
II. America's Pacific Mission

America-China Relations: The Longer View

by William Jones

The impetus for this article was a lecture given by the author at Zhejiang University on May 19, as the keynote of a two-day forum on U.S.-China relations and the Trump Administration.

During the 234 years that the United States has had relations with China, that relationship has largely been amicable and mutually beneficial. The origins of both nations have played a role in this. Until the American Revolution, the English and other settlers in North America had been under the thumb of the British Empire. China, while never a colony of any nation, would also feel the oppressive heel of the British Empire from the outbreak of the first Opium War in 1839. Both cultures, in different ways, have been affected by that experience. And the good-will shown by Americans toward China during its more difficult periods has been based on a genuine aversion of Americans to having any country under an oppressor's heel.

This has to do with the unique history of the United States, the creation of which was the end result of so many failed attempts to change the oligarchical system predominant in Europe. The migration to the new colonies in America included some of the best elements from European society, and particularly from the British Isles, who had found it impossible to change, or to live with, the oligarchical system that was 17th Century Britain.

The lack of any fixed social structure in the colonies gave much more leeway for them to attempt to fashion their own institutions of government in a way that



The Empress of China leaving New York harbor, the first U.S. trading ship to sail to the Far East, February 22, 1784.

would reflect the notion of the equality of man, which had been brutally suppressed under the European regimes. It was the refusal of the British oligarchy to allow anything like that to happen that led to the outbreak of the American Revolution, whose effects reverberated around the world.

Particularly during the first century of America's sovereign existence, this cultural heritage imbued the inhabitants of this new Republic with a repugnance toward oligarchies and hereditary nobilities, and it inspired them with a preference for a system based on merit and achievement rather than on blood relationship.

George Washington's keen desire to quickly build a university in the new capital city of the United States was aimed at preventing American youth from having to go abroad to study in Europe and perhaps adopting

there, the old aristocratic modes of thought.

It is true that the United States has at times forgotten those important lessons of our history—or completely ignored them. During the first part of the last century, and during the Cold War and McCarthy era, the United States often took on the role of oppressor itself. And the continual wars of the last few decades, from Vietnam to Iraq, bear witness to the loss of that republican spirit. This betrayal—or at best ignoring—of

our revolutionary heritage was not, however, “made in America,” but instead was the result of the decades-long successful effort—particularly after the death of Franklin Roosevelt—to woo America into a “Special Relationship” with our historic enemy, the United Kingdom, and to import the geopolitical designs of that Empire into American foreign policy.

It is with the hope of reviving the real history of America that I have attempted to illuminate the periods of U.S.-China cooperation which truly reflect the American spirit, as opposed to that phony narrative of the Anglo-American “special relationship.”

The New Republic Sets Sail

On February 22, 1784, a three-masted, square-rigged sailing ship of 360 tons, *The Empress of China*, left New York harbor carrying a full load of goods, including 30 tons of ginseng, on a six-month voyage to Canton (Guangzhou), China. This was the first U.S. trading ship to set out on a voyage to the Far East. Prior to the American Revolution, Americans could only trade in British bottoms and under the British flag. And Great Britain virtually ruled the waves. With independence, trade with Europe for an independent American vessel was virtually excluded by this British monopoly, and the British were brooking no competitors—particularly from a nation which had broken from “the Empire.” So, the voyage was also the



Maj. Samuel Shaw

aide-de-camp to General Henry Knox. Shaw had also fought at Trenton, Monmouth and Yorktown, where Lafayette praised the work of Shaw’s artillery. A testimonial by George Washington said of Shaw that he “distinguished himself in everything which could entitle him to the character of an intelligent, active and brave officer.”



Painting by Robert Edge Pine

Robert Morris

first major assertion at sea of America’s sovereignty.

The significance of the mission was ever-present in the minds of the voyagers. The ship’s captain, John Green, had run smuggling missions and raids against the British fleet during the Revolution. He was released from the Continental Navy to take command of this particular vessel. Samuel Shaw, the supercargo (manager of the ship’s cargo), had been a major in the American Revolution and had served as an

aide-de-camp to General Henry Knox. Shaw had also fought at Trenton, Monmouth and Yorktown, where Lafayette praised the work of Shaw’s artillery. A testimonial by George Washington said of Shaw that he “distinguished himself in everything which could entitle him to the character of an intelligent, active and brave officer.”

Both Green and Shaw were members of the Society of the Cincinnati, as were five other crew members. Shaw was a founding member of the Society and, according to Timothy Pickering, had written its constitution. The ship itself had also served as a privateer during the Revolution.

The ship’s crew carried with it a copy of the *Declaration of Independence*, as was common in American ships of the time, proud to show foreigners this remarkable founding document. The ship also carried official treaties and an official letter from the President and the Secretary of Con-

gress (the country was still operating under the Articles of Confederation), addressed to any foreign rulers they might encounter during their voyage.

The chief financier of the voyage was Robert Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and the chief financier of the American Revolution. Writing to John Jay, who was serving as foreign minister, Morris said of the voyage, “I am sending some ships to China in order to encourage others in the adventurous pursuit

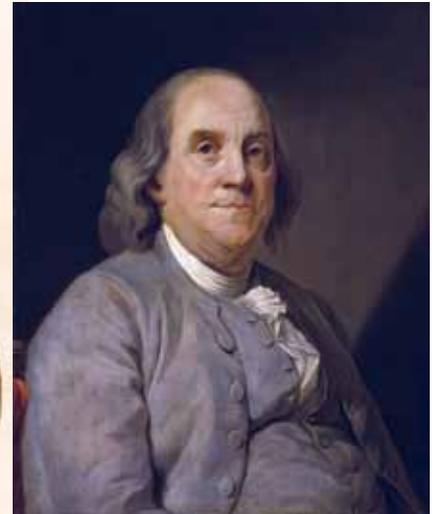
of Commerce, and I wish to see a foundation laid for an American Navy.” As the ship sailed out of New York harbor, symbolically on George Washington’s birthday, she fired off a thirteen-gun salute, which was responded to by the cannons of the fort on shore. (This was the highest salute at the time, symbolizing the thirteen states of the Union.) The sailing of the *Empress* set the stage for other ships to engage in trade with the Far East.

Shaw would write an extensive report on the trip to John Jay. While he dutifully reported on the conditions of trade with the Chinese, he also kept Jay fully abreast of the various activities of the British in the region and the growing conflict between the British and the other European traders. He also noted the total British disdain shown for the American presence there. Shaw would later be named U.S. Consul to China, and Thomas Randall, who was also on the maiden voyage of the *Empress* to China, would be made Vice-Consul, keeping Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton well-informed of the trade activities of the other nations in Asia-Pacific region.

The American Confucius

The voyage of the *Empress of China* was not the first encounter of the new American Republic with China. Our own philosopher and scientist Benjamin Franklin had already made acquaintance with China through his travels in Europe, where he served as minister to France during the Revolution, and his own readings of the works of Confucius, that were becoming available to the West at the time.

Franklin’s European sojourn coincided with the increasing interest in what was considered the exotic Far East engendered by the extensive reports coming from the Jesuit missionaries who were serving in China as advisors to the Qing Emperor. The Jesuit mis-



Painting by Joseph Siffred Duplessis
Benjamin Franklin was greatly influenced by Confucius (left), as reflected in his writings on morality.

sions, while focused initially on conversions, were also an opportunity for Chinese scholars to make their first acquaintance with developments in Western science since the Renaissance. And the inquisitiveness of the Chinese, particularly that of the great Emperor Kangxi, regarding these new sciences, led him to allow Jesuit astronomers to serve on the Imperial Board of Astronomy in Beijing. The letters the Jesuits wrote back to Europe gave the Europeans their first real, detailed picture of this Empire in the East.

In Philadelphia, Franklin read much of the Chinese material which was arriving from Europe based on the missionaries’ reports. In 1738, Franklin was already studying Father Jean-Baptiste Du Halde’s *Description of the Empire of China*. In 1767, Franklin published in his own *Pennsylvania Gazette* a series of articles entitled, “The Morals of Confucius.” This was taken directly from an English translation of a book published in Latin, *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, by the Belgian missionary,



Anonymous Qing Dynasty Court Painter
The great Kangxi Emperor.

Philippe Couplet, a correspondent of Gottfried Leibniz, which summarized the thoughts of Confucius. And Franklin's Quaker friend in Philadelphia, James Logan, had one of the largest collection of works at the time about China, primarily from the Jesuit collections.

A more comprehensive work on China, *Memoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les moeurs, les usages, &c. des Chinois*, was published in 1776 in seventeen volumes on the basis of the Jesuit letters. The first fifteen volumes of this collection were found in Franklin's personal library and are now housed at the Princeton University Library.

In his own works, Franklin made numerous comments on the virtues of the Chinese. He was greatly influenced by the works of Confucius, and indeed, much of his personal writings on morality reflect this Confucian influence. He also expressed an interest in traveling to China, and, during his own travels to Europe, he would often interrogate sailors he met who had been to China and to the Far East. The series on Confucius in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, underlined three important concerns of Confucius' philosophy, to which Franklin in his own life and writings also adhered:

1. Of what we ought to do to cultivate our Minds, and regulate our Manner.
2. Of the Method by which it is necessary to instruct and guide others.
3. Of the Care every one ought to have to tend to the Sovereign Good, to adhere thereunto, and, I may say repose himself therein.

Confucius' moral philosophy, Franklin wrote, was "the gate through which it is necessary to pass to arrive at the sublimest wisdom and most perfect." Franklin also had a high regard for the principles of governance in China, hoping that some of these might be implemented in the new Republic. He promoted the idea of using the Chinese system of regular censuses of the population and regular statistics on pro-



The Pennsylvania Gazette, in which Franklin published some of the moral philosophy of Confucius.

duction. Franklin was also opposed to any system of aristocracy in the United States and agreed with the Chinese views that "honors" must ascend from below, based on a person's merits and not be descended hereditarily (from father to son). Franklin lauded the Chinese system of meritocracy, which brought to the top those who showed their capabilities, rather than their patrimony.

In a letter to George Wakefield dated July 6, 1749, Franklin wrote: "When he [Confucius] saw his country sunk in vice, and wickedness of all kinds triumphant, he applied himself first to the grantees; and having by his doctrine won them to the cause of virtue,

the commons followed in multitudes. The mode has a wonderful influence on mankind."

Franklin also wished to follow the Chinese in cultivating silk production and in utilizing their navigation technology. The Chinese were the first to tightly caulk compartments of their ships, so that if one were breached, the others would not be filled with water and the ship could be saved. Franklin discovered in England the soybean that was grown in China, and he sent some soybeans to his friend, John Bartram, the noted botanist, to study for possible cultivation in North America. Franklin was also in favor of the United States sending an envoy to China, feeling that one sent from this new nation, uncluttered by a colonial past, would not raise the same concerns as those raised by European envoys, who had their own clear geopolitical goals in their relationship with China.

U.S. Struggle with Britain in the Pacific

The War of 1812 placed U.S. and British ships in conflict in the Pacific as well as the Atlantic, with growing British interest in controlling the Hawaiian Islands as a dagger pointed at the heart of North America.

After the war, the United States sent the first warship, *Ontario*, around Cape Horn to assert an American title to the lower Columbia Valley on the Pacific coast, which was also claimed as an area of interest by Great Britain and by Russia, which had already established



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British gunboat diplomacy forces China to cede territory and accept opium importation.

itself in Alaska and along the western coast of the American continent.

Although U.S. trade with the Far East did develop through the first half of the 19th Century, it remained far below that of the Europeans, particularly that of the British, who would remain the dominant players in Japan and China for many years and were doing everything possible to hinder American products and influence in the region.

When the British launched the First Opium War in 1839, America remained outside the fray and, ignoring British calls for a trade boycott, continued to trade with China. Even though a small number of U.S. merchants were recruited into the opium trade, American policy remained officially one of friendship with China.

The U.S. government sent two ships under Commodore Lawrence Kearny to China, which arrived in early 1842. The first thing that Kearny did when he arrived in Canton, was to announce that his government would not sanction any opium smuggling under the American flag, and American merchants were warned that they faced serious risks if they did so. To make his point, Kearny even forced an American schooner, the *Ariel*, to dispose of its illegal cargo, and deprived her of her American papers. China's



Commodore Lawrence Kearny

Viceroy of Canton would later hail this friendly act and go on to declare that American ships had always obeyed the law.

The First Opium War led to the first of the "unequal treaties." The Treaty of Nanking in 1842 stipulated that China should pay the British an indemnity, cede the territory of Hong Kong, open five new ports to British trade, and establish a "fair and reasonable" tariff.

When the victorious British succeeded in wringing another oppressive treaty from the Chinese, the Supplementary Treaty of the Bogue, the United States felt that it also should ensure its interest by a formal commercial

agreement under these new conditions. The ensuing Treaty of Wanghia in 1844 gave the United States all the privileges won by the British based on most-favored-nation status, and also reasserted the principle of extraterritoriality, meaning that Americans who were accused of a crime would be tried under American rather than Chinese law.

But the treaty reasserted the U.S. prohibition of the opium trade, and waived extraterritoriality for Americans who trafficked in opium. They would be subject to the full severity of Chinese law. The treaty allowed the construction of American schools, hospitals and churches in the treaty ports, which encouraged the work of the American Protestant

churches. It also made it lawful for U.S. citizens to employ Chinese scholars to teach any of the languages of the Empire, or to assist in writing and research, which had previously been restricted by the Qing authorities. Later in the century, the work of the Protestant missionaries would serve as the basis of the development of a modern educational system in China.

The treaty contained an important clause, saying that in any conflict between China and any third power, where any other nation acted “unjustly or oppressively,” the United States would “exert their good offices” to settle the question amicably. This gave the United States a special role in the diplomatic community in China.

In the Second Opium War, 1856-1860, the British captured Canton and moved on to Tianjin, a port close to the Chinese capital. The Chinese were forced to agree to new terms in the Treaty of Tianjin, in which several new ports were opened to foreign trade. In addition, foreigners were allowed to travel up to 600 miles along the Yangtze, and foreign missionaries were allowed freedom of movement throughout the country. In a separate agreement signed in Shanghai, Britain’s despicable opium trade was given full legal status.

When the Chinese later balked at ratifying the oppressive treaty, the British and French returned to Tianjin, attacked the capital, Peking, and deliberately destroyed the cultural treasure of the Yuanming Garden, the elaborate summer palace of the Emperor. The devastated garden remains so even today, as a constant reminder to the Chinese public of the days when China was under the thumb of European powers. Because



Anson Burlingame

His choice for envoy to the Austro-Hungarian Empire was Anson Burlingame, a former Republican congressman from Massachusetts. Burlingame traveled to Paris on his way to the Austro-Hungarian capital

of this new military action, the Chinese were forced to sign the Beijing Convention, in which they agreed to ratify the treaty of Tianjin, and in addition, were forced to cede Hong Kong and Kowloon to the British.

China and the Lincoln Presidency

Abraham Lincoln had far more immediate, more deadly problems than relations with China when he took office in 1861. Nevertheless, the thinly veiled British and French support for the Confederacy made it necessary for Lincoln to secure the country on the foreign policy front—in particular, to prevent other nations from giving any support to the rebellion. His choice of envoys to the various European powers was therefore of great importance.

with Lincoln’s appointment papers, where he suddenly received word that the Austro-Hungarian Emperor was not prepared to accept him as the United States representative. Burlingame had been one of the major hosts of Hungarian freedom fighter Louis Kossuth during his visit to the United States in 1852, which made him *persona non grata* at the Austrian court. As a result, he was reassigned to the relatively inferior post of U.S. envoy (Minister) to the Chinese Empire, a sudden twist of fate which would prove to be of great benefit to China and to U.S.-China relations.

Burlingame, who had not previously been involved in Far Eastern



Cartoon from Le Petit Journal
Britain, Germany, Russia, France and Japan carving up the China. 1898.

policy, devoted himself to a crash course in it. One of his teachers when he arrived in Beijing, was S. Wells Williams, an eminent American Presbyterian missionary and sinologist, who was serving as the secretary of the American legation. Also, Lincoln's Secretary of State, William Seward, was fortunately one of the first secretaries to take a keen interest in the Far East, and he gave Burlingame the support he needed.

At the same time, through greater contact with Western envoys, who were now allowed by treaty in the capital, the Chinese Government had realized that it needed to set up something akin to a Foreign Office. So, in 1861, the Empire established the Tsungli Yamen (Office for General Management), which was supervised by a controlling board of five officials, the most important being Prince Gong, the uncle of the under-aged Emperor Tongzhi.

Burlingame quickly became the most important foreign envoy in Beijing. The fact that an American soldier of fortune, Frederick Ward, was also leading Chinese government forces against the Taiping rebels, created a positive image of the United States in Chinese eyes. Concerned that foreign merchants were lobbying to "divide the spoils" after the Anglo-French intervention in 1860, Burlingame pulled together the other envoys around a cooperative policy, in which they issued a document that reaffirmed their treaty prerogatives to trade and live in the prescribed ports, but also stated that they would not threaten the territorial integrity of China or the jurisdiction of the Chinese government—nor would they intervene in Chinese internal affairs, except to uphold the rights accorded them by treaty.

This agreement resulted in measures by the Chinese government to further facilitate trade with the foreign powers. Burlingame's initiatives also won him the support and trust of Prince Gong.

Burlingame was convinced that China should develop its natural resources. He persuaded Prince Gong to bring the American geologist, Raphael Pumpelly, to



Prince Gong

do a survey of coal resources in China. He further persuaded the Prince to sponsor a Chinese translation of Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law*, to acquaint Chinese officials with that important subject. Burlingame also encouraged the construction of railroads in China, which were frowned upon by the Chinese government because it feared giving foreign companies too much influence over Chinese transportation. Burlingame pressed the State Department for a larger legation in Peking and for salaried consuls in the principal ports. While unable to eliminate extraterritoriality entirely, Burlingame allowed

Chinese citizens to give evidence in cases which came under the purview of the U.S. Minister, something that had not been allowed previously.

With the Civil War raging in the United States, there was also a clear danger that rebel privateers would try to use Chinese ports for refurbishing and gathering supplies, or even commandeering new vessels to prey on American ships. Burlingame succeeded in getting the Tsungli Yamen to give orders to refuse all succor to Confederate warships prowling in the East Indies.

Prince Gong would often consult with Burlingame on foreign affairs. In 1867, when he learned that Burlingame was preparing to relinquish his post and return to the United States, he expressed great concern. Burlingame tried to console him by saying that he would continue to do his best to garner support for China in the United States.

Before his departure, however, Prince Gong asked Burlingame to give up his post as U.S. envoy, to serve as an envoy of China at the head of a delegation he was preparing to send to the European capitals and to the United States. This was a measure that Burlingame and others had earlier urged on him to create greater understanding of China in the Western capitals.

At first, Burlingame thought he was joking, but he soon realized that the offer was real. The great trust he had acquired during his stay had assured the Chinese that he would truly represent their interests. And while



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Anson Burlingame (center) led the first Chinese foreign mission in 1868.

they would also be sending some of their own top diplomats, it was felt that Burlingame's knowledge of the Western capitals would ensure the success of the delegation. Burlingame agreed, and on November 21, 1867, he resigned his official commission in American service and entered the service of the Emperor of China as a "high minister extraordinary and plenipotentiary."

The first stop was the United States. Beginning with its landing in San Francisco, the delegation was widely celebrated. Despite growing uneasiness among some Californians about the large Chinese immigration there, all were elated by the possibility of greater trade with China. The delegation then sailed via Panama to New York and Washington, where they met with President Andrew Johnson at the White House. During the interim, Secretary of State Seward had drawn up a treaty based on many of the recommendations he and Burlingame had worked out regarding China. The delegation signed the treaty in Washington, subject, of course, to ratification by the higher authorities in Beijing.

Speaking at a banquet in New York on June 23, 1868, attended by many of the leading lights of the day, including FDR's grandfather Warren Delano and

Townsend Harris, the U.S. envoy to Japan, Burlingame gave a moving defense of China's position.

She comes with your own international laws; she tells you that she is willing to come into relations according to it, that she is willing to abide by its provisions, that she is willing to take its obligations for its privileges. [Cheers] She asks you to forget your ancient prejudices, to abandon your assumptions of superiority, and to submit your questions with her, as she proposes to submit her questions with you to the arbitrament of reason. [Cheers]

Speaking in Boston, at an August 21 banquet in honor of the Chinese delegation, Burlingame explained the fundamental significance of the new treaty:

I say China has been put upon terms of equality.

Her subjects have been put upon a footing of those of the most favored nations, so that now the Chinese stands with the Briton or the Frenchman, the Russian, the Prussian and everybody else. And not only so, but by a Consular clause in that treaty they are given a diplomatic status by which those privileges can be defended. That treaty also strikes down all disabilities on account of religious faith. It recalls the great doctrine of the Constitution which gives to a man the right to hold any faith which his conscience may dictate to him. Under that treaty the Chinese may spread their marble altars to the blue vault of heaven and may worship the spirit which dwells beyond. That treaty opens the gleaming gates of our public institutions to the students of China. That treaty strikes down or reprobates—



First group of 30 Chinese boys sent to study in the U.S. in 1872.

that is the word—the infamous Coolie trade. It sustains the law of 1862, drafted by Mr. Elliot of Massachusetts, and pledges the nation forever to hold that trade criminal . . . It invites free immigration into the country of those sober and industrious people by whose quiet labor we have been enabled to push the Pacific railroad over the summits of the Sierra Nevada. Woolen mills have been enabled to run because of this labor with profit. And the crops of California, more valuable than all her gold, have been gathered by them. I am glad the United States had the courage to apply her great principles of equality.

Leaving the United States, the delegation would travel to Great Britain, France, Germany and Russia. Burlingame was intent on resolving the remaining border issues between China and Russia. Arriving in St. Petersburg, they met with Czar Alexander II, the liberator of the serfs, who received them warmly. “I am very glad to see you here,” he told the delegates, “since your presence is new proof of the peaceful and friendly relations which have always existed between us and China. I hope that your negotiations will only confirm these excellent relations. I am at the same time very glad to see the interests of China represented by a citizen of a friendly state which is especially sympathetic to us.” But tragedy struck at this point when Burlingame caught pneumonia and died, a martyr to the cause of this, China’s earlier “opening up.”

In an obituary of Burlingame, written by his friend, Mark Twain, Twain commented on Burlingame’s character,

It is not easy to comprehend, at an instant’s warning, the exceeding magnitude of the loss which mankind sustains in this death, the loss which all nations and all peoples sustain in it. For he had outgrown the narrow citizenship of a state and become a citizen of the world; and his charity was large enough and his great heart warm enough to feel for all its races and to labor for them.

Creating Native Cadre for Industrial Take-Off

By the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, which was completed in 1867, it was clear that the United

States would become more directly involved in the Pacific trade and in trade with China. Even President Lincoln, in his last Annual Message to Congress in December 1864, referred to this development. He said,

The rebellion which has so long been flagrant in China has at last been suppressed, with the cooperating good offices of this Government and of the other Western commercial States. The judicial consular establishment there has become very difficult and onerous, and it will need legislative revision to adapt it to the extension of our commerce and to the more intimate intercourse which has been instituted with the Government and people of that vast Empire. China seems to be accepting with hearty good will the conventional laws which regulate commercial and social intercourse among the Western nations.

And the final victory over the slave power had profound implications for the rest of humanity, in underlining the universal nature of human freedom. Sun Yat-sen’s borrowing from Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address for his Three Principles was just one example of that influence.

American interest in the China trade would only increase with time. When Ulysses Grant was elected president in 1868, this interest was at its height. In seven of the eight Annual Messages given by Grant, he referred to the importance of the Pacific region for the United States. Later, when he had left the presidency, he would play an even greater role in his attempts to mediate peace between the two most important Asian powers, China and Japan.

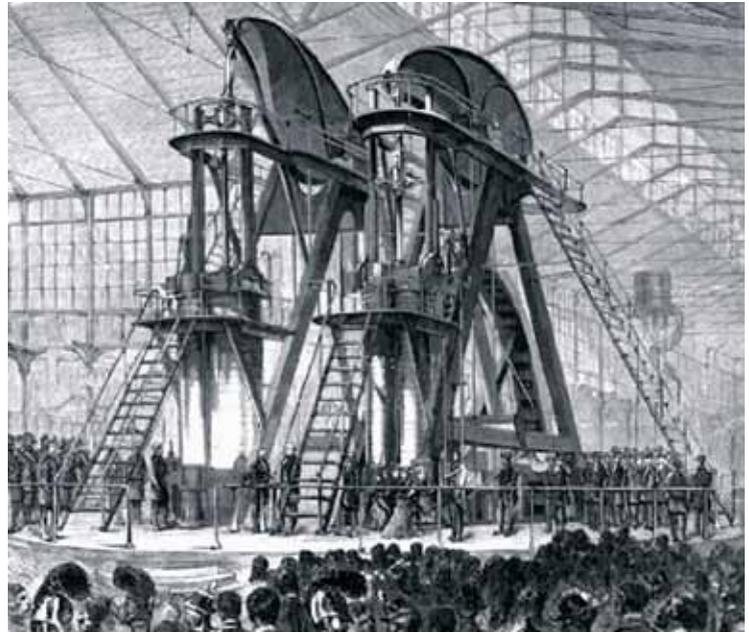
Right from the beginning of his presidency, Grant also made it clear that his administration would be fully supportive of the Burlingame Treaty, which had not been ratified by China when Grant became president. Grant’s Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish, wrote in a letter to George Bancroft, the U.S. envoy to Germany: “The great principle which underlies the articles of July 1868 [the Seward-Burlingame Treaty] is the recognition of the sovereign authority of the Imperial government at Peking over their social, commercial, and political relations with the western powers.” Fish called the treaty one of “amity,” rather than of the “force” which had characterized the previous “unequal treaties.”

There were reformers in the Qing court who understood the necessity of bringing China into the modern era, if the country was to withstand the pressure of the more powerful Western nations. One of these reformers was Zeng Guofan. Marquis Zeng had been a commander of the Qing Army in the fight against the Taiping rebels, and in 1860, he was appointed the new imperial commissioner for most of southern China. Zeng was also assisted by Li Hongzhang, who would command the Qing Navy in the fight against the Taiping rebels. In 1863, Zeng brought in Yung Wing, one of the first Chinese students educated in the West, a graduate of Yale University, as his adviser.

The successful activity of Yung Wing also made clear the importance of sending Chinese youth abroad to become educated, particularly in areas of technology and engineering. Yung Wing, with his own connections at Yale, succeeded in setting up a Chinese Educational Mission where Chinese youth could study abroad to attain the vital skills needed for modernization. Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang submitted a memorial to the Qing Government calling for such a mission. The choice of the United States was obvious because of the guarantee of the Burlingame Treaty. The memorial received the support of the Qing court, and the first batch of students arrived in Hartford, Connecticut in 1872.

The year 1876 was the occasion of the Centennial of the founding of the United States, and the outgoing Grant Administration had arranged a major international exhibition in Philadelphia with exhibits from most of the countries around the world. Both Japan and China had exhibits. The centerpiece of the Centennial were the exhibits showcasing the major advances the United States had made in science and technology since the end of the Civil War. People came from all over the world to see them.

Li Hongzhang had assigned Li Gui, a translator for the Imperial Maritime Commission, to travel to the United States and Europe, and to attend the Centennial and report back on his observations, which he did in a book introduced by Li Hongzhang. Of course, the Chinese students in Hartford were also at the Centennial. President Grant, who had opened the exhibition, made a return visit towards the end, and held a reception for the Chinese students, shaking hands and speaking briefly with each one. While the China Educational



The Corliss Centennial Engine at the opening ceremonies of the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, 1876.

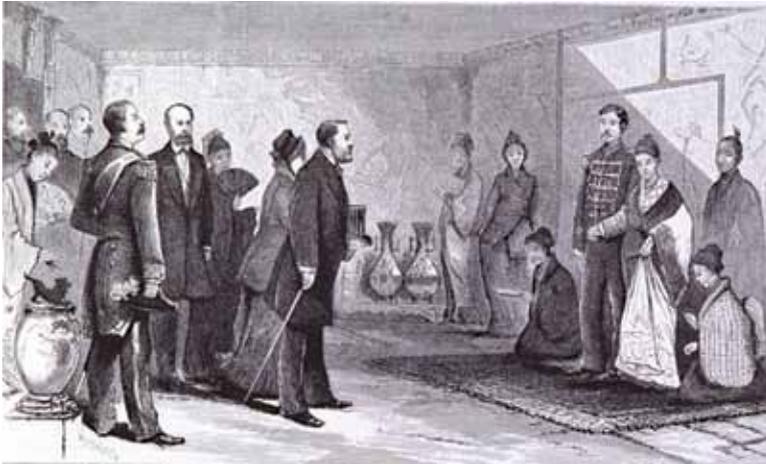
Mission would be terminated all too soon, the students who passed through it would later serve as the most important technical cadre in China's early modernization attempts.

Grant as Mediator in China-Japan Dispute

As Grant was leaving office in 1877, he made arrangements to take a trip around the world with his wife and son. Except as a soldier in the Mexican War, Grant had never traveled abroad. But with his renown as the victorious general of the Civil War and for his two terms as President, he would be received like royalty wherever he went (often to his chagrin).

He traveled to many European capitals, visiting Germany, France, Russia, Spain and Italy, and meeting with Bismarck, Alexander II and Pope Leo XIII. He then traveled to Egypt, to the Middle East and then on to Asia. He spent considerable time in India, and already on his way there, he was appalled by the British treatment of the native populations in the countries of the Middle East, where British control along this strategic "route to India" was almost total. Speaking to one of his traveling companions, John Russell Young, who kept a written record of the trip, Grant said,

As I was traveling through the East, I tried to find something in the policy of the English gov-



U.S. Grant's audience with the Emperor and Empress of Japan, 1877.

ernment to approve. But I could not. I was fresh from England, and wanted to be in accord with men who had shown me as much kindness as Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues. But it was impossible. England's policy in the East is hard, reactionary, and selfish. No one can visit those wonderful lands on the Mediterranean without seeing what they might be under a good government. As I understand the Eastern Question, the great obstacle to the good government of these countries is England. Unless she can control them herself she will allow no one else. That I call a selfish policy. I cannot see the humanity of keeping those noble countries under a barbarous rule, merely because there are apprehensions about the road to India.

When he arrived in China, Grant held discussions with Prince Gong and with Li Hongzhang. China was then in a dispute with Japan over the Liu-qiu (Ryukyu) Islands. In 1874, Japan had invaded Taiwan, which was considered a Chinese tributary. Now further action by the Japanese on the Liu-qiu islands could be the straw that broke the camel's back, leading Chinese to accuse their government of forfeiting its sovereign rights. In Grant's meetings with Li and with Prince Gong, they requested his assistance in mediating with Japan, knowing the prestige he would have with the Japanese. Grant was eager to help, because he saw that a war between these two countries would open the gate to more aggressive acts by the European powers, particularly the British, who dominated the trade of Asia.

From China, Grant arrived in Japan. Here he was given the unprecedented opportunity of a private discussion with the Meiji Emperor. Speaking with the Emperor, President Grant expressed his disgust with the operations of the European powers in the Far East, which, he said, "made his blood boil." He warned the Emperor, as he had Bismarck earlier, against taking loans from these powers—he might lose his sovereignty in the bargain as Egypt had. Grant stressed the importance of Japanese and Chinese independence and urged the Emperor to try to come to an understanding with China on the Liu-qiu Islands, in order to avoid a conflict which would only benefit the European powers. He

also urged the Japanese side, as the militarily stronger power, to show magnanimity, so as to prevent a loss of face by China, which would only cause further enmity.

Grant would also urge the State Department to play a role in helping avoid any conflict between these two powers. Writing to the State Department from Tokyo, Grant reported on his discussions and expressed his clear view of the matter:

In the vast east embracing more than two thirds of the human population of the world there are but two nations even partially free from the domination and dictation of some one or other of the European powers, with intelligence and strength enough to maintain their independence: Japan and China are the two nations, the people of both are brave, intelligent, frugal and industrious. With a little more advancement in civilization, mechanics, engineering, etc., they could throw off the offensive treaties which now cripple and humiliate them and could enter into competition for the world's commerce. Much more employment for the people would result from the change and vastly more effective would it be. They would become much larger consumers as well as producers and thus the civilized world would be vastly benefited by the change, but none so much as China and Japan.

He also warned of the threat posed for the two countries by the Western powers:



Liang, Shitai

U.S. Grant and China's Governor-General Li Hongzhang, 1879.

I can readily conceive that there are many foreigners, particularly among those interested in trade, who do not look beyond the present and who would like to have the present condition remain only grasping more from the east and leaving the natives of the soil merely “hewers of wood and drawers of water” for their benefit.

And this concern continued when Grant returned to the United States. Li Hongzhang maintained continual contact with Grant until his death. When the Qing government, worried about too much Western influence, was considering closing the Chinese Educational Mission, Grant, at the behest of Mark Twain, wrote a letter asking them to not do so. Li wrote Grant requesting that he tell the State Department to keep Charles Denby as U.S. legate in China. Grant also recommended to President Garfield in 1881 that he appoint Grant's friend, John Russell Young, who had accompanied him on his trip to the East and had documented it for the world, as U.S. Minister to Japan.

But it was President Chester Arthur—coming to the presidency after Garfield's agonizing death from an assassin's bullet—who in 1882 would appoint Young Minister to China, where he would help mediate the China-Japan relationship. Young played a major role in

mediating the crisis between Japan and China over Korea. He remained until 1888, all the while doing his best to improve the relationship between the two countries.

Rediscovering America's Roots in the 20th Century

America's traditional and historic friendship with China would re-emerge in the course of the 20th century. The election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 empowered the spirit imbued with the American historical tradition of Lincoln and Grant. Franklin was a keen student of history; his great-great grandfather, Isaac Roosevelt, had been a collaborator of Alexander Hamilton.

Roosevelt's first two terms were almost fully occupied with pulling the country out of the Great Depression. Yet, it was also during those eight years that he initiated his Good Neighbor Policy with the nations of Latin America. The principle of this policy was non-interference and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of the Latin American countries. FDR reversed the previous “dollar diplomacy” programs, which had been brought in by his uncle Teddy Roosevelt, who became President following the 1901 assassination of President William McKinley. Franklin Roosevelt's policy was one of sovereignty, peace, and economic development, and later, during World War II, Roosevelt directed that the Good Neighbor Policy be used as the model for the post-war Bretton Woods monetary and economic agreements.

Looking forward to the post-war period, in which he felt he would play a crucial role in rebuilding a war-torn world, Roosevelt was intent on eliminating every vestige of underdevelopment and colonialism. On this he was in direct conflict with the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill.

Roosevelt's son and aide, Elliott, gives the clearest picture of FDR's vision in his book, *As He Saw It*, based largely on the conversations he had with his father during the war. Elliott Roosevelt published this book in 1946, full of bitterness that FDR's successor, Harry



Hon. John Russell Young



President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Yalta, February 4, 1945.

Truman, and his colleagues, had betrayed FDR's vision. Roosevelt had made clear to Churchill in Casablanca in 1944, that the British Empire would be dismantled, along with the French, the Dutch, and the Japanese empires. He was also insistent that the developing countries become independent, including British India, something Churchill would fight tooth and nail—unsuccessfully. Elliott Roosevelt noted that FDR was very clear to Churchill that the post-war world would not be ruled by Britain's colonial "18th-century methods" but by twentieth-century methods.

"Twentieth-century methods," Roosevelt told the Prime Minister, "involve bringing industry to these colonies. Twentieth-century methods include increasing the wealth of a people by increasing their standard of living, by educating them, by bringing them sanitation—by making sure they get a return for the raw wealth of their community."

In Roosevelt's plan, China would become one of the four major nations—with the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain—to help keep the peace through their security cooperation. But after Roosevelt's death, even while the war in the Pacific was still underway, Churchill was in a position to gain control over the lightweight Harry Truman and launch the Cold War—and return most of the colonial overlords to power in their former colonies, on the pretext of "stopping communism."

Yet a similar Rooseveltian thrust would emerge fifteen years later with the election of President John F.

Kennedy. Chastened by the dangerous brinkmanship of the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy began to define a peace policy toward the Soviet Union, which he would elaborate most clearly in his famous speech at American University a few months before his death.

According to his friend and appointee, U.S. Ambassador to India John Kenneth Galbraith, once Kennedy had secured his second term, he intended to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China—a

full seven years prior to Nixon's trip to China. During his last press conference on November 14, 1963, a week before he was murdered, Kennedy gave a hint of this when he was asked what his policy would be toward "Red China." Kennedy replied, "We are not wedded to a policy of hostility toward Red China," and added that to the extent that it normalized its relations with its neighbors, including India, the U.S. would be prepared to work with the People's Republic of China as well.

The Opportunity Today

China has now become the second most important economy in the world. With the background of its development from an impoverished nation to a relatively prosperous one, it is now working to help other countries to develop with its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, and the United States has been invited to become a part of it. But this will only be possible if we can again revive the spirit of cooperation that so characterized our two nations' histories up until this point.

As economist and statesman Lyndon LaRouche has long underlined, the only "special relationship" that the United States should be part of is a four-power relationship among the United States, Russia, China and India, acting as partners, around which the rest of the world can orient in order to change the direction of economic development toward the type of infrastructural investment and win-win cooperation that has been so successfully laid out by China in its Belt and Road Initiative.