

The "Taiwan Threat" Hypothesis: Ideas, Values, and Foreign Policy Preferences in the United States

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The goal of this article is to construct a useful typology of ideas that influence foreign policy preferences that individuals hold, using a case study of the ideas embedded in the general debates over U.S. policy to the PRC and Taiwan. This article builds on the typology of policy-relevant ideas provided by Goldstein and Keohane, and (1) argues that "world views" is actually best viewed as packages of more basic ideas and (2) calls for the addition of a new category of ideas, "ordering principles," that along with "principled beliefs" and "cause-effect ideas" help explain differences in inter- and intra-world view policy preference.

Based on this theoretical framework, the article provides an overview of the debates in the United States regarding the policy importance of China and Taiwan. The argument is that there exist four main types of ideas-based world views in the United States toward the China-Taiwan issue: "international realism," "sentimental realism," "international liberalism," and "sentimental liberalism." These main orientations—as well as important ideational variation within them—help explain the diversity of opinion found in the general discussions of whether Taiwan poses a threat

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to stable Sino-American relations. Whether a "Taiwan threat" exists, therefore, depends on the ideas and preferences of those you ask.

KEYWORDS: U.S.-China-Taiwan relations; U.S. foreign policy; ideas; threat perception; foreign policy preference.

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This special issue is concerned with exploring the "Taiwan threat" hypothesis: the argument that Taiwan poses a "threat" to U.S.-China relations because any provocative moves by Taipei could elicit a military response from Beijing, which in turn would force—or at least place considerable pressure on—Washington to intervene militarily on the island's behalf, and would thereby directly involve the United States in a war with the People's Republic of China (PRC). One question arising from this line of argumentation is whether or not the United States would actually intervene to defend Taiwan in the event of an attack by the PRC.

A plausible-sounding and oft-heard reply is that the likelihood depends on the degree to which the United States would determine such an action to be in its national interest at the time.¹ Such an answer, however, begs the question of how a country actually determines its national interest. There have traditionally been three main conceptual approaches to answering such questions regarding the determinants of political phenomena: examinations of the roles played by *ideas*, *interests*, and *institutions*.² In the study of the U.S.-China-Taiwan triangular relationship—as in the study of foreign policy and international relations in general—institutional- and especially interest-based approaches have traditionally dominated.³ This

¹The introduction to this special issue notes many such arguments.

²See, for instance, Hugh Heclo, "Ideas, Interests, and Institutions," in *The Dynamics of American Politics: Approaches and Interpretations*, ed. Lawrence C. Dodd and Calvin Jillson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 366-92.

³As one example of the many realist writings focusing on interests, see Edward I-hsin Chen, "The United States' Post-Cold War Policy toward the Two Sides of the Taiwan Strait—A Neo-realist Perspective," in *Sino-American Relations at a Time of Change*, ed. Gerrit W. Gong and Bih-jaw Lin (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994), 67-98; for an example of the impact of institutions see Ramon H. Myers, ed., *A*

article thus seeks to provide a methodological counterbalance by adopting an ideational approach, and thereby contributing to a budding corpus of literature in the China studies field.⁴

Sinologists—like many other students of area studies—have, however, often been accused of providing only detailed national (or regional) descriptions without striving to draw clear generalizations that may apply to other cases.⁵ The goal of this article, therefore, is to use an exploration of U.S. ideas regarding the "Taiwan threat" hypothesis as a case study from

Unique Relationship: The United States and the Republic of China Under the Taiwan Relations Act (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1989).

⁴Richard Madsen, for instance, has argued that U.S. policy to the Central Kingdom had traditionally been influenced by a view of a "liberal China" that was created by both the optimistic thinking of the first missionaries in China and the later Sinologist community these evangelists helped create. See Richard Madsen, *China and the American Dream: A Moral Inquiry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). Jie Chen (陳杰) has written more generally on the impact of ideology on U.S. foreign policy, using Washington's policy orientation to the PRC over succeeding administrations as a collective case study. See Jie Chen, *Ideology in U.S. Foreign Policy: Case Studies in U.S. China Policy* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1992). John Copper, moreover, has provided a comprehensive breakdown of the key differences in perceptions between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait that help not only to explain the current political stalemate but also to shed light on prospects for future development in Taipei-Beijing relations, examining perceptions of five issue areas: history of Taiwan, Taiwan's legal status, views of the "Taiwan issue" espoused by Beijing and Taipei, current relations between Beijing and Taipei, and the stance of the international community. See John F. Copper, "The Origins of Conflict Across the Taiwan Strait: The Problem of Differences of Perceptions," *Journal of Contemporary China* 6, no. 15 (1997): 199-227. Note also that in post-martial law Taiwan, differences in identity and identity-inspired ideas among different ethnic groups on Taiwan as well as their resulting impact on cross-Strait relations have become a popular area of study; one example is Shelley Rigger, "Competing Conceptions of Taiwan's Identity: The Irresolvable Conflict in Cross-Strait Relations," *ibid.*, 307-17. An entire cottage industry has even sprung up in Taiwan to measure and analyze public opinion and its effects on cross-Strait relations—Emile Sheng's (盛治仁) article in this special issue is but one example. Note also that relevant public opinion surveys are carried out, for instance, by Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council <<http://www.mac.gov.tw/english/POS/Welcome.html>> and National Chengchi University's Elections Study Center <<http://www2.nccu.edu.tw/~s00/english/publication/s00he005.htm>>. Despite the sometimes daunting political obstacles, moreover, students of Chinese politics are even beginning to catalogue the views that people within the PRC hold about both the United States and Taiwan. See, for instance, Ming Zhang, "The New Thinking of Sino-U.S. Relations: An Interview Note," *Journal of Contemporary China* 6, no. 14 (1997): 117-23; and Andrew J. Nathan and Tianjian Shi, "Left and Right with Chinese Characteristics," *World Politics* 48, no. 4 (July 1996): 522-50.

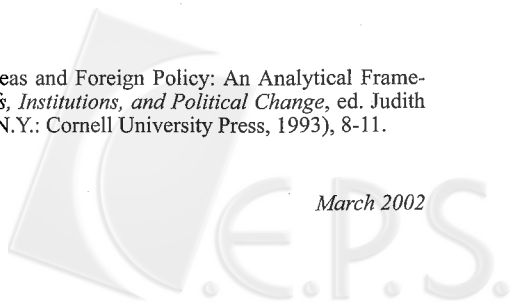
⁵See Peter Hall and Sidney Tarrow's defense of area studies in Peter A. Hall and Sidney Tarrow, "Globalization and Area Studies: When is Too Broad Too Narrow?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.) 44, no. 20 (January 23, 1998): B4-B5.

which to draw wider conclusions regarding the role of ideas in foreign policy, and thereby provide benefit to students of international politics in general. Given the fact that ideas impact foreign policy through a complex interplay with interests and institutions, however, this research defers making generalizations regarding causation and instead chooses a less daunting—yet still equally important—research goal: the construction of a useful typology of the kinds of ideas that influence policy preferences at the level of the individual. Such a typology can provide a necessary base for the ultimate research objective of explicating the role of ideas in determining foreign policy outcomes.

More specifically, the main intent of this article is to improve upon the existing typology of ideas—*world views*, *principled beliefs*, and *beliefs about cause-effect relationships*—that Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane have argued are capable of influencing political outcomes.⁶ According to this typology, world views define the universe of possibilities for action, principled beliefs are the normative ideas that specify criteria for distinguishing right from wrong, while the third type of ideas concerns beliefs about key cause-effect relationships in the political world. Given that the term "threat" in the "Taiwan threat" hypothesis suggests something of *value* is under attack, we should be able to identify world views, principled beliefs, and ideas regarding cause-effect relationships that help determine how Americans decide what U.S. "values" are at stake in any military conflict between Taiwan and China.

The organization of this article is as follows. The first two sections focus on building a hierarchy of ideas. After presenting the argument that political science theories are in fact the equivalent of ideas about how the world works or should work, section one examines two main types of world views that influence American perceptions of China—realism and liberalism, adding additional analysis regarding how the policy implications of these world views are often modified by other ideas, including principled

⁶Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, ed. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), 8-11.



beliefs and ideas about cause-effect relationships. Section two adopts a similar approach yet narrows the focus to American views regarding the Taiwan issue, and identifies four main general orientations to the question of whether Taiwan—or China—is a possible "threat" to U.S. values, also noting important sub-variation. Based on the analysis of these two sections, the third and final section of this article draws conclusions for constructing an improved typology of ideas, and also offers insight into how various types of ideas can combine to produce a final policy preference.

The main contribution of this paper is in terms of general theory: the analysis demonstrates that Goldstein and Keohane's typology of ideas is neither collectively exhaustive nor mutually exclusive—key requirements for any typology. In terms of the former, this paper argues for the addition of a new category of ideas: ideas about *ordering principles*—the prioritizing of values (both empirical and normative) that give rise to definitions and/or plans of action. Ideas about ordering principles, as this author holds, can have an impact on policy preference separate from the influence of the types of ideas identified by Goldstein and Keohane. In terms of the latter—mutual exclusivity, this paper will argue that rather than being one *type* of idea, world views should actually be defined as loose *packages* of different ideas—including principled beliefs, ideas about cause-effect relations, and (as introduced in this paper) ordering principles.

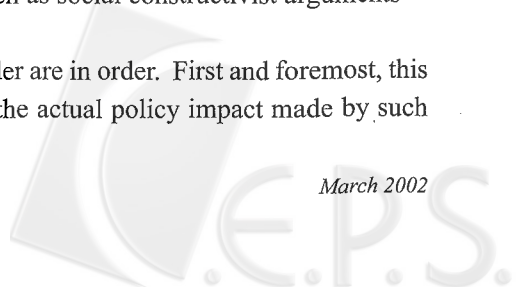
A second general contribution is in demonstrating the complexity of how ideas come together to form a final policy preference—using American perceptions of the relative value of Taiwan vis-à-vis China as a case study. In terms of the "Taiwan threat" hypothesis, this article argues for the existence of four general types of ideational-based orientations or world views, ranging from those likely to be least- to most-supportive of George Bush's "The United States will do whatever it takes to defend Taiwan" statement noted in the introduction to this special issue. The first orientation is *international liberalism* which, when a choice must be made between the two, places regional peace and China's future democratization ahead of protecting Taiwan's democracy. Second is *international realism* which holds that U.S.-China relations should be determined solely by the Logic of great-power competition—Taiwan has no inherent importance out-

side of this larger context. Third is *sentimental liberalism* which believes in, and actively seeks to promote methods of, cooperative and pacific international relations and the democratization of China; at the same time, however, this perspective sees no reason to sacrifice an existing democracy (Taiwan) for the sake of a potential future one (the PRC). The final category is *sentimental realism* which argues that U.S. armed forces must protect the island because an expansionist PRC is a threat to American interests; this realist argument is, oddly enough, combined with liberal principled beliefs: that Taiwan's democracy, respect for human rights, and other accomplishments are themselves of value and thus worthy of protection. These four orientations, therefore, result from specific constellations of ideas.

This paper warns, however, that the above four categories reflect only general orientations. Other ideational differences in terms of cause-effect relations, principled beliefs, and the like can also result in the ultimate policy preferences within these four general categories being radically different. Also of note, moreover, is that this ideational complexity also results in actors with radically different world views being united over a policy preference due to the intervening preferences imposed by ideas. By dividing like-minded people and bringing together normally opposing orientations, ideas can therefore help explain why politics makes for such strange bedfellows.

The third and final contribution this paper makes is to make explicit the general theories—such as liberal and realist-based theories—that underlie policy preferences that are raised in the debates within and between the China studies field and the policy community over the appropriate U.S. interest vis-à-vis any military conflict between the PRC and Taiwan. This linkage is—interestingly enough—one that oftentimes both generalists and Sinologists/policymakers deny even exists. This article constitutes only a preliminary attempt at drawing such parallels, however; many other important theories—such as social constructivist arguments—are not covered in this analysis.

Finally, a few notes to the reader are in order. First and foremost, this article does not purport to explain the actual policy impact made by such



ideas regarding U.S. values/policy preferences in terms of any armed conflict between China and Taiwan. Possible pathways by which ideas may have an impact on policy include via influencing the policy preferences of key decision-makers, interest groups, and the general public at large.⁷ Such a research agenda is left for future analytical efforts.

On a second and related point, while this article employs many quotes in the process of characterizing arguments in terms of their theoretical underpinnings, these attributions should by no means be construed as an attempt to finger *individuals* as holding or representing any particular theoretical orientation. Caution is necessary due, in part, to the fact that people's belief systems are not always consistent over either time or issue area. In addition, public statements can reflect other considerations as well, including individual and institutional interests and the borrowing of the arguments of others to support a preferred policy option. Since the goal of this analysis is to construct a typology of ideas rather than to trace the impact of these ideas on the policymaking process, such generalizations are not problematic.

Ideas and U.S. Perception of China

Goldstein and Keohane's thesis, as outlined above, holds that there are at least three types of ideas which influence political outcomes: *world views*, *principled beliefs*, and *beliefs about cause-effect relationships*. World views, according to their classification, are "conceptions of possi-

⁷While this paper has not dealt with how ideas impact policy, ideas can and do influence politics. One example is the democratic peace theory, an idea espoused by liberals that democracies settle their disputes with one another without resorting to military force. Note that in 1993 Anthony Lake—then Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs—explained the new U.S. policy of "enlarging" the number of democracies around the globe. The full text of Lake's speech can be accessed at <<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html>>. "A National Security Strategy for a New Century," compiled by the White House in December 1999, confirmed enlargement as one of the three key U.S. foreign policy objectives. That document can be found at <<http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ar/natsec2k.htm>>.

bilities ... embedded in the symbolism of a culture and [which] deeply affect modes of thought and discourse." They list such concepts as scientific rationality that is emblematic of modernity and the world's great religions as being world views.⁸ From such an explanation one could derive that the major views about the nature of international relations—namely realism and liberalism—are world views of the highest order or, put differently, are three modern-day secular religions. This section thus examines how realism and liberalism influence threat perception vis-à-vis China, noting where other ideas—such as principled beliefs and ideas of cause-effect relationships—interact with world views in order to finalize policy preference.⁹ This section closes by drawing some conclusions regarding general policy orientations held by Americans towards the PRC.

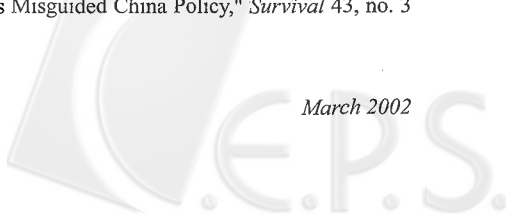
The Realist World View

One of the biggest differences separating world views is whether international relations are basically confrontational or cooperative. To the realists and neorealists, the anarchical structure of international relations results in a world that is characterized by a nasty and brutal struggle for power. As a rising power will attempt to change the status quo, hegemons keep a wary eye on potential competitors. In terms of the U.S. view toward China, Bush's National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice has presented arguments using realist terminology: "China resents the role of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. This means that China is not a 'status quo' power but one that would like to alter Asia's balance of power in its own favor. That alone makes [China] a strategic competitor, not the 'strategic partner'."¹⁰

⁸Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy," 8.

⁹Constructivist theories/ideas are not covered in this paper due to both space limitations and the lack of a unified system of implications stemming from constructivist assumptions.

¹⁰Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 1 (January/February 2000): 56, quoted by Lanxin Xiang in the course of presenting the converse argument—that the United States is actually the better modern-day exhibitor of Wilhelman behavior. See Lanxin Xiang, "Washington's Misguided China Policy," *Survival* 43, no. 3 (2001): 7-24, esp. 16-17 and note 17.



In the struggle for power, however, how wary a nation should be of a competitor depends on differences in strength. This leads to a conceptual problem: How do we measure power? This question has caused a split in the realist camp: the neorealists (led by Kenneth Waltz) argue for a narrow definition encompassing only mostly military strength, while the traditional realists (represented by Hans Morgenthau) seek a broader definition which encompasses such "soft" and national/sub-national level factors as national character, quality of governance, and quality of diplomacy.¹¹ From such differences in opinion over power measurements stems another important area of dispute—the question of how to determine the polarity of a system. Without an agreed upon definition of unipolarity, bipolarity, and multipolarity, impossible is to find common consensus on the proper foreign policy that a pole—or even a lesser power—should adopt.¹²

In the China field, little wonder is thus that a dispute has also erupted regarding how to conceptualize/measure PRC national power and therefore how to view the U.S.-China relationship. Bernstein and Munro's *The Coming Conflict with China* is one example of the growing chorus of voices that views China's expanding economic and thus military capabilities as posing an increasingly formidable challenge to the United States—a threat that requires a U.S. response.¹³ Another view holds that China's strengths are not so great, making her only a strategic competitor and not a strategic adversary; the United States and China therefore "can cooperate in certain, limited areas—many of them strategically significant—while having competitive and sometimes contentious relations in the main."¹⁴ Others, how-

¹¹Ken Waltz's neorealist argument can be found in Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), esp. chaps. 2-5, and 11. For the traditional realist definition of power see Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Random House, 1972), chap. 9.

¹²For a look at some of the contentious debates within the school of realism, see Randall L. Schweller, "Managing the Rise of Great Powers: History and Theory," in *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power*, ed. Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (London: Routledge, 1999), 1-31.

¹³Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China* (New York: Random House, 1997).

¹⁴See David Shambaugh, "Sino-American Strategic Relations: From Partners to Competitors," *Survival* 42, no. 1 (2000): 99.

ever, do not believe that China is anything more than a medium—or even small—power in terms of economic, military, and/or political resources, and therefore argue that there is no reason for the United States to defer to, or be so concerned about, China on many issues.¹⁵

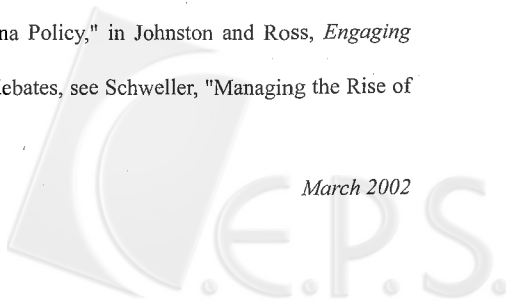
In addition to ideas about power definitions and measurements, other ideational differences can result in different policy preferences—even among those sharing agreement on a particular definition of power. Note that Robert Ross has argued: "America's response to China's developing power will depend not only on how Washington balances short-term and long-term interests but also on the *strategy* it chooses to address its long-term interests in managing Chinese power and to create a favorable strategic environment in East Asia."¹⁶ That strategy is a factor in promoting one's interests thus means that ideas regarding cause-effect relations can be just as important as world views in determining of actions: which strategies work, or work best?

For instance, even if there exists agreement that a competitor is quickly rising in power, how should the United States react? In terms of U.S. foreign policy to China, should Washington attempt to appease, bandwagon, contain, roll back, or completely annihilate the PRC? This question harkens back to many of the issues raised in the "strong point" vs. "perimeter" defense debates of the Cold War era, *with each strategy reflecting different cause-effect and even other types of ideational arguments*.¹⁷ During the Cold War debate, the strong point ordering principle held that vital to U.S. interests was only the protection of key areas, while perimeter defense proponents defined all regions and countries as being equally important to U.S. security. Note that Iain Johnston and Robert Ross have already captured many of the parameters of the post-Cold War version of this "containment" debate in their analysis of the debates re-

¹⁵Gerald Segal, "Does China Matter?" *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 5 (September/October 1999): 24-36.

¹⁶Robert S. Ross, "Engagement in U.S. China Policy," in Johnston and Ross, *Engaging China*, 176. Emphasis added.

¹⁷For an overview of the general theoretical debates, see Schweller, "Managing the Rise of Great Powers" (cited in note 12 above).



garding U.S. policy to the PRC.¹⁸ Since many of the realist arguments regarding U.S. policy to China touch directly on the Taiwan issue, however, section two will examine this variation in realist policy stances in more depth, clearly highlighting how different cause-effect and other ideas lead to vastly different policy preferences.

For illustrative purposes, however, an example is useful. One question of how to treat a rising power involves whether or not to adopt what some have termed "appeasement" in the hopes that limited concessions will satisfy a contending power. Timperlake and Triplett argue that Bill Clinton's policy of "giving in" on key U.S. interests in order to encourage more moderate behavior on China's part constitutes such a strategy. Noting the miserable failure of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's attempts to appease Hitler, Timperlake and Triplett espouse the view that appeasement does not change competitor behavior. They therefore warn that Clinton's approach will neither change China's actions nor safeguard U.S. security.¹⁹ Therefore, one's view of whether or not a certain cause (appeasement) will have a certain effect (changing PRC behavior) helps determine policy preference.

Based on the analysis of realist policy preferences presented so far, one can draw two conclusions regarding ideas and perceptions. First, even within one world view, differences in final policy preference can result from variation in other beliefs. One's stance on the effectiveness of such strategies as appeasement, containment, and roll-back is one prime example, illustrating the importance of ideas regarding cause-effect relationships.²⁰

¹⁸Johnston and Ross position specific policy strategies (mostly realist strategies but also including liberal ones as well) along a dual-axis grid that reflects type of grand strategy (containment vs. engagement) and degree to which a state devotes resources to implementing the grand strategy (maximum or minimum). See Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross' concluding chapter in Johnston and Ross, *Engaging China*, 273-309.

¹⁹Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Year of the Rat: How Bill Clinton Compromised U.S. Security for Chinese Cash* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 1998), esp. chap. 11.

²⁰The reader is reminded that section two's analysis of U.S. policy toward Taiwan will provide many further examples to back up this argument.



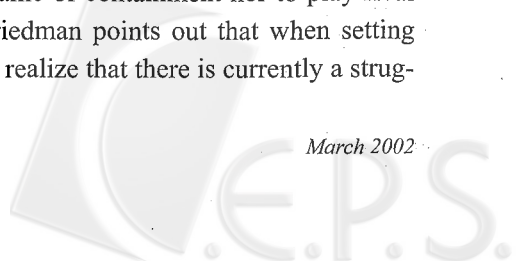
A second implication of the above analysis is that Goldstein and Keohane's classification scheme of ideas is not collectively exhaustive. As one example, note that the above definitional/conceptual dispute within the realist camp over which types of national power are of import (i.e., how power is defined) has important implications for policy preference. One power definition could result in a view of a strong China, while another may peg the PRC as only a medium power—resulting in different policy preferences. This demonstrates that ideas that people hold concerning how to prioritize, count, and define can lead to vastly different perceptions and thus policy prescriptions. *Thus to Goldstein and Keohane's schema we can add another category of ideas: ideas about ordering principles—the prioritizing of values (both empirical values and, as will be later argued, normative ones) that give rise to definitions and/or plans of action.* This article will continue to point out ways in which ideas about ordering principles are important—how they interact with other types of ideas to influence perceptions and thus policy orientations.

Returning to the analysis of world views, the last empirical example noted above was appeasement. One man's appeasement, however, is another man's engagement—a key policy recommendation that springs from the next world view to be examined: liberalism.

A Liberal World Order

According to the liberal conception of world order, international relations are not a Hobbesian dog-eat-dog world—i.e., liberals take issue with the underlying beliefs that realists hold regarding both the existence and implications (i.e., cause-effect relationship) of anarchy in the international system. Countries can and do cooperate on many issues. Liberals espouse at least three key views about what can bring about cooperation: arguments that focus on the pacific effects of *commerce*, *democracy*, and *institutions*.

Commerce: Presenting an argument reflective of commercial liberalism, Edward Friedman writes that the key to peace in Pacific Asia is for Washington not to play the realist game of containment nor to play rival powers off against one another. Friedman points out that when setting China policy, the United States must realize that there is currently a strug-



gle being waged in China between two key groups. The first faction is comprised of chauvinistic militarists who are bent on pure expansionism. While the United States should treat such a group in hard-nosed realist terms, there is a second cohort—economic modernizers—who care most about the bottom (read: economic) line, i.e., China's image as a place for secure investment. Friedman thus argues that:

It is not yet true that the chauvinistic militarists are fully ensconced in power in China and running China's foreign and security policies. Rather, a power struggle continues in which it is in America's . . . and China's . . . interest that broad engagement continue to be the policy of . . . America [in order] to attract China's people and leaders to the cause of China's economic modernizers. This means respecting China's rise, not fighting it.²¹

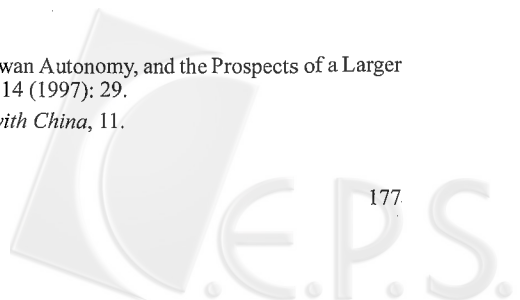
Thus Friedman's policy prescription is one of commercial liberalism: to encourage China to continue trade and commerce with the outside world, and not to take any actions that will give the hard-line conservatives the upper hand. This approach will ensure the continuance of a peaceful, trade-centered China.

If liberals can (as noted above) challenge the realist cause-effect assumption about the consequences of anarchy, so too can realists dispute the causal logic of liberals. One such criticism is proffered by Bernstein and Munro. They combine a cause-effect idea with one of ordering principle:

We believe that China and the United States do indeed have common interests, especially in the area of economic exchange. China needs the United States for trade, technology, and the maintenance of a peaceful environment for economic growth. . . . The important thing here is that Beijing's rulers will risk war with America not because it is in their country's interest but because it is in the interests of the governing clique. If economic growth slows down, if income gaps increase, if corruption continues to erode the reputation of the leadership, or if there is a new, internationally televised movement for greater freedom similar to the 1989 student demonstrations, the regime will wrap itself in the flag. And the major way of doing that is to blame the outside world, especially the United States, for China's problems.²²

²¹Edward Friedman, "Chinese Nationalism, Taiwan Autonomy, and the Prospects of a Larger War," *Journal of Contemporary China* 6, no. 14 (1997): 29.

²²Bernstein and Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, 11.



Thus, the cause-effect relationship between regime instability and foreign policy takes precedence, in the minds of Bernstein and Munro, over the impact that trade has on encouraging peaceful U.S.-China ties.²³

Democracy as a force for peace: Yet another liberal argument centers on the effects of democracy on relations between nations. Nations can live in peace, liberal scholars believe, because men (and thus countries) have the capacity to learn, to improve, and to adopt more cooperative norms—namely democratic methods of problems solving. Extending this republican liberal theory to the international realm results in the democratic peace theory: the argument that democratic nations will settle their disagreements peacefully.²⁴

The following quote from Barrett L. McCormick applies this liberal logic to the field of U.S. policy to China:

Democratization in China would lead to better relations between the United States and China. This is because the present atmosphere of mutual suspicion and hostility between China and the United States is more the result of perceptions and institutions than unchanging culture or immutable national interests. Far from being inevitably driven to conflict by culture or realpolitik, China and the United States could derive mutual benefit from economic and cultural exchanges and cooperate to achieve common diplomatic goals. As the democratic peace argument suggests, democracy offers the best hope of ameliorating institutional conflicts and negotiating mutual understanding between the United States and China.²⁵

Challenges to the democratic peace theory are not, however, lacking. Some qualifications raised by challengers involve ideas of both ordering principles and cause-effect relations. In terms of the former, Richard K. Betts and Thomas J. Christensen have argued that:

As Fareed Zakaria has noted, the theory really applies only to liberal democracies on the Western model, ones with restraints on government action and guar-

²³The impact of nationalism on democratic arguments is treated in section two's treatment of the Taiwan question.

²⁴A good articulation of this theory can be found in Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

²⁵Barrett L. McCormick, "U.S.-PRC Relations and the 'Democratic Peace'," in *What if China Doesn't Democratize? Implications for War and Peace*, ed. Edward Friedman and Barrett L. McCormick (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 305.

antees of minority rights. Democratization in China could just as conceivably turn in an illiberal direction, on the model of post-Tito Yugoslavia, Iran, or other unpleasant examples of violent activism.²⁶

Therefore, whether or not democracy can make the PRC peaceful depends on the future form of any Chinese democracy—another example of how a question regarding ordering principles (i.e., how democracy is defined) can have important foreign policy implications.

Betts and Christensen have also called for a cautious reading of the democratic peace logic for another reason:

While liberal democracy is pacific, the process of becoming a democracy can be violent and destabilizing. This is particularly true of democratizing states that lack developed civil societies, independent news media, healthy outlets for popular grievances, and a marketplace for ideas where countervailing views can be debated. This gives elites incentives to manipulate populist or nationalist themes and to adopt tough international policies as an electoral strategy.²⁷

The warning, therefore, is that the United States should not place all hope—or risk key U.S. interests—on the possibility that China will democratize, because other cause-effect relations can easily steer the PRC off course.

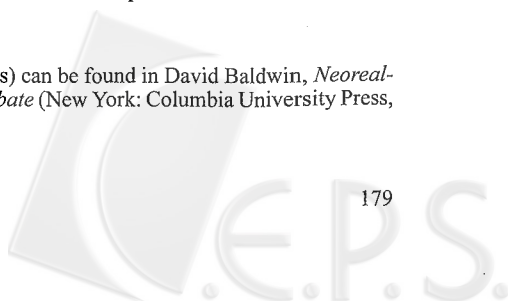
Institutions: A third strand of liberal argumentation is sociological liberalism. Neoliberals do not reject the neorealist argument that power competition based on the anarchical structure constitutes the defining principle of international relations. This new brand of liberalism, however, puts faith in institutions to modify and help mitigate the ill effects of anarchy, thereby allowing cooperation between countries to occur under certain conditions.²⁸

In their examination of liberal explanations of how involvement in multilateral security institutions affects Chinese behavior, Iain Johnston

²⁶Richard K. Betts and Thomas J. Christensen, "China: Getting the Questions Right," *The National Interest*, no. 62 (Winter 2000/01), found at <<http://www.nationalinterest.org/issues/62/Betts-Christensen.html>>.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Neoliberal arguments (and neorealist responses) can be found in David Baldwin, *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).



and Paul Evans identify a variety of contending cause-effect arguments. One, for instance, holds that engagement is a way of tying China down with multiple commitments and issue linkages. Another view sees the main effect more in terms of changing Chinese interests or preferences. Johnston and Evans state:

Engagement advocates have intellectual affinity with mainstream institutionalist arguments that involvement in international institutions adds new multiple costs and benefits (e.g., through side-payments, threats of sanctions, linkage to other issue areas) such that cooperation pays, even for states with opportunistic, prisoner's dilemma-like payoff preferences. Other engagement advocates implicitly share constructivist arguments that institutions can socialize states, and "teach" states new interests through a complex set of ideational channels including NGOs, transnational coalitions, and domestic constituency-building.²⁹

Margaret Pearson, in turn, presents a liberal argument in her look at the effects of Chinese participation in major multilateral economic institutions:

Judging by the evolution in attitudes of key domestic policy makers and bureaucrats within China, and changes in Chinese policies since the late 1970s, the effort of multilateral economic institutions to bring about engagement appears thus far to have been successful in encouraging China to play by the "rules of the game."³⁰

As with the liberal arguments regarding commerce and democracy, challenging this liberal world view are also realist and other critiques grounded in other types of ideas. These critiques will be discussed in section two's treatment of U.S. policy to Taiwan.

Democracy as a principled belief: Ideas of a liberal world order share the same epistemological root with such liberal principled beliefs as freedom, democracy, and self-determination.³¹ Another reason, therefore, to

²⁹See Alastair Iain Johnston and Paul Evans, "China's Engagement with Multilateral Security Institutions," in Johnston and Ross, *Engaging China*, 235.

³⁰Pearson also argues, however, that this cooperative behavior is also the effect of domestic political structures and politics. See Margaret M. Pearson, "The Major Multilateral Economic Intuitions Engage China," in Johnston and Ross, *Engaging China*, 209-10.

³¹What happens when these principled beliefs clash either with each other or other types of ideas will be treated in section two.

choose a pro-democracy policy preference is because democracy as a phenomenon is inherently valuable in itself. Therefore, some argue that the United States should not go out of its way to treat China favorably given that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is an *undemocratic* regime. Thus, many criticize the policy of engagement for allowing a regime that oppresses its people to remain in power.³²

Note, however, that discrepancies can sometimes exist between the policy implications stemming from liberal principles and liberal world views: What policy does a liberal adopt when the policy of encouraging a nondemocratic country to liberalize clashes with a policy to protect an existing democracy?³³ One way for liberals to resolve this conflict is by making sure that the nondemocratic country (China) democratizes or otherwise adopts liberal values as quickly as possible. This goal, however, brings up many questions regarding cause-effect relationships. One such area of contention is whether or not China can or will democratize—a question that gives rise to disputes over such issues as the degree to which the Chinese fear of "chaos" (亂 *luan*), a principled belief, will block political reform; what role economic development plays in political liberalization; the existence of, and role in democratization played by, civil society in the PRC; and prospects that corruption can impede democratization.³⁴ Another contentious issue is the age-old chestnut of "Can the United States (or the West in general) change China?"³⁵ or, put differently, to what extent is the United States capable of influencing domestic political development in the PRC?

³²An argument put forth by the "Blue Team" against the engagement policy as noted in Ted Osius, "Legacy of the Clinton-Gore Administration's China Policy," *Asian Affairs* 28, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 132.

³³This problem aptly characterizes the liberal U.S. policy dilemma in regard to China and Taiwan. See section two.

³⁴The issue of what causes/impedes democratization is too complex to be given in-depth treatment here. For more see the multi-authored "Will China Democratize?" section of *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 1 (January 1998): 1-64 and Harvey Nelson, "Caution, Rough Road Ahead," in Friedman and McCormick, *What if China Doesn't Democratize?* 259-83.

³⁵This question is treated from a historical perspective in Jonathon Spence, *To Change China: Western Advisers in China, 1620-1960* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1980).

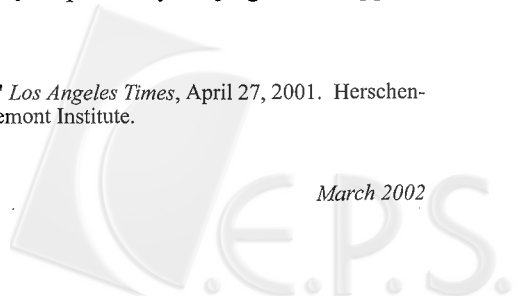
While space considerations prohibit a point-by-point review of the above debates, one argument is illustrative. Bruce Herschensohn presents a critique of one of the cause-effect arguments proposed by some liberal thinkers—that economic engagement with China will help lead to democracy within the PRC:

[Liberals] argue that an abundance of trade with China will bring about a reduction in China's human rights violations and bring about an impetus to democracy. There is no historical precedent to guarantee such prophecy. If the Soviet Union had to give up its totalitarianism because of economic collapse, why should China give up its totalitarianism because of economic health?³⁶

The above general discussion on the liberal world view has interesting implications for Goldstein and Keohane's typology. Note that the neoliberals accept many of the basic assumptions of neorealists, but argue that under certain conditions institutional rules can bring about cooperation (i.e., ideas about certain cause-effect relationships). The democratic peace theory makes a similar argument, holding that democratization of polities brings about pacific settlement of disputes. Herschensohn quote immediately above points out, however, that some realists completely disavow any such types of cause-effect relations. Thus we can categorize the difference between liberal and realist world views as being, in part, determined by contrasting ideas regarding cause and effect relationships.

An additional example adds yet another dimension of nuance. Note that Bernstein and Munro's realist challenge to commercial liberalism noted earlier actually accepts the liberal view that trade does help to tie one nation's interests to another country's welfare. They argue, however, that regime instability can cause the PRC to be aggressive regardless of the pacifying effect of trade. Thus the difference here between realist and liberal world views is more subtle—centering on alternative interpretations over *which* of the many cause-effect relations will be the defining one in the event of a clash between them. Some liberals believe that the logic of the benefits of trade will override any impulses by Beijing to use aggres-

³⁶Bruce Herschensohn, "Let Bush Be Bush," *Los Angeles Times*, April 27, 2001. Herschensohn is a Distinguished Fellow at the Claremont Institute.



sion to shore up legitimacy, while realists hold likewise. From this we can draw the additional insight that another factor distinguishing world views from one another is ideas regarding ordering principles.

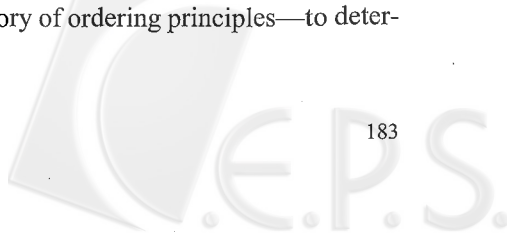
These two points call for a more nuanced typology than one presented by Goldstein and Keohane—with world views being partly composed of other types of ideas. Section three will return to this point.

This section has examined how two general world views shape the orientations that those in the United States hold toward China. Generally speaking, the realist group sees China as a threat or potential threat, depending on way of measuring China's strength (i.e., an ordering principle). Liberals, on the other hand, are much less likely to view the PRC as a threat, especially if China can be woven into a web of economic and institutional ties and/or encouraged to democratize.

This section has been valuable in helping bring to the surface the general theoretical debates—and thus ideas—which underlie discussion within the United States over policy toward China. This section has also extended Goldstein and Keohane's typology of ideas, and begun to present a more nuanced view of how ideas interact in order to determine a policy preference. What this section did not and cannot accomplish, however, is to provide much guidance about what the United States should do when policy toward China involves the question of Taiwan. Necessary, therefore, is to further refine the analysis by looking at the ideas regarding U.S.-China relations in the specific context of the Taiwan issue.

Ideas and U.S. Perception of Taiwan

This section examines policy orientations espoused by realist and liberal world views on whether or not the United States should protect Taiwan from PRC invasion. The focus is on highlighting not only key differences between these two groups, but also how these world views interact with the other three types of ideas—principled beliefs, ideas on cause-effect relationships, and the new category of ordering principles—to determine a final policy preference.



The Realists

How do the realists stand on the issue of whether the United States should intervene to protect Taiwan? One type of realism calls for a more proactive, aggressive approach. In terms of the Taiwan issue many who see China as an unavoidable challenger feel that the United States should step up to China *now*. Bruce Herschensohn presents this view: "In a half-century China has not stopped threatening Taiwan, but has increased those threats. Therefore, knowing that China will be an economic and military superpower some time within the next half-century, why subdue our dialogue until such time as they have that superpower status?"³⁷

Whether or not Taiwan should be protected can be disputed in terms of the island's strategic value, with different ordering principles leading to different policy prescriptions. Taiwan should be protected, one strand of realism thought holds, because: "Strategically, the island is too essential to U.S. policy in the region, which centers on containing China. The waters around Taiwan are the gateway into the South China Sea, an important shipping route and the link to the Koreas and Japan. If China were to control these waters, it could effectively control the region."³⁸

Others, however, see Taiwan as an insignificant player on the grand stage of international politics. Zbigniew Brzezinski, for instance, argues that "Admittedly, how the Taiwan issue is handled will influence—and in some circumstances could even determine—the evolution of U.S.-China relations. But, except for its impact on those relations, the status of Taiwan itself is not a central international concern."³⁹ Note that others have argued that cargo ships can just as easily be diverted from its current route through the Taiwan Strait to the east side of the island. From this perspective, Taiwan itself is of no real importance to the United States except as a possible flash-point for Washington-Beijing conflict.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸"Behave: Washington Sends a Message to Taipei," *Asia Times Online*, December 16, 1999, found at <<http://www.atimes.com/china/AL17Ad02.html>>.

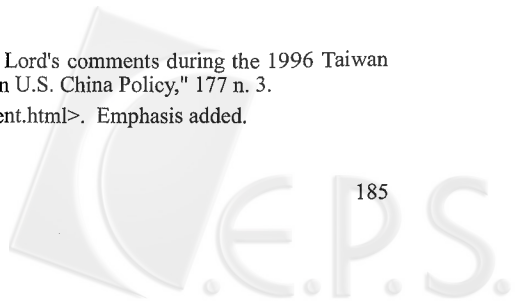
³⁹Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Extracts from 'Living with China'," *The National Interest*, no. 59 (Spring 2000), found at <<http://www.nationalinterest.org/issues/59/Brzezinskiextr.html>>.

There are other realist-based reasons why protecting Taiwan from the threat of PRC invasion is important. One such argument concerns the cause-effect relationship found in the idea of credibility. Echoing Alan Wachman's characterization in this special issue of the primacy of credibility in U.S. foreign policy concerns, Robert Ross states that "America's commitment to Taiwan's security is a basic tenet of U.S. Asia policy and a weakening of that commitment would call into question America's will to remain an active participant in the East Asian balance of power, possibly eliciting counterproductive reactions from American allies throughout the region."⁴⁰ Such an argument is reflective of the same cause-effect beliefs which motivated the United States to throw support behind Vietnam's communist insurgency during the Cold War.

Quite interesting is that oftentimes realist world view-based reasoning of why the United States should stand up to China over the Taiwan question is coupled with arguments drawn from principled beliefs, especially ones stemming from the *liberal* tradition. The Asian Studies Center of the Heritage Foundation has published a "Conservative Statement of Principles on China Policy" which notes not only that the national interest of the United States includes "freedom of the seas, access to markets and the prevention of one hostile power or a group of powers from dominating the region to the exclusion of American influence and interests" (a common realist argument) but also adds that "the advancement of freedom in Asia in all its forms, including religious liberty, freedom of conscience, and economic freedom, is a guiding value of U.S. foreign policy" (an argument steeped in liberal principles). In terms of U.S. policy to Taiwan, therefore, the Foundation urges the United States to ensure the island's security and to encourage "a peaceful resolution of the differences between the ROC and the People's Republic of China, *that does not limit individual freedom and political democracy*."⁴¹ This last qualification clearly shows the priority Taiwan should be afforded in U.S. foreign policy.

⁴⁰Quoting Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord's comments during the 1996 Taiwan Strait confrontation. See Ross, "Engagement in U.S. China Policy," 177 n. 3.

⁴¹See <<http://www.asianstudies.org/chinastatement.html>>. Emphasis added.



Yet another principled belief holds that the United States should protect Taiwan not just because the island is a democracy, but also because Taiwan is in fact a U.S. creation: "The United States has a moral obligation to Taiwan. In a very real sense, we helped create it as a viable entity. Taiwan, as it transformed itself into a democracy, consciously chose the U.S. system of government and our society as a model."⁴² This argument holds that the United States should not turn its back on a country that was allowed to exist and grow due to the intervention of the 7th Fleet during the Korean War and subsequent USAID support. In addition, the United States has since been the main provider of arms to Taiwan and general guarantor of the island's security. Taiwan has made use of these linkages, moreover, adopting many aspects of the U.S. market economy, education system, and culture. This argument also points out that people-to-people exchanges between the two sides are particularly impressive—the number of high-level government officials holding Ph.D.'s from U.S. universities is perhaps higher in Taiwan than in any other country.⁴³

In contrast to these arguments pushing for a more active defense of Taiwan is a policy line that calls for a more cautious approach. These warnings urge the United States to carefully consider the importance of Taiwan to China and the related question of the degree to which China would resist U.S. efforts to protect Taiwan.

Some, for instance, question the cause-effect relationship postulated by the idea of deterrence. Equating Bush's statement as an effort to deter China, Carpenter warns Bush of the likely negative effects of such a policy:

History is littered with the wreckage of deterrence failures. Many Europeans in the early years of the 20th century assumed the continent's elaborate system of alliances would make war unthinkable. The tragic events of 1914 demonstrated how wrong they were. In addition to the balance of military power, three factors are especially important in determining whether deterrence is like-

⁴²See the *Newsday* editorial, "Why Taiwan is Worth Fighting For," April 22, 2001, which can be found at <http://www.taiwanstudies.org/news_commentary/view_story.php3?387>.

⁴³Many of these arguments are also presented by Taiwan's foreign service and public diplomacy establishment in their dealings with the U.S. government, American interest groups, and American society in general.

ly to succeed: the importance of the states to the protector, the importance of the stakes to the challenging power, and the extent of the challenging power's inclination to gamble.⁴⁴

Given that Carpenter has raised the issue of "stakes," what factors might affect how hard the PRC is willing to fight over Taiwan? One such argument concerns principled beliefs—China's principled beliefs. Carpenter continues along a traditional realist line: "The island's importance to China is much greater than Western Europe or Northeast Asia was to the Soviet Union. To Beijing, Taiwan is not merely a political and economic prize. The status of the island is caught up in issues of national pride and prestige." Thus he warns, "applying the lessons of the Cold War to deter China from coercing Taiwan is likely to lead to either a humiliating U.S. retreat or an armed conflict."⁴⁵

In a similar vein, Betts and Christensen argue that national honor can outweigh the mediating power of economic interests that so occupy liberal thinkers:

... there is little reason to assume that sober economic interest will necessarily override national honor in a crisis. A tough stand by Beijing may be viewed from the inside as essential for regime survival, even if it is not seen by detached observers as being in China's "national interest." In an imbroglio over Taiwan, which capitals will feel the strongest emotional inhibitions against backing down? Beijing and Taipei both have a greater material, moral, and historical stake in the outcome than does the United States.⁴⁶

Others disagree with these ideas, however. Ross Terrill presents a neorealist argument that given the PRC's subordination to the U.S. superpower, China's general security and economic interests weigh much more heavily on the Beijing regime:

Mr. Bush's firm position to defend Taiwan and his commitment to missile defense have not reduced the modest but worthwhile areas of cooperation between

⁴⁴Carpenter is Vice-President for Defense and Foreign Policy Studies at the Cato Institute. For his remarks, see Ted Galen Carpenter, "Bush's Pledge to Defend Taiwan Goes Too Far," Cato Institute, May 9, 2001, available at <<http://www.cato.org/cgi-bin/scripts/printtech.cgi>>.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶See note 26 above.



the two nations. And despite the Communist Party's opportunistic use of anti-American rhetoric, its leaders know that no long-term economic or security interest is served by confronting the United States. For all its fiery words, China, a lesser power, respects the strength of a superpower.⁴⁷

Given that Terrill's policy preference can be supported from a liberal perspective as well, we now turn to examining this second world view.

The Liberal Perspective

In characterizing the PRC's reaction to various statements and actions by Taiwan's former president, Lee Teng-hui (李登輝), Edward Friedman has written:

It just is not true that Chinese patriots would rise up *en masse* to overthrow rulers in Beijing who refused to injure wealth-expanding economic ties with Taiwan and accommodated Taiwan in ways that do not devastate the Taiwan economy, as war and the threat of war do. There are plenty of Chinese who favor a Taiwan policy that enhances wealthy expansion on the mainland of China. Political leaders in the dynamic southern coastal regions of China warned Beijing against policies that could ruin China's image as a place for secure investment and consequently undermine China's great economic rise. All over the country, except perhaps in some regions of the north, many Chinese wondered why Beijing played a high risk military game and did not act on the long-run enlightened economic interests of the Chinese people.⁴⁸

He further explains that "territorial issues are central to the budget, priorities, and power and prestige" of only the chauvinist hard-liners.⁴⁹

There is, however, a realist critique of the basic cause-effect relationship inherent in this liberal world view of the pacifying effects of trade and commerce. Betts and Christensen explain:

... both sides in a political dispute have a stake in not overturning profitable economic integration. The PRC might not want to kill the golden goose, but

⁴⁷See Ross Terrill's opinion piece: "China, the Uncertain Ally," *New York Times*, February 19, 2002.

⁴⁸Friedman, "Chinese Nationalism, Taiwan Autonomy, and the Prospects of a Larger War," 11. Friedman further notes that even the "heavily propagandized issue of Taiwan" ranks at the bottom of the public's list of priorities, quoting Nathan and Shi, "Left and Right with Chinese Characteristics," 532, 533, 536.

⁴⁹Friedman, "Chinese Nationalism, Taiwan Autonomy, and the Prospects of a Larger War," 17.

neither would Taiwan or the United States. Why, then, should Beijing be any more anxious to back down in a crisis than Taipei or Washington? Mutual dependence makes a political conflict a game of chicken, in which each side expects the other to bow to the stakes, and in which collision may result rather than concession.⁵⁰

Speaking to this chance for a collision, Chinese military officials have told U.S. negotiators that "in the end you care more about Los Angeles than you do about Taipei."⁵¹ Thus Ted Galen Carpenter responds: "Americans must ask themselves whether they would really be willing to risk confrontation with a nuclear-armed China over Taiwan."⁵²

For some, the answer is an affirmative one, based on ordering principles informed by liberal values.⁵³ In his oft-quoted inauguration speech, President John F. Kennedy pledged "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."⁵⁴ No wonder that during the campaign for presidency, Kennedy stated "I believe that we should defend Formosa [Taiwan]. We should come to its defense. To leave this rather in the air—that we will defend it under some conditions but not under another—I think is a mistake."⁵⁵ Some therefore see Bush's more recent pronouncement as a reiteration of Kennedy's principles: "The moral instincts of President George W. Bush became clear on the morning of April 25, 2001. Free men and women everywhere should give thanks."⁵⁶

There are, however, other principled arguments for *not* protecting

⁵⁰See note 26 above.

⁵¹For the background behind this comment see the Carnegie Endowment for Peace's *Proliferation Brief* 4, no. 4 (March 22, 2001), at <<http://www.ceip.org/files/Publications/ProliferationBrief404.asp? p=8&from=pubdate>>.

⁵²See note 44 above.

⁵³This includes the liberal principles noted in the preceding subsection on the realist response to the Taiwan issue.

⁵⁴For a complete transcript of Kennedy's inauguration speech (January 20, 1961), see <<http://www.networker.www3.50megs.com/jfk7.html>>.

⁵⁵As quoted in Herschensohn, "Let Bush Be Bush" (cited in note 36 above).

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

Taiwan. Thomas Friedman order-ranks several conflicting principles when he argues:

If China attacks Taiwan without provocation, the United States must defend Taiwan. We cannot turn our backs on a country that has built its whole political system and economy in our own image. But this is not a fight that Taiwan or the United States should court. Yet that is what Taiwan's president, Lee Teng-hui, was doing when he said in an interview with German radio that henceforth relations between Taiwan and China should be seen as a "special state-to-state relationship" rather than an "internal" one—seemingly nullifying the fiction that there is one China that will one day be reunified.⁵⁷

To Friedman, therefore, U.S. principles require supporting Taiwan against naked aggression by the PRC, but if the island intentionally provokes China, then the United States should not intervene. Some might wonder why a liberal argument would put such qualifiers on support for an existing democracy. His rationale is, in fact, tied into the above-mentioned liberal world view about the potential for change in the PRC:

[Lee's "state-to-state relationship" statement] was reckless because the only long-term solution for Taiwan is not if it describes China differently, but only if China actually becomes different. . . . What will make Taiwan diplomatically recognizable is a change in China. Not only is that change in process, but Taiwan has a huge role to play in nurturing it. The only thing Taiwan needs is time, and the key to buying time is not clarity about its relations with China, but ambiguity. . . . Forcing clarity now is reckless and stupid for Taiwan.⁵⁸

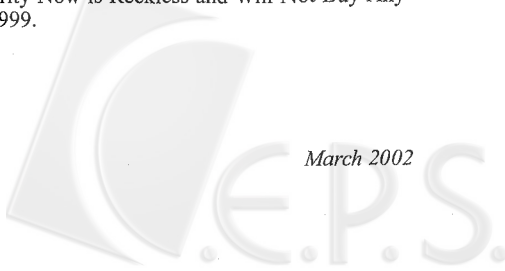
Brzezinski spells out more clearly this argument that China's democratization is more important to the United States than Taiwan, arguing that "the real strategic challenge for the United States—more important than the issue of Taiwan—pertains to China's evolution, both in its domestic politics and especially with regard to the global mindset of its ruling elite."⁵⁹

And what if this question is reversed? Will China's democratization lead to peace in the cross-Strait relationship, thus making the Taiwan issue

⁵⁷Thomas Friedman's column appears in the *New York Times* and is quoted here from a reprint in Thomas L. Friedman, "Forcing Clarity Now is Reckless and Will Not Buy Anything but Trouble," *Taipei Times*, July 29, 1999.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹See note 39 above.



all but disappear?⁶⁰ Brzezinski argues in the positive, noting that "a successfully developing and progressively democratizing China may eventually be able to reach some practical arrangement with Taiwan. It might do so by enlarging the 'one country, two systems' formula (currently applied to Hong Kong) to 'one country, several systems'."⁶¹ Others argue, however, that:

the democratic peace theory does not apply clearly to civil war. Democracies must recognize each other as democracies for the theory to apply. They also have to view each other as legitimate, independent, and sovereign states. No matter how many Americans and Taiwanese believe that Taiwan is or should be a sovereign state, this view is widely rejected on the mainland (and is not a premise of past or current U.S. policy).⁶²

There exist other issue-areas where liberal principled beliefs can clash with views on liberal world order. One such source of tension is on the question of self-determination. Joseph Nye, for instance, has called for a three-part plan whereby the United States would state a firm policy of "one China" yet "no use of force," Washington would guarantee Taiwan greater international living space, and the island would explicitly forswear any steps toward independence. Nye has defended his proposal, arguing:

Critics might reject this proposal as amoral, since it ignores Taiwan's alleged right to "self-determination." But history shows that self-determination is neither a clear legal principle nor an overriding moral claim. It has often led to disaster—witness the experience of the former Yugoslavia. If the simultaneous preservation of democracy and peace is the real moral problem confronting practical policymakers, this modest proposal can claim the high ground.⁶³

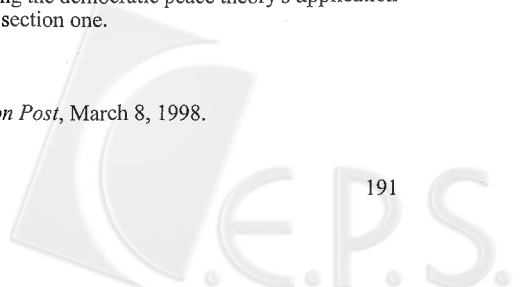
Lilley and Waldron, on the other hand, have criticized the former Democratic administration for placing China's complaints over Taiwan's legitimate rights in the aftermath of Lee's "special state-to-state" statement. They argue that

⁶⁰The reader is reminded that arguments regarding the democratic peace theory's application to China in a general sense has been raised in section one.

⁶¹See note 39 above.

⁶²See note 26 above.

⁶³Joseph Nye, "A Taiwan Deal," *The Washington Post*, March 8, 1998.



Elsewhere in the world the Clinton White House (rightly) insists on freedom, democracy, and self-determination—precisely the foundations on which Taiwan's claims are built. But when it comes to Taiwan, this administration embraces the archaic notion of absolute sovereignty by which China justifies its claim: Taiwan is part of their map, regardless of what the population may think—and despite the fact that, in the past 100 years, China has ruled Taiwan for only four (1945-49).⁶⁴

Interesting is that this above debate reveals two opposite mixes of realist and liberal arguments. On the one side is a realist world view being supported by liberal principled arguments. On the other is a liberal world view adopting, in part, more of a realist "international peace and security" argument to outrank the liberal principle of self-determination.

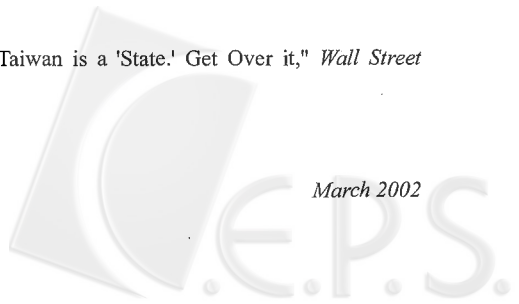
Four World Views on the Value of Taiwan

While the analysis presented so far has reviewed a wide variety of such ideas and their policy implications, some generalizations can be made. At the most basic level there exist four main orientations in American thinking regarding whether or not the United States should defend Taiwan against some future PRC military attack. This paper identifies these value-orientations as *international realism*, *sentimental realism*, *international liberalism*, and *sentimental liberalism*. These orientations are cohesive enough to be considered as world views.

The international realists see Taiwan as not holding much value in the great geopolitical game that is international relations, except as a potential issue of conflict between the United States and its growing rival, the PRC. The best example of such a view offered in this article is Zbigniew Brzezinski's argument that "Admittedly, how the Taiwan issue is handled will influence—and in some circumstances could even determine—the evolution of U.S.-China relations. But, except for its impact on those relations, the status of Taiwan itself is not a central international concern."⁶⁵ However, the specific policy recommendations of those within this group

⁶⁴See James Lilley and Arthur Waldron, "Taiwan is a 'State.' Get Over it," *Wall Street Journal*, July 14, 1999.

⁶⁵See note 39 above.



can vary, depending on various ideas regarding cause-effect relationships and ordering principles (see below).

Sentimental realists also see China as a potential competitor, but argue that the U.S. commitment to Taiwan—be it ideological, friendship, market, or otherwise—should not be subservient to, or used as a pawn in the management of, U.S.-China relations. Thus Lilley and Waldron, in defending Lee Teng-hui's "special state-to-state" articulation, have argued that the United States should respect that Taiwan has been built on the liberal foundations of freedom, democracy, and self-determination, and subsequently warn the White House not to blame Taipei for the "palpable failure" of the Clinton administration's engagement policy.⁶⁶

International liberals—like their realist counterparts—also focus on the global stage, but they push for the expansion of democratization and multilateral institutional forms of cooperation, viewing China as one of the most important countries yet to be converted into this liberal world order; Taiwan, while holding some value in the eyes of these liberals, is more of a peripheral concern because the island's 20-plus million inhabitants cannot match the weight of 1.2 billion mainland Chinese in terms of influencing international relations. Thus, Nye has argued that "The growth of democracy in Taiwan is an important achievement, but it has also introduced increased uncertainty into the situation"; has warned of the dangers to international peace of any self-determination by Taiwan; and puts his faith in "political evolution, economic development, and social change"—i.e., China's democratization—to improve cross-Strait relations.⁶⁷

The fourth and final general orientation is sentimental liberalism, proponents of which agree that helping to draw China into the liberal world order is important, but see no reason to place the possibility of a democratic PRC over the interests of an already democratized Taiwan. An example of this thinking has been presented by Edward Friedman, who argues that "Scapegoating Taiwan obscures America's global stake in the cause of

⁶⁶See note 64 above.

⁶⁷See note 63 above.

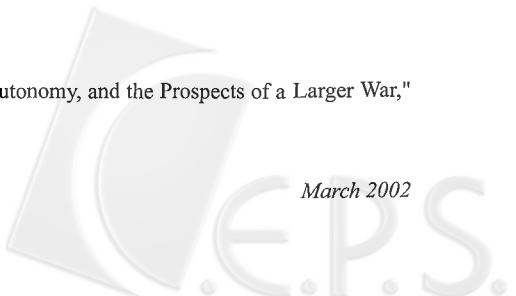


democracy. . . . Washington should not appease the worst case forces in China [the hard-line militarists] by betraying democracy in Taiwan."⁶⁸

From these general orientations we can rank-order these basic American "values." Stated most broadly, China is more important than Taiwan to international realists and international liberals, while sentimental realists and sentimental liberals are more apt to place Taiwan's defense before other considerations. One must note, however, that international realists may value China as being more important than Taiwan, but this merely reflects the potential danger that China can pose to the United States. Sentimental liberals have reasons to emphasize U.S.-China relations at the international level, yet share values with Taiwan at the national and sub-national level. Sentimental realists are concerned with China's behavior at the international level, yet are supportive of Taiwan at the national level and below. *Thus, generally speaking, an arrangement of these four categories from most- to least-likely supportive of Bush's "We will do whatever it takes to help Taiwan defend herself" statement would be: international liberals, international realists, sentimental liberals, and sentimental realists.*

The above rank-ordering is only a generalization, however. There still exist important ideas regarding ordering principles, principled beliefs, and cause-effect relations that can modify these general orientations. The question of definition of power is one such ordering principle which can lead to sharply diverging policy preferences: those international realists who see China as a relatively weak power would, for instance, be less likely to place importance on the U.S.-China relationship and may be more likely to support Taiwan since the costs of such action would—in their view—not be that high. Those international realists who view the PRC as a quickly rising competitor would be more concerned with how U.S.-Taiwan relations affect the PRC. Which specific policy preferences this second group has, however, is oftentimes determined more by ideas on cause-effect relations—including the effectiveness of deterrence, appeasement, and

⁶⁸Friedman, "Chinese Nationalism, Taiwan Autonomy, and the Prospects of a Larger War," 31.



other such strategies, and ordering principles about which cause-effect relationship has the strongest effect.

Looking within the individual liberal camps also reveals examples of additional complexity. True, an international liberal is more disposed than a sentimental liberal to give priority to maintaining a friendly U.S.-China relationship in the hopes of drawing China into the international system. Not all international liberals, however, would place equal emphasis on China's value. One can believe in the democratic peace theory, yet be pessimistic about either the PRC's ability to democratize or the ability of the United States to influence this process. International liberals also can emphasize the democratic peace theory, the mediating influence of multi-lateral institutions, or both; such variety can lead to different rankings of value-orientations toward the Taiwan issue.

The above four-point orientation articulation can, therefore, help in answering the question that underlies the "Taiwan threat" hypothesis: Does Taiwan threaten U.S. relations with China? The simple yet unsatisfactory answer is "depends on who you ask." People hold different values and thus tend to identify threats to their values differently. From a normative perspective, therefore, whether Taiwan is a "threat" can only be answered from the level of the individual. Whether or not the United States would intervene militarily to defend Taiwan from a PRC attack is another matter, however, being a probabilistic question on a potential empirical move by the United States. Whether or not the United States would make such a move would depend on a complex interplay of interests, institutions, and ideas—including the types of ideas outlined above. This question of policymaking is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion: What is an Idea?

Based on the analysis provided in sections one and two, we can now reevaluate Goldstein and Keohane's typology of ideas. The main critique provided by this research is that their typology is neither mutually exclusive nor collectively exhaustive—key requirements for any ty-

pology.⁶⁹ In terms of not being mutually exclusive, the above analysis has shown that world views in themselves are comprised of a variety of other types of ideas, such as those identified by Goldstein and Keohane—principled beliefs and ideas about cause-effect relationships.

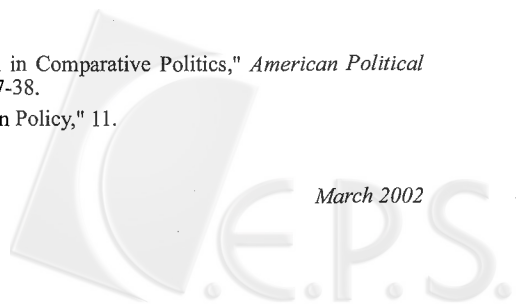
Liberals, for instance, hold a different perception of possibilities for cooperation in international relations than do realists. They do so, moreover, because of a belief in certain cause-effect relations. Commercial liberalism, for instance, holds that international trade and commerce can lead to peaceful relations between nations, republican liberal theory makes the same argument for the effects of democracy, and sociological liberalism, espoused by neoliberals, hold faith in the ability of institutions to bring about cooperation.

Importantly, however, this paper's argument that world views are in fact collections of ideas is made based on the assumption that liberalism and realism—two main theoretical approaches to understanding international relations—are world views. One could in fact argue that this assumption is erroneous since Goldstein and Keohane did not list these paradigms in their identification of different world views; perhaps these theories are in fact more broad than the specific meaning of "world views" as intended by the two scholars. Note, moreover, that Goldstein and Keohane also state that "Doctrines and movements often weave conceptions of possibilities and principled and causal ideas together into what may seem to be a seamless web."⁷⁰ In drawing a distinction between a doctrine and a religion, however, one would expect the former to be smaller than the latter.

Goldstein and Keohane do, however, clearly list "the world's great religions" as being world views—and one would be hard pressed to conceive of a world religion as embodying a single idea, or at least not including any ideas about principled beliefs (*i.e.*, the Bible's "thou shall not kill")

⁶⁹Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review* 64 (December 1970): 1037-38.

⁷⁰Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy," 11.



or cause-effect relationships (*i.e.*, *Confucianism's "losing the mandate of heaven"*). Secondly, Goldstein and Keohane also note that "Principled beliefs are often justified in terms of larger world views, but those world views are frequently expansive enough to encompass opposing principled beliefs as well."⁷¹

Unfortunately, Goldstein and Keohane's edited volume does not provide much guidance for those seeking clarification of this confusion regarding what exactly constitutes a world view. Goldstein and Keohane note that because the authors in the volume are affected by "modern Western world views," the book says very little about the impact of broad world views on politics.⁷²

This paper has at the very least helped improve their typology by pointing out an area that requires clarification. At the most, moreover, this paper has possibly pointed out a methodological inconsistency in their classification scheme. Alternatively, one could put aside the question of what constitutes a world view and draw from the analysis in this paper a useful fact about ideas: *they tend to be packaged together in loose yet fairly consistent groups*. These groupings or orientations, moreover, do provide a useful starting point for analysis into the role ideas play in politics.

If world views are to be viewed as collections of ideas, what other types of ideas might we then identify? This brings us to the second main criticism of Goldstein and Keohane's typology—the failure to be collectively exhaustive. This paper argues that another type of ideas not identified by their typology but shown to be important in this paper is ideas about ordering principles. Ordering principles are the prioritizing of values (both empirical and normative) that give rise to definitions and/or plans of action. A major difference within the realist camp, for instance, is over the question of how power is measured. The neorealists argue for a narrow definition encompassing only mostly military strength, while the traditional realists seek a broader definition. This paper has shown how different ideas

⁷¹Ibid., 9.

⁷²Ibid.



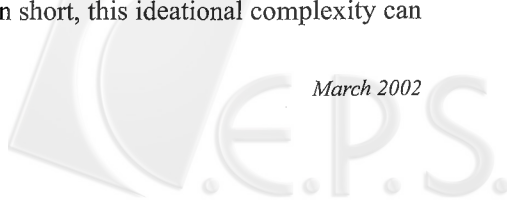
regarding how power should be measured have led to difference in whether realists view the PRC as a threat to the United States.

Possible, perhaps, is that the explanatory role of the idea of ordering principle has already been incorporated by Goldstein and Keohane's articulation of other ideas. This paper has raised Bernstein and Munro's realist argument, for instance, that while the liberals may be right that trade can encourage peaceful U.S.-China ties, the cause-effect relationship between regime instability and foreign policy has a more powerful effect, meaning that the PRC and the United States will clash in the future despite trading ties due to the inherent legitimacy problems of the CCP.

Such an explanation—that other ideas laid out by Goldstein and Keohane capture the effect of ordering principles—has its shortcomings. First, it does not allow us to make the distinction between those who discount, for instance, a principled belief and those who accept that such a belief does exist yet has limited potential. The policy preferences of a realist who discounts any use of foreign policy to achieve human rights objectives would under some circumstances be different from one who placed the protection of human rights around the globe as a possible, albeit limited, option when no other pressing security consequences would apply.

A second reason regards the distinction between international liberalism and sentimental liberalism. What does one do when liberal values seem to call for differing foreign policy preferences? Should the United States sacrifice a democratic Taiwan if necessary to continue a policy of engagement that encourages China's democratization—especially when a democratic China might have a major pacifying effect on relations in the Asia-Pacific? Goldstein and Keohane's typology of ideas as presently articulated does not help us in being sensitive to the ideas that influence such key decisions.

To conclude, therefore, this paper thus adds the ideas of ordering principles that together with principled beliefs and ideas about cause-effect relations help independently shape policy preferences. Moreover, these ideas often come together in the form of world views—packages of ideas that come together to present a fairly coherent way of interpreting the world and thus influence policy preferences. In short, this ideational complexity can



result in people with the same world views holding completely polar policy preferences, or can also mean that actors with radically different world views can be united over a policy preference due to the intervening preferences imposed by ideas.

With such a complexity of ideas interacting with each other to determine a final policy preference, no wonder *Newsday* has editorialized that "For the United States, defending Taiwan has been an ambiguous geopolitical concern and an uneasy moral obligation."⁷³ Geopolitical concerns are ambiguous because of the sharp dispute between realists and liberals about what is important in international relations as well as disputes within, for example, the realist camp over whether China is powerful enough to form a threat to the United States. An "uneasy" moral obligation stems not only from the polarization between international realists and the remaining camps over the role of principles (vs. interests) in setting national priorities, but also between international and sentimental liberals over which types of principles should take precedence. The result is that actors with radically different world views can find themselves united over a policy preference due to the intervening preferences imposed by principled beliefs, ideas about cause-effect relations, and ordering principles. Ideas, therefore, can help explain why politics makes for such strange bedfellows.

⁷³See note 42 above.

