew Arnold, who had said that the function of criticism is "to study and praise elements that for the fulness of spiritual perfection are wanted, even though they belong to a power which in the practical sphere may be maleficent."

It is in this spirit that we should read Thomas Carlyle today, prepared to study and praise him for those elements that "for the fulness of spiritual perfection are wanted"—yet in full recognition of their possibly "maleficent" effects when put in practice. And it is in this spirit that his contemporaries read him. We tend to think of the Victorians as conformist, complacent, self-serving. Yet the most eminent of them were highly individualistic, even eccentric, self-questioning, and remarkably self-critical. Thus the most conventional and liberal of them could appreciate, even revere, so iconoclastic and reactionary a thinker as Carlyle.

Thomas Carlyle is a biographer's dream. His life was uneventful in the usual sense; he never had a regular job, or held office, or engaged in any notable activity apart from writing. Yet by sheer force of character he conveys a sense of drama that few public figures could match. The biographer has ample materials to draw on in his personal life: his marriage (probably unconsummated); his tormented relationship with Jane, his intelligent, quick-witted, and sharp-tongued wife (the one much-publicized episode of violence, leaving her with bruised wrists, was less traumatic than years of emotional neglect); his lifelong devotion (platonic, but nearly obsessive) to Lady Ashburton, causing much misery to Jane (although not, apparently, to Lord Ashburton); the constant complaints about household problems, servants, noises (a crowing rooster or piano-playing neighbor), each of which took on the proportions of a major crisis; the chronic ailments (with their evocative Victorian names—dyspepsia, colic, biliousness, bowel troubles, lumbago) which somehow did not interfere with travels abroad, visits to family in Scotland and friends in the country, and a regimen of exercise that included twenty-mile walks and many hours on horseback; an aversion to socializing, in spite of which he managed to see a multitude of friends and to meet almost everyone of any importance in England and visitors from abroad.

Simon Heffer
Moral Desperado
A Life of Thomas Carlyle
Trafalgar Square, 420 pp., $29.95

All the while it was "scribble, scribble, scribble," as was memorably said of Gibbon. And, like Gibbon's, Carlyle's scribbling involved strenuous research. The three volumes on the French Revolution (the first of which had to be rewritten after the manuscript was accidentally burned by John Stuart Mill's housemaid), four on Cromwell, and six on Frederick the Great may not measure up to modern scholarly standards, but they did represent, for their time, impressive feats of archival research. And they all had respectable sales, in America as well as Britain.

That multivolume works on these subjects, representing views as unconventional as Carlyle's and in his unique style, should have been so well received is itself remarkable. Only Carlyle could have made heroes of Marie Antoinette, Cromwell, and Frederick, and persuaded the public to give them a sympathetic hearing. But his shorter writings were no less unconventional and were even more enthusiastically received. In many circles Carlyle himself was seen as a hero—or, better yet, a prophet.

Carlyle was thirty-six when his first book appeared in 1831. (He had published several essays earlier.) *Sartor Resartus* might have been expected to kill his career at the outset. If the

Gertrude Himmelfarb's most recent book is The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values *(Knopf).*

educated reader of his day understood the meaning of the title ("The Tailor Repatched," for the benefit of the present-day reader), he probably missed most of the German allusions. But he could not have mistaken the laboriously satirical intent of the account of Diogenes Teufelsdröckh ("Devilsdung"), professor at the University of Weissnichtwo ("Know-notwhere"), author of a book on the "Clothes Philosophy," published by Stillschweigen ("Silence") and Co. In a style as bizarre as the story itself, the clothes philosophy emerges: All the externalities of civilization are nothing more than the "cloth rags" that conceal the inner reality, the immanent God. Teufelsdröckh himself is said to have come to that reality (as Carlyle did) in the course of a journey from the "Everlasting No" through the "Center of Indifference" to the final revelation of the "Everlasting Yea."

If the God that appears at the end of that journey, a transcendental God stripped of the "Hebrew old clothes" of orthodox Christianity, remains amorphous, there is nothing vague about the other passions that engage Teufelsdröckh along the way: his revulsion against materialism, utilitarianism, and mechanism, against a false democracy that cannot give proper reverence to leaders and heroes, against the gimmickry of political reform and the callousness of Malthusianism, and above all, against the prevalent spirit of Unbelief that denies not only the spirit of God but the spirit—the soul—of man.

These are the motifs of all of Carlyle's later work, and it is thus that they were first presented to an unwary public: enveloped in metaphor upon metaphor, in archaisms, solecisms, neologisms, compound words, and obscure foreign expressions. Publishers were understandably reluctant to take on the book, and it eventually appeared serially in *Fraser's Magazine*, which promptly lost some subscribers. Yet a modest American edition quickly sold out and a second one was issued, and it was republished in England a few years later. It won the admiration not only of Emerson, who wrote a glowing (anonymous) preface to it, but of John Stuart Mill and George Eliot, was read avidly by Matthew Arnold's coterie in Oxford in the 1840s, and continued to be read, talked about, and reprinted; in 1900 alone, nine editions were published.

The publication of *Chartism* (1839) ushered in Carlyle's great decade. It was followed by some of his most influential works: *Past and Present*; *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*; and the annotated edition of Cromwell's letters and speeches (in effect, a biography). Their common denominator was a radical critique of society—radical not as most of his contemporaries understood that word, as a call for liberty and equality, political reforms, and material progress. What was wanted, Carlyle insisted, was precisely the opposite: a restoration of authority to bring order out of chaos and give spiritual and social direction to the mass of men. Those exercising this authority must do so by "divine right"—which he took to be the opposite of "diabolic wrong." As he wrote in *On Heroes*, "There is no act more moral between men than that of rule and obedience. Woe to him that claims obedience when it is not due; woe to him that refuses it when it is!"

WHAT ALL PEOPLE REQUIRED—SLAVES, SERFS, AND WORKERS ALIKE—WERE THE RIGHT TO WORK AND THE RIGHT TO BE RULED.

Carlyle's critique was directed not against those who mistakenly demanded the "right to rule," but against the ruling classes who had participated in the farce of political reform, thus abdicating their obligation to rule and depriving the people of their true right, the "right to be ruled." In clamoring for the vote, Carlyle said, the Chartists were in fact giving voice to the inarticulate prayer: "Guide me, Govern me! I am mad and miserable, and cannot guide myself."

It is extraordinary that such sentiments were welcomed by those who had acclaimed the reform of the franchise only a few years earlier and who were later to favor its extension. Mill, for example, declared it "a glorious piece of work," and tried to persuade Carlyle to let him print it in the last issue of the journal he was editing as his valedictory statement.

The year 1850 is generally thought of as the turning point in his life and career, marking the emergence of an even more reactionary Carlyle who was even more dramatically out of tune with his times. It was then that his *Latter-Day Pamphlets* were published, the first of which was the "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question." The essay had originally appeared in *Fraser's* as "The Negro Question"; Carlyle changed the title to be more provocative. He had always opposed the anti-slavery movement on the grounds that it distracted attention from the condition of the working classes at home. The repeal of the Corn Laws, he argued, was more important than the abolition of slavery in the colonies. But in this essay, written long after slavery had been abolished, his diatribe against the "rosepink sentimentalism" of "nigger philanthropists" was calculated to give maximum offense.

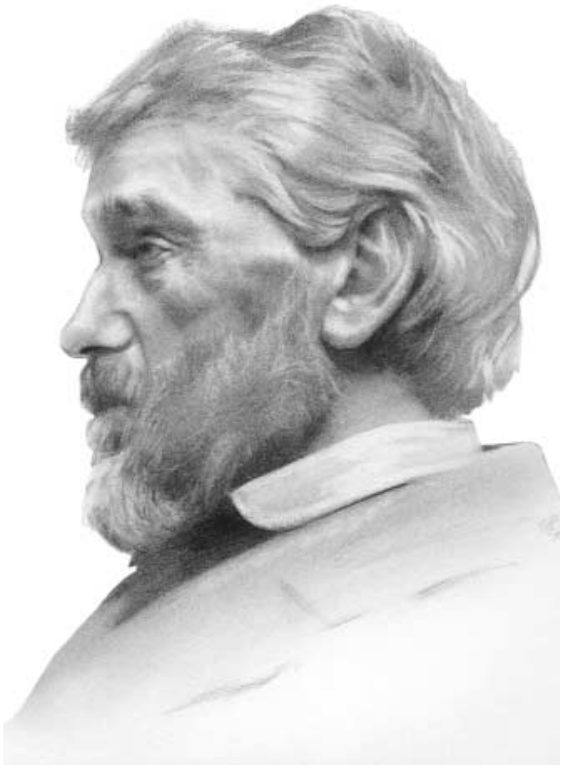
Carlyle insisted that he was not defending slavery, which he declared to be a "contradiction of the laws of the universe." The issue, as he saw it, was much larger than that. It was the soul-destroying "dismal science" of

political economy, which "finds the secret of this universe in 'supply and demand,' and reduces the duty of human governors to that of letting men alone." What all people required—slaves, serfs, and workers alike—was the right to work and the right to be ruled. And no act of Parliament could provide them with these elementary rights.

There was little in this essay that was not in Carlyle's earlier writings. But it was put so harshly here that Mill was moved to write a sharp (although anonymous) reply in *Fraser's*, which effectively broke off their friendship. Carlyle's response was to go on the offensive against other liberal "sentimentalisms," as he saw them. In subsequent pamphlets, he criticized the movement against capital punishment and satirized the "model prisons" that treated criminals better than paupers, proposed putting beggars and the unemployed to work in compulsory "regiments," deplored petty statesmen and mocked parliament as a "talking shop," and reviled not only Catholicism but all organized religions that were prone to "Jesuitism," the sin of cant.

The *Latter-Day Pamphlets* were not as well received by reviewers as the earlier writings. Yet they sold well, as did most of his later work, which was no less provocative. His last essay, "Shooting Niagara," written immediately after the Reform Act of 1867 enfranchised most of the working classes, described an England in a state of social and spiritual anarchy, betrayed by its natural aristocracies: the "speculative" aristocracy (literary and artistic) that was wasting itself on trivia, and the "practical" or "industrial" aristocracy that was mired in the "cheap and nasty." Reprinted as a pamphlet, it sold 7,000 copies within weeks. At the same time a new edition of his collected works was being issued. By now his writings earned him a substantial income, so that he found, much to his surprise, that he was no longer the impoverished writer he had always thought himself. (He had also received a handsome bequest from Lord Ashburton.)

So far from becoming a pariah as a result of these "infamous" writings, as some later biographers would call them, Carlyle counted among his friends and admirers Emerson, Ruskin, Tennyson, Dickens, Thackeray, Macaulay, Browning, Henry Adams, and a host of others. He was elected to the Athenaeum and, later, to the honorary position of rector of Edinburgh University, succeeding Gladstone. (The unsuccessful candidate was Disraeli.) Turning down other invitations from royalty, he reluctantly agreed to an audience with the Queen, taking the occasion, she noted in her journal, to declaim upon "the utter degeneration of everything." He refused the offer of a knighthood from Disraeli (that "superlative Hebrew conjuror"), but accepted a doctorate from Harvard. When he died, in February 1881, the Dean of Westminster tried to persuade his niece, who had lived with him, to have him interred in Westminster Abbey with the other eminences of England. But she would not go against his expressed wish, which was to be buried in the small Scottish town where he had been born.



Chas Fagan

"No man else," Walt Whitman said in his eulogy, "will bequeath to the future more significant hints of our stormy era, its fierce paradoxes, its din, and its struggling parturition periods, than Carlyle." The Dean of Westminster, in his sermon in the Abbey, endorsed the title of "prophet" that was often bestowed on Carlyle—a prophet, he said, for an "untoward generation," resisting the modern tendency of "exalting popular opinion and popular movements as oracles to be valued above the judgment of the few, above the judgment of the wise, the strong, and the good."

Some of the obituaries, like many later commentators, rebuked Carlyle for being overly critical of the existing institutions of society and insufficiently constructive in proposing alternative ones. But this is to misunderstand the function of the prophet, which is precisely to criticize rather than to construct. Indeed, it can be dangerous, as Trilling intimated, to apply the exhortations of the prophet to the practical sphere, where they may well prove to be "maleficent."

This is why Carlyle, like all prophets, had many admirers but few disciples. The Victorians, or at least

the most eminent of them, did not make the mistake of confusing the prophetic mode with the practical. They could appreciate the spiritual force of Carlyle's teachings—his criticisms of the "pig-philosophy" of utilitarianism, the "mammonism" of materialism, the "sansculottism" of democracy, the "cash-nexus" of laissez-faire, and all the other "soul-murdering Mud-Gods" that governed their lives—while retaining the safe and familiar institutions and practices that were, if not entirely beneficent, at least not maleficent.

The economist and social critic Harriet Martineau, herself a firm advocate of laissez-faire, arranged a lecture series for Carlyle in which he attacked that doctrine, among other things. He was an "original," she explained, a messenger come with tidings from "the Infinite Unknown," the "primal reality of things." After the publication of his most provocative pamphlets, George Eliot paid tribute to him: "There is hardly a superior or active mind of his generation that has not been modified by Carlyle's writings; there has hardly been an English book written for the last ten or twelve years that would not have been different if Carlyle had not lived."

Carlyle was the conscience of an age that was conscience-ridden and guilt-stricken, not only about its vices but about its virtues as well. Matthew Arnold, in the passage that gives the title to Simon Heffer's new biography, confided to his friend:

> These are damned times—everything is against one—the height to which knowledge is come, the spread of luxury, our physical enervation, the absence of great natures, the unavoidable contact with millions of small ones, newspapers, cities, light profligate friends, moral desperadoes like Carlyle, our own selves, and the sickening consciousness of our difficulties.

But then, he continued, as if to caution against such moral desperadoes: "For God's sake let us neither be fanatics nor yet chaff blown by the

wind but let us be 'virtuous as the man of practical wisdom would define it.'" (The quotation from Aristotle was, of course, in Greek in Arnold's letter.)

A hostile commentator might interpret this kind of self-criticism as moral posturing, a typical bit of Victorian hypocrisy. Heffer happily does not. He takes seriously the title, *Moral Desperado*, addressing the moral as well as the desperate aspect of his hero. This is both the merit of the book and its inevitable shortcoming. If Carlyle is, in his life and mind, a biographer's delight—passionate, contentious, melodramatic—he is also a biographer's despair. How does one convey, in the cold, rational format of the conventional biography, proceeding in an orderly fashion from month to month, year to year, the inner turmoil that is rarely reflected in external events? And how does one avoid the discordance between commentary and quotation—between the lucid prose of the biographer and the eccentric, chaotic, often manic style in which Carlyle's ideas were embodied, and which was so appropriate to those ideas? (Henry James, himself not the most crystalline of writers, said of Carlyle's style that "it is not defensible but it is victorious.")

Yet for all of that, any biography of Carlyle, and especially one as judicious as Heffer's, is to be welcomed. For if we have even better reason today than his contemporaries did to be wary of the practical consequences of his reactionary ideas (about slavery, most notably), we also have good reason to be wary of the consequences of some of the more liberal ideas of our own time. Even so seemingly benign an idea as welfare, we now realize, can have maleficent effects—and not only in the practical realm of economics, but in the spiritual and moral ones of family, work, and individual responsibility.

Carlyle is assuredly not our prophet. But he does remind us of the need for prophets who will keep in the forefront of our imaginations those "elements that for the fulness of spiritual perfection are wanted." ♦

BCA

Who Hears a Horton?

Lee Atwater and the Rise of the Celebrity Consultant

By Jessica Gavora

With the fall of Richard Nixon, the American media discovered that only suckers and fellow travelers took politicians at face value. The real agendas were the hidden agendas, and these were the product of the men behind the public faces: the consultants. The press soon began to seek out consultants—not politicians—as the ultimate sources. Thus, the sleazier and more devious consultants got, the more their perceived power increased.

John Brady
Bad Boy
The Life and Politics of Lee Atwater
Addison Wesley, 330 pp., $24

Lee Atwater was the first consultant to understand this. By giving the media a caricature of what it expected in a consultant—the redneck con man; the good ol' boy who read Sun-tzu—he passed from sourcehood to a half-decade of national celebrity, which was cut off by his death of brain cancer in March 1991 at age 40. What Atwater created was less a new style of politics than a new style of consultant: James Carville soon mastered the same tricks, before becoming, in effect, a full-time entertainer. By now, when Dick Morris's sex life can enthrall the country for weeks at the height of a political campaign, the cult of the celebrity political consultant has sunk deep roots into the popular culture.

In *Bad Boy*, John Brady gives us front-row seats for the ongoing performance-art exhibition that was Lee Atwater's life. In so doing, he makes another breach in the crumbling wall between politics and entertainment. While he does a commendable job of tracing Atwater's career, Brady has written not a political biography but the first psychobiography of a political consultant. Always Brady's eye is less on what Atwater did than on what drove him to do it.

In Brady's reading, the formative event of Atwater's life came when he was five years old. Waiting for their father to come home one night, Lee and his younger brother Joe set about helping their mother fry doughnuts. Joe climbed up to view the oil bubbling in an electric deep-fat fryer perched on the kitchen counter. He stumbled and fell, pulling the 340-degree oil down on top of himself. Burned over 90 percent of his body, Joe Atwater died soon after. The death of his little brother, Brady speculates, left Atwater unable to form genuine, lasting bonds.

Atwater was bright, but a poor student. He started playing rock guitar to impress girls when barely an adolescent, spent time in military school, indulged his penchants for drink and pro wrestling, and was a general, all-around hell-raiser. He rose from South Carolina politics to the White House on the strength of an over-

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sized ego and a commitment to winning at any cost.

Nowhere was this energetic obsession better illustrated than in the 1988 presidential campaign. Brady devotes page after page to Atwater's role in developing the "Willie Horton issue" in the 1988 race. Brady is inclined to see the issue as a legitimate one, given the horrific violence of Horton's initial crime and then-Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis's efforts to save the program that allowed Horton to commit an even more grisly crime in Maryland while on furlough. But once he has made the case for Horton as a campaign issue, Brady retreats again into psychobiography. He labors mightily to disprove allegations that Atwater was a racist for exploiting Horton (who is black) in the first place. "No one who knew Lee Atwater personally—either as a pol or a good ol' boy—ever felt he was a racist," Brady writes. This is an issue, one suspects, that Atwater would have dismissed as irrelevant. For him, the only important thing in the summer of 1988 was whether Willie Horton could help make George Bush president.

Atwater's womanizing was notorious, and without naming names, Brady recounts it in lurid detail. As chairman of the Republican National Committee, Atwater would occasionally pretend to be out of town on a business trip when he was in fact holed up in a hotel with a companion. These trysts were paid for with an RNC credit card that earned points toward free airline tickets; RNC staffers called these Atwater's "frequent f—er miles."

Brady's treatment of Atwater the husband, like his depiction of Atwater the consultant, is a curious mixture of unflattering fact and tortured rationale. It is the specter of his dead brother Joe, Brady thinks, that drove Atwater from the marital bed into the willing arms of a multitude of young Republican staffers, trust-fund princesses, and political wannabes. Nor does Brady hold Lee's widow Sally Atwater wholly blameless. She is often portrayed as a small-town girl who fell victim to Lee's appetites, and Brady accepts that view. But he also describes the Atwater marriage as "a working partnership," in which Sally turned a blind eye to Lee's affairs because she enjoyed the glamorous life their marriage brought her.

Kent Lemon

What's newest in Brady's book is a depressingly thorough accounting of Atwater's fight against cancer. Consumed by the need to defeat his disease, Atwater for the first time in his life was distracted from cultivating an image. He tried to cheat death through conventional medicine, acupuncture, massage therapy, dream therapy, and, finally, Catholicism. But he was looking for a loophole, not enlightenment. The picture that emerges from his last months is of a remarkably self-centered man, unhumbled by impending death and unappreciative of those who stayed by him as he faced it. At no time, even after he knew his death to be inevitable, did his thoughts turn to his wife and children. In one chilling vignette, Brady writes that Atwater's 10-year-old daughter Sara Lee had to dress up like a news anchor and pretend to interview him in order to get his attention.

In his last days, Atwater made certain amends. He wrote explanatory letters to old political opponents and to a woman he had set up for a group sexual encounter with his fraternity brothers back in South Carolina—not to apologize, exactly, but to ask that the incidents be "put behind us." Even his famous *mea culpa* to Michael Dukakis for having said he "would strip the bark off the little bastard" and "make Willie Horton his running mate" was less an apology than a last effort at damage control. Atwater said he was "sorry for both statements: the first for its naked cruelty, the second because it makes me sound racist, which I am not."

To this day, Atwater's vanquished adversaries hold up his deathbed contrition as the final proof of his venality. Brady treats this reaction as vindictive and unfair, and there is truth in his defense. After all, what better way for Democrats to explain their loss to George Bush in 1988 than to claim the election had been stolen by a racist, self-confessedly evil man?

But by focusing on the motives of his opponents, Brady lets Atwater off the hook for a lifetime spent cultivating an image as someone fully capable of committing the crimes his critics accused him of, whether he

did so or not. When consultants become celebrities, we forget that their job is not to embody anyone's ideals but to win. That was Lee Atwater's obsession. Would a Republican be sitting in the White House today if he had lived? *Bad Boy* doesn't try to answer this question, which is the only one Lee Atwater would have cared about. ♦

WRITE LIKE BILL

William F. Buckley, Jr., on Language—Finally!

By Jay Nordlinger

Once, a reader wrote a wild letter to William F. Buckley, Jr., condemning him for all manner of failure, not excluding "lousy syntax." Buckley answered tersely: "If you had my syntax, you'd be rich."

Buckley himself is rich, and not only because of family money: His syntax is a wonder. It is also his alone. In an age of literary homogenization, Buckley is instantly recognizable. You glance at a single sentence—a clause, even—and you know that it is Buckley.

Who else would write that something is "as well known as that Coca-Cola is the pause that refreshes"? Who else would begin a column, "If you're looking for a handy way to curb the population explosion, try the death penalty for anybody who asks, 'Do the ends justify the means?'" Who else would observe that, when a dull statesman addresses a gathering, "all the birdies stay perched on the trees"?

Buckley, now just past 70, has spent a lifetime with words. He edited the magazine he founded, *National Review*, for 35 years; he has written a syndicated column since 1962; and he is the author of almost 40 books, 11 of them novels. Along the way, he has had much to say about language, and certain of his admirers had hoped that, in the twilight of his career, he might find a week or two to produce his *Fowler's*.

Now someone has gone and done it for him. *Buckley: The Right Word* is the brainchild of Samuel S. Vaughan, Buckley's longtime editor at Doubleday. Vaughan has mined the Buckley *œuvre* for writings and statements that bear on language, and placed them between hard covers, giving us as vibrant and useful a manual as one that Buckley could have written from scratch.

William F. Buckley, Jr.
Buckley: The Right Word
Random House, 524 pp., $28

The book offers chapters on such subjects as usage, vocabulary, letter-writing, fiction, reviews, and eulogies (a Buckley specialty). It is engaging on the small questions (*Who* or *whom*?) and on the large ones (What gives English its unequaled expressive power?). It includes piquant examples of Buckley's speeches, columns, interviews, and correspondence. Particularly entertaining, and instructive, is a lengthy exchange between Buckley and the critic Hugh Kenner on the following Buckley sentence:

> Robert F. Kennedy had a way of saying things loosely, and it may be that that is among the reasons why so many people invested so much idealism in him, it being in the idealistic (as distinguished from the analytical) mode to make large and good-sounding generalities, like the generality he spoke on April 5 after the assassination of Martin Luther King, two months exactly before his own assassination.

The sentence is not Buckley's best, but he defends it unyieldingly, assuring Kenner that he would not put him "to such inconvenience merely for my own amusement." Buckley is generous in matters of language, as in others. In a remembrance of *New Yorker* editor William Shawn, he smarts at Shawn's criticism of his (idiosyncratic) use of the comma, saying, "If Saint Peter had declared me unfit to enter the Kingdom of God, I could not have felt more searingly the reproach . . ."

Buckley counsels conservatism in language, but he is far from a fogey: Flexibility within reasonable rules is what gives his prose its musicality and range. In Buckley's view, you can write low or you can write high, but you must always write appropriately. And what leads to appropriateness? Ear, chiefly—taste—so that if Buckley writes "irenic" instead of "peaceful," it is not because he wants to show off but because he "desire[s] the extra syllable." And even a man known and mocked for an exotic vocabulary finds occasion to write, "We must cut the crap."

Precision, too, is a holy aim, for words should be counted on to mean tomorrow what they meant yesterday, and communication ought to be less difficult than it is. Years ago on the *MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour*, Charlayne Hunter-Gault questioned Buckley about his recent trip in a submersible to the site of the *Titanic*. "Some have accused you of grave-robbing," she said. "Why isn't what you did grave-robbing?"

With an expression both patient and pained, Buckley blinked, pursed

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his lips, and responded: "Because it's not robbing graves."

Buckley has often said that his greatest fear in life is that he will be bored. His second-greatest fear must be that he will bore his readers. Hence the hyperbolic flourishes that make otherwise common observations sing. Garry Wills may regard Lillian Hellman as America's foremost woman playwright, but isn't that "on the order of celebrating the tallest building in Wichita, Kansas"? Philistines are not simply philistines, they "speak out from the depths of Philistia." The pages of his magazine are "sacred glades."

For a demonstration of Buckley in stylistic splendor, I invite readers to locate the November 25, 1996, issue of *National Review*, in which Buckley has a piece on cigars. Now, I, personally, would usually rather slit my throat than read about cigars, but so glittering is this essay that I had no choice but to xerox it, to keep as an example of what "the performing writer" (Buckley's words) can do.

The *Wunderkind*/Old Man has not lost it, and *Buckley: The Right Word* is invested with all his hard-won authority. In an essay for *The American Heritage Dictionary* on whether we should defer to our linguistic betters, he writes, "It is not a sign of arrogance for the king to rule. That is what he is there for."

Long live the king. ♦

Deep South

Dangerfield's Dud, Billy Bob's Triumph

By John Podhoretz

Sunday, February 2. Of the dozen movies I have yet to see, I have ended up at *Meet Wally Sparks*, an astoundingly vulgar new comedy starring the 75-year-old Rodney Dangerfield. As I was buying my ticket, I felt a rush of fear at the thought that somebody I knew might be on line and would later gleefully report to friends and enemies alike just how crass my tastes are. A careful check of the multiplex crowd reveals I am safe from exposure.

—Movie Diary—

Meet Wally Sparks
Rodney Dangerfield

Sling Blade
Billy Bob Thornton

I really didn't intend to see *Meet Wally Sparks*; I was between engagements and it was the only movie playing at the right time. Even so, there is something exciting about seeing a movie that looks disreputable—first because at a time when everything is permitted, only violations of taste seem at all dangerous and alluring. And second, because there is always a chance, however slight, that you might come across a hidden gem. That is one of the greatest of pleasures for a connoisseur of any art form, high or low—the feeling of discovery, that you have been witness to something extraordinary that has gone unappreciated.

Alas, *Meet Wally Sparks* lives down to expectations. It's a remake of *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, the wonderful 1930s play about a world-famous New York sophisticate who is forced to spend three weeks in the home of an Ohio Babbitt and ends up turning the entire Midwest upside down. (There's a charming movie version out on video that I recommend most highly.) *Meet Wally Sparks* reverses field: Dangerfield is a trash-talking New York TV host who invades the home and privacy of a high-born and courtly Southern governor in hopes of landing an interview that will save his job.

Dangerfield did once make a very amusing movie called *Back to School*, and with better writers and director, *Meet Wally Sparks* could have been terrific. But in the end, it resembles nothing so much as a *Beverly Hillbillies* episode with jokes about things that break off statues depicting Greek gods (and I'm not talking about noses). The most interesting thing about the movie is that Sparks's foil, the governor, is a Moral Majority type, and yet he is a wholly sympathetic character.

Saturday, February 8. You want to talk about feeling as though you have discovered something extraordinary? The movie is called *Sling Blade*, and it is the story of a retarded man in a small town in Arkansas who becomes the soulmate of a small boy he must rescue from an abusive adult. I know, I didn't want to see it either when I first read about it, but you must trust me that *Sling Blade* is a singular achievement—so singular that to describe it is to make it sound horribly cheap and exploitative when it is neither of these things.

I don't ordinarily go in for comparisons between movies and novels, but *Sling Blade* is closer to the experience of a Thomas Hardy novel on film than any movie ever made from a Hardy novel (that includes Roman Polanski's *Tess* and the recent *Jude*). Like a Hardy novel, *Sling Blade* is set among ordinary people living far from the madding crowd. It features a surpassingly strange character at its center, and moves with stately inexorability to a powerful and profoundly moving conclusion.

By turns unsettling and predictable, funny and humorless, grandiose and grand, *Sling Blade* was made for $1 million by a writer-director named Billy Bob Thornton, who

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also plays the central role. Thornton is Karl, whom we first meet in a mental institution on the day he is to be released after a 25-year stay. With jutting lower jaw and strangulated bass voice, Karl delivers a chilling monologue to a college newspaper reporter about the crime he committed when he was 12: He killed his mother and her lover with a scythe (the "sling blade" of the title). It will turn out that this is not the first crime he committed as a child; indeed, as the movie unfolds, it turns out that Karl is not at all what he seems to be. He is kind-hearted, and mechanically gifted, and the possessor of a very hard-won wisdom.

Thornton is, I think, really more a writer than an actor; his performance as Karl is the perfect realization of a character that was wonderfully conceived and written. Karl has a very stunted vocabulary; he assembles sentences from clichés and words spoken to him by others. The phrases "all right then" and "reckon I could" and "quite a bit" dot each conversation, and come to seem almost like poetry. As a result, whenever Karl says something new, it leaps out, a jarring insight from an unexpected source.

Thornton co-wrote and co-starred in a marvelous movie five years ago called *One False Move*, which begins as the story of three violent criminals on a killing spree and ends as a full-scale character study of a loquacious sheriff in a small Arkansas town that features as many secrets and epiphanies as the town in *Sling Blade*. One of the beauties of *Sling Blade* is that the rest of the movie is as sharply observed as Karl is. Karl works with two good-hearted good-ol'-boy mechanics who tell each other dirty jokes neither understands. A fatherless boy whose mother is involved with a violent drunk is so hungry for a caring adult man that Karl becomes his constant companion. And the villain of the piece, the violent drunk, is not a terrifying monster but a pathetic bully who so needs to express his dominance that he will push around a guy in a wheelchair.

Forget the man from Little Rock who read his unmemorable verses at Bill Clinton's second inaugural; Billy Bob Thornton is the true poet laureate of Arkansas.

Tuesday, February 11. The Oscar nominations were announced this morning, and even though I have scolded myself for years about it, I am still capable of being made happy or furious by them. This year, the nominations are terrific: Not only was *Jerry Maguire* properly recognized, so was *Fargo*. More important, *The People vs. Larry Flynt* was denied a best-picture nomination, which is not the only suggestion that even Hollywood is tiring of its radical-chic image; because of new nominating procedures, there isn't a single piece of Commie agitprop nominated for best documentary, either!

Best of all, Billy Bob Thornton received two nominations for *Sling Blade*, one for screenplay and one for best actor. He won't win either one, but at least I can say I was onto this guy three days before he became at least semi-famous.

Billy Bob Thornton gets two Oscar nominations the same week O.J. Simpson is found liable. How much more can one ask? ♦

The new head of the Democratic National Committee, Roy Romer, defended the president's personal fund-raising efforts inside the White House last week. "The president has to have coffees," he said.
—News item

Parody

Erskine Bowles: Mr. President, your guests are here for the 3 o'clock coffee.

President: Come on in, boys! I'm just settin' a spell, enjoying me some Jamaica Blue Mountain. It's a smooth, rich, dark bean.

Charlie Trie: I would enjoy some tea, Mr. President.

President: Tea? Boy, I don't know where you come from, but here in America we drink ***coffee***. And the best part of being president is, I can get any bean I want here. Any bean! Sumatra, Costa Rican Tres Rios . . .

Wang Jun: I am from China, and in China, Mr. President, we drink tea. And we have many different varieties as well. Lapsang Souchong, for example.

President: Heathen.

Anthony Lake: Mr. President, I'm sure the gentlemen don't want to take up much of your time. They are just here to express their concern over the status of most-favored-nation discussions.

President: Tony, you like that stuff with the hot milk in it, don't you? I just had the Secret Service put in a machine right over there. Let me mix you up some.

Lake: The doctor says I'm taking in too much caffeine, Mr. President.

President: No prob, I'll make you one a them decappuccinos. ***D***e-cappuccino! Get it? And what about you, Bruce?

Bruce Lindsey: A latte for me, big guy!

President: Skinny, though, right? With the skim milk? 'Cause we don't want that lactose-intolerance thing bubbling up right in the middle of this powwow. And you, Mr. Wang? (Hey, Bruce, can you believe this guy's name is Wang?)

Wang Jun: As a Chinese man, I must tell you, Mr. President, that the thought of drinking cow's milk is repulsive to me. Now, if we could discuss the most-favored-nation . . .

President: Maybe we could go farther, talk about a whole free-trade zone! Got one with Mexico, you know, just so I could get my hands on their bean. Mexican Altura. It is ***smooth***!

Charlie Trie: A free-trade zone? Why, Mr. President, that is more than we ever hoped even to think of . . .

President: Now hold on there just a moment, Charlie. You know what I want to know, back from that restaurant of yours in Little Rock.

Charlie Trie: Now, Mr. President, we've talked about this before. You know that there are some trade secrets that I, as a restaurateur . . .

President: Charlie Trie, do you want that free-trade zone or don't you?

Charlie Trie: Well, of course, I . . .

President: You know what you got to do, then. What you got to tell me.

Charlie Trie: Mr. President, this is blackmail!

President: Don't nobody ever said Virginia Kelley's boy didn't know how to bargain.

Charlie Trie: Sanka.

President: What?

Charlie Trie: Sanka! It was Sanka! That coffee you loved so much that I served to you that one time you came in with Susan McDougal!

President: No way.

Charlie Trie: I didn't want to tell you.

President: I was sure it was Ethiopian Yrgacheffe.

Charlie Trie: Sanka. In the little packet. Just pour in water and serve.

President: Man, is my face red. Well, now you boys just have to have a cup of Java with me. Don't worry, Mr. Wang, you don't have to have any cow's milk. How about an espresso?

Wang Jun: All right. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: That'll be $450,000.

Charlie Trie: What?

President: Hey, with milk, it would have been 75 cents extra!