

# **Changing Giants**

**The U.S. ( Part I )**

**China ( Part II )**

**How They May Achieve Friendly and Productive Relations ( Part III )**

**Mainstream and Organic Views**

**Dr. Wordman**

## **Abstract**

The two great nations, the U.S. and China are undergoing rapid changes in a very different ways from historical development perspective. The changes in the U.S. as a nation were evolutionary after completion of her revolution. The changes basically followed the time and were very much being reactionary to events, achieving her independence, making advances in her democratic system and achieving her dominance on the world stage. China on the other hand has made gradual changes in steps seemingly evolutionary but more so driven and mandated by her time-stretched revolution – a unique history. China's changes are very different and painful full of obstacles and foreign intervention and aggression. China's changes show a significant contrast to the changes of the U.S. exhibited by their contemporary history. The U.S. gained independence smoothly and became stronger through WW I and II and ultimately become a super power. China's revolution for building an independent Republic nation was a treacherous route and ended in division rather than a United Republic due to foreign intervention. Thus China carries a historic mandate to complete her revolution and a vision characterized as the Chinese Dream - Chinese wish China to be a strong independent united nation free of foreign aggression and interference with a government being a capable and fair tax collector providing people opportunities to pursue a prosperous life – a modest dream. In this essay, the author discusses the background on 'changes' the two large countries have experienced 'alone' in the process of establishing each as an independent nation and 'together' as they have become two great nations on the same world stage. (Part I. on the U.S. and Part II on China). With this understanding, one can fully understand and appreciate how the current events are happening and relating to the U.S. and China and their fast changing relationship. In part III, the author discusses how the two Giants can achieve friendly and productive relationship by focusing on win-win strategy which can make changes for mutual benefits as well as for the prosperity of the world.

The two great nations, the U.S. and China are currently undergoing very rapid changes. If you follow the media, you will find that the US-China relation seems to be yo-yoing up and down like a roller-coast ride in the past years and recently turning worse from better. The U.S. and China have been changing very differently in the past two and half centuries and they are fast changing in the past few decades. To understand the US-China relations and their possible future development, one must understand the background on 'changes' the two large countries have experienced 'alone' and 'together' as they have become two great nations on the same world stage. With this understanding, one can fully understand and appreciate how the current events are happening and how they are relating to the U.S. and China and their fast changing

relationship. With that understanding, the two great nations can find win-win opportunities which are essential for achieving mutual benefits and friendly relations.

## **I. Background on Changing Giants - The United States**

Since her independence in 1776, the U.S. has been evolving around a constitution-based democratic political system (federation of states) driven by capitalism for economic development. The nation enhanced her democratic system gradually: first, only land owner could vote (1776), States decided voting rights (1787), vote expanded to all white men (1856), first abolishing slavery (1862), repealing Fugitive Slave Law (1864), banning slavery (January 1865, 13<sup>th</sup> amendment rectified December 1865, April 1865 Lincoln assassinated and civil war ended), granting male blacks right to vote (15<sup>th</sup> amendment 1869), native Indians could not vote (1876), Chinese Exclusion Act barring Chinese (with Chinese ancestry) to become US citizens (1882, repealed 1943), granting citizenship to native Indians requiring application (1890, no voting rights), then granting female right to vote (1920), repealing discriminating laws against Chinese immigrants (1943) and McCarran-Walter Act granted all Asian (with Asian ancestry) right to become citizens (1952). Finally the U.S. adopted socialistic laws such as social security, affirmative action and Medicaid to take care of the underprivileged, the poor, the minorities and the retired with the purpose of providing all citizens a minimum standard of living and closer social and economic equality as the capitalistic democratic system can offer. However, the wealth gap has persistently existed. This timeline review indicated one thing, civil rights and democracy came gradually and may not be rushed, therefore it is unreasonable to expect a change to whatever level of democracy overnight through regime change as the U.S. foreign policy seems to hope to achieve.

The U.S. has developed the Monroe doctrine (James Monroe 1823) to discourage intervention and invasion of foreign powers into weak nations in America, thus it is also known as the US policy towards West Hemisphere. The U.S. held the Monroe doctrine in general but less rigorous in her foreign action particularly in other continents. Although the U.S. was credited for advocating the 'Open China' policy in 19th century to ask the other powers (England, Russia, France, Germany, Italy and Japan) to show constraint in their aggression towards China and towards each other and to respect China as a nation allowing her to administer her own trade rules in her ports and on her land, but in practice, the U.S. had always placed her own interest above all. At that time, it was the trade interest. The British was guilty of forcing opium trade onto China, but the American traders participated in opium trade in China for profit as well (for example, see Forbes House Museum in Boston on Forbes trade in China).

The 'American first' political philosophy is understandable and even acceptable from nationalistic viewpoint. However, when American interest is interpreted as Justice for all, imposed on other nations, then the American foreign policy showed elements of hypocrisy. In many cases, the U.S. foreign policy backed by her military strength is "do as what I preach but don't do as what I do." This power backed foreign policy works, though not convincingly; so long no other nation can challenge the might of the U.S. The U.S. grew stronger through WW I and II and maintained her strong position since the end of WW II (1945). By leading the world

against communism, the U.S. eventually gained her superpower status by making the Soviet Union to collapse completely in 1989-1991.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, 'against communism' became less a binding force among the allies of the U.S. especially in Asia and Africa and to a lesser extent in America. The 'American interest' dominated international order has met resistance from various reasons all linked to contentions in resources, trade and economic benefits. The Middle East, Africa, even South America began to question the 'American interest'. Trouble, even war, started despite of the superior US military forces and her numerous military bases around the world. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, instead of having world peace, the U.S. had engaged in numerous wars; in particular, the Middle East Wars had dragged more than two decades draining the U.S. Treasury.

In the meantime, China has risen to be the world's number two economy, holding a foreign reserve of \$4 Trillion (2015) growing out of surplus of trade with the U.S. and the rest of the world. In addition to the pressure from foreign affairs, the U.S. faces domestic issues, economy, immigrants, unemployment, decaying infrastructure and burden of welfare system which all require large funds that the U.S. economy could not seem to afford. The world is experiencing that the American democracy and American interest may not be the ultimate answer or the only answer to the problems of the world. 'What is good for America is good for the world' can no longer be convincingly preached to other nations. Many nations, especially Asian countries were able to grow their economy with a rate of a factor of two or three higher than that of the U.S. and that of most EU countries. The American people somehow sensed (but yet silent) that there were something wrong about the political and social system of the U.S. That sentiment was amply demonstrated in the 2016 US Presidential election and proven by the election result - a non-politician businessman, Donald Trump, won the election with his "politically incorrect" approach and remarks which somehow resonated with the angry silent majority.

Yes, the U.S. has changed and is still changing, More likely to change more after the 45th US President has fully assumed the responsibilities of his office starting January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017. However, one thing seems to be clear though, relationship between the two Giants would be better off for each other and the world if each side would make a sincere effort to understand the other. All citizens of the U.S. should make such an effort to make sure the US China policy is a sound one and the US-China relation will change for the better not for the worse. There are hawks targeting China and there are Panda huggers being friendly toward China but no one has been able to articulate that a confrontational US-China relation will benefit either the U.S. or China or the world at large.

## **II. Background on Changing Giants - China**

One may not have to go back to 1776 to understand how China was changing, but one could get a better feel of why China was changing as she did and continued to change rapidly by reviewing her history back to 19th century. The changes in the U.S. as a nation were evolutionary after her revolution. The changes basically followed the time and were very much being reactionary to

events. China on the other hand has made gradual changes in steps seemingly evolutionary but more so **driven and mandated by her time-stretched revolution** – a unique history. China's changes are very different from the changes of the U.S. exhibited by her modern history since her independence. By historic mandate, it really means that the 1.4 billion Chinese people were bestowed by the 200 years or so 'national disaster' and the Chinese people endured personal misery far more than any revolutionary war had ever given to a nation. Not lucky like the U.S., China's revolution to build a republic suffered from so much intervention from foreign powers and later foreign invasion and threats so that her revolution still has not been completed to this day, after more than one century. Thus, 'To complete China's revolution to build a United Republic Nation' has become the historic mandate for all Chinese people throughout the last and current century. Of course, the image or destiny of a Republic China has been described by Dr. Sun Yat Sen, father of China (11-12-1866 – 3-12-1925) more than 100 years ago, in his famous book, Three Principles of People. This mandate - building China to be an independent and prosperous Republic - was sustained by Chinese political leaders (Chiang, Mao, Deng, Hu, Jiang) and clearly and artfully illustrated especially today by Xi Jinping as the **Chinese Dream**. The world and the US citizens should understand the Chinese Dream in the above context. Letting China to complete her revolution to build a United Republic Nation is not only good for the Chinese people but is likely to be good for the world.

Fulfilling the Chinese Dream is a historical mandate for Chinese, even though many of the Chinese people are not sophisticated enough in understanding any detailed doctrine behind the mission of fulfilling the Chinese Dream (Socialism, capitalism or something in between were too technical for the common mass). Ever since the founding of the Chinese Republic (1911), the Chinese wanted a strong China, getting rid of foreign aggression and providing peace and prosperity which the Chinese citizens ever cared and wanted throughout their thousands years of history\* (\*Some would say that the Chinese were the least nationalistic race who viewed government just as a tax collection institution, they don't care who comes to power they just hope the tax collection is fair and bearable. Of course this notion was wiped out by the Japanese atrocious invasion and ruling in the Japan-occupied Chinese territories. Subsequently, Mao in his teachings called for the awakening of nationalism to remove the infamous descriptor of Chinese people by foreigners, "a plate of loose sand".)

The U.S. has always been regarded as a friendly nation to China during her early revolution phase. Unfortunately, after WW II, China being ruined to ashes and rubbles by the war, was "helped" by Russia and the U.S. separately each with a selfish motive and each tempted to treat her controlled government like a puppet. The two sources of foreign 'assistance' were confrontational making the process of rebuilding China ominous. This situation created division and civil war in China till Mao occupied the entire Mainland and Chiang retreated to Taiwan. Mao and Chiang both understood the motives of the two rivals, Russia and the U.S., but the division of China was done which had become a nightmare in the Chinese Dream and a thorn in the historic mandate of the Chinese people.

Even though China was divided but the Chinese Dream remains to be shared despite of a minority of pro-Japan people plotting Taiwan's independence today. Taiwan accepted the artificial temporary division and struggled to build her economy with the U.S. backing her (ROC) under the American Interest – 'prevention of the spread of communism' and 'maintaining a

world leader position for the U.S.'. Mainland China also accepted the artificial temporary division and focused on feeding the huge population and repairing a devastated war-torn country. Mao was facing a tremendous challenge domestically as well as the pressure from the Soviet and the U.S. which forced China into the Korean War, a war with no benefits to China, other than keeping out Russian forces from the North East of China and stopping the U.S. occupying the entire Korean Peninsula posing a military threat at China's doorstep.

Mao was a great but tyrannous leader forcing Chinese people to work hard to be self supporting. He made a number of mistakes in his policies but his goal was clear, well aligned with the historical mandate - the Chinese Dream. Fortunately, the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union gave China an opportunity – a breathing space and a window for self-development. The Chinese leaders, Deng, Zhao, Jiang and Hu, followed Mao and took the opportunity emphasizing on 'careful national planning' and 'picking strategic regions for development' to demonstrate successful examples for other areas to follow and replicate, eventually making China an export based strong economy today. As China is growing in economy, profits were reinvested in China's basic infrastructure such as energy, transportation, roads, bridges, ports and basic human development in education, science and technology and industrial skills. These investments transformed China into an industrial nation gradually evolved into a manufacturing power house for the world. When China was on the sanction (especially technology) list, of course, China tried every means to acquire technology know how, but that policy was no different when the U.S. was eyeing technologies from Britain and Germany and Japan was stealing technologies from the U.S and Germany through espionage or reverse engineering. IP theft should not be condoned but it is a way of business unfortunately. In fact, signs are showing now that China are concerned with her own advanced technologies (materials, laser, manufacturing, space and high speed rail etc) being spied on by other nations.

Part of the Chinese historic mandate was deeply rooted in the view that China was a victim of foreign aggression. China (both Mainland and Taiwan) felt that the post WW II international order was illegitimate, gerrymandered by the Western powers resulted in unfair arrangement regarding China's sovereignty and her deserved war reparation (Japanese atrocious war crimes such as Nanking Massacre, sex slaves/comfort women, bio-weapon experiments on live human and POWs were not brought to justice). The Japanese Emperor ultimately responsible for the invasions and wars was not brought to trial. The gradual assertive attitude China exhibits today as she rises with economic power and military strength is easily understandable. However this attitude is neither derived from aggression like the past invaders done to China nor came from revenge which was quite absent in Chinese diplomatic history, but simply rooted in the Chinese historic mandate discussed above. That is why China always urges everyone to respect history - historical facts about war crimes and sovereignty. China and Chinese elites are proud of Chinese political philosophy on governance, Wang Dao (not Ba Dao) (creating harmonious society not a hegemony). Based on the Chinese historic mandate, one can understand why her claims, regarding sovereignty, is always backed by historic evidence.

Xi inherited China's historic mandate and took it on as a personal and national challenge. Xi articulated the mandate as the Chinese Dream emphasizing that China will rise peacefully and China will persistently develop and change to fulfill the Chinese Dream. China's challenge is to convince her neighbors that her rise is benign and harmless to anyone. Ironically, it seems more

difficult for China to convince her strongest neighbor, Japan (a past aggressor to China) that China is trying hardest to develop win-win relation with her Asian neighbors. The historical baggage - Japan's invasion to China - of course is not a forgettable (but forgivable) history, but Japan's stubborn denial of her past war crimes in China was far more the reason for triggering Chinese people's anger and worry and fueling Japanese people's insecurity than the assumption that China will take a revenge on Japan for her past sins. (\*Number of Chinese tourists being the biggest in Japan should easily dispel the 'revenge' assumption) Japan really ought to understand this, so should the U.S. Understanding this national psychology will help US, China and Japan to develop a mutually beneficial rather than a hostile relation. For all of them, there are people understanding this historical baggage and advocating peaceful relations, but unfortunately there are still many believing in hegemony theory and striving for a belligerent national security strategy – targeting China as a threat to the U.S. and Japan and their world leadership positions. The current right-wing Administration in Japan and the new US Administration should understand this.

### **III. How Can the Changing Giants achieve a friendly and productive US-China Relation?**

Today China has risen as a great nation, economically, militarily and diplomatically. However, from the above description of the Chinese historic mandate, the notion of 'China Threat' proposed by some strategists seems to be baseless. There is no concrete evidence that China is threatening the security of the U.S. and world peace. Other than being more assertive in dealing with her sovereignty issue, China has not put effort into preparing military bases for offensive purposes. Her military development by and large is for defense and focusing on second strike capability. Thus, it is not wise for the U.S. or anyone else to target China militarily and pressure her into a mutually destructive arms race. Japan's desire to rearm by strengthening her navy (new carriers) and air force (stealth fighter jets) strike capability is not only viewed as a time-bomb by China but it also feared by many other Asian nations. The U.S. must understand this dynamics and must not look for a gain by inducing a Sino-Japanese war, since a Sino-Japanese War will certainly lead to an all out nuclear war devastating the world even as far as America.

China has already become a strong nuclear power among the U.S., Russia, India and Japan. Therefore, applying nuclear threat to China (as Russia (President Putin) and the U.S. (President Trump) recently called for more nuclear capability development) has very little real deterrent effect, more likely to produce the opposite reaction and waste funds. **Recalling a US-NATO military exercise in 1983 (under Reagan Administration) involving nuclear missiles nearly triggered a massive nuclear war with the Soviet Union (a possible total destructive world war),** one must remember and conclude that reoccurrence of any such event has to be avoided. So far China has not joined in such rhetoric making nuclear threats, but this should be viewed as that China is being rational and sensitive not willing to engage in inflammatory rhetoric regarding nuclear threats, not as that China is being weak or timid when comes to a nuclear war. China has always maintained that she will never be the first to use nuclear weapon, but recently in response to foreign threats such as Japan's desire to rearm with encouragement from the U.S., China seems to be worried and warned that she might have to remove that pledge, a rather unfortunate path to take or even think about it. Any thought of rearming Japan to counter China

and North Korea seems to be an obvious foolish destructive idea. Therefore while we are witnessing China's rise, we must not misinterpret China's resolve in her rights to fulfill the Chinese Dream and her rights to defend herself against aggression; any hostile and belligerent reaction would be a mistake and very dangerous.

At this point, China is governed under a decisive, experienced and visionary leader, Xi Jinping, who had made serious effort in reaching out to President Obama in the past four years to open dialogs on issues and to reach agreements regarding conflicts while dealing with the 'Pivot to Asia' policy initiated by Obama-Clinton, which is perceived by China as targeting her. World leaders have shown concern about such an ambiguous US-China relation; they rather see a stable friendly US-China relation for the sake of world peace and prosperity. It is expected that Xi will try to maintain a collaborative approach with President Trump based on Xi's speeches, even though Trump has kept being elusive in declaring foreign policies particularly his China policy. In the 2017 Davos Conference in Swaziland, Xi has made a clear speech on China's position regarding globalization and world development. President Trump is yet to make a major policy speech to a world audience to clarify the fuzzy impressions he created in his campaign speeches and tweets. Trump has issued a number of executive orders regarding immigrants and refugees which had caused many angry protests in domestic and foreign lands. The change of US Administration has cast more uncertainty to a changing U.S. As said above, we must reemphasize again, relationship between two 'changing' Giants would be better off for each other and the world if each side would make a sincere effort to understand the other.

Trump's surprise victory does reflect the desire of a silent (questioning political correctness) majority to forego legacy and make some changes. Instead of adhering to a U.S. dominated international order and trying to maintain it with reactionary foreign policies, the U.S. may want to start from fresh to take a proactive approach to define what is really good for the U.S. and understand that what is good for the U.S. may or may not be good for other nations or the world. Trump and his team should take their time to articulate and develop a clear answer to what is the best China policy, a workable trilateral US-China-Russia relationship and a win-win foreign policy, since they seem to have a resonance with the hidden silent majority in the U.S. (consider it an election mandate) on the one hand and a serious clash with an open mass of protesters domestically and worldwide (consider an accountability check). We certainly hope that the Trump team can figure out a proactive policy to lead the U.S. first to make the America great again, but not at the expense of the world peace and harmony.

The US-China Relation is at a crossroad. Both countries are facing their domestic and international challenges. Thus, each must continue to change. While change will produce uncertainty, each nation must take careful steps in plotting the change. The real conflict between the U.S. and China is the imbalance in trade. Trump is right about using smart negotiation to reach favorable trade agreements for the U.S. However, negotiation requires understanding. Citing a famous phrase from Chapter Three in Sun Tzu strategy book, "Know yourself and know your opponent well, you will always win.", this phrase simply says that one must try to understand your competitor or opponent to develop a winning strategy. Of course, one must realize that both sides can adhere to this famous phrase, so it may be wise to develop a win-win strategy rather than just focusing on a one-sided winning strategy. China seems to understand this philosophy; she has been preaching it in her foreign relations. China's "One Belt and One

Road” program seems to be based on the win-win principle. The change of heart in the attitude of the Philippine’s President towards China’s South China Sea policy seems to reflect on that principle as well.

Therefore, let us urge two great nations to keep an open mind to seek win-win opportunities. We must stress that, by understanding each other and exploring win-win opportunities, the two giants can make changes for mutual benefits as well as for the prosperity of the world.

Ifay Chang, Ph.D. 張一飛

Producer/Host, Community Education - Scramble Game Show, Weekly TV

Columnist, Dr.Wordman & Director, US-Chinaforum.org

Trustee, Somers Central School District,

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