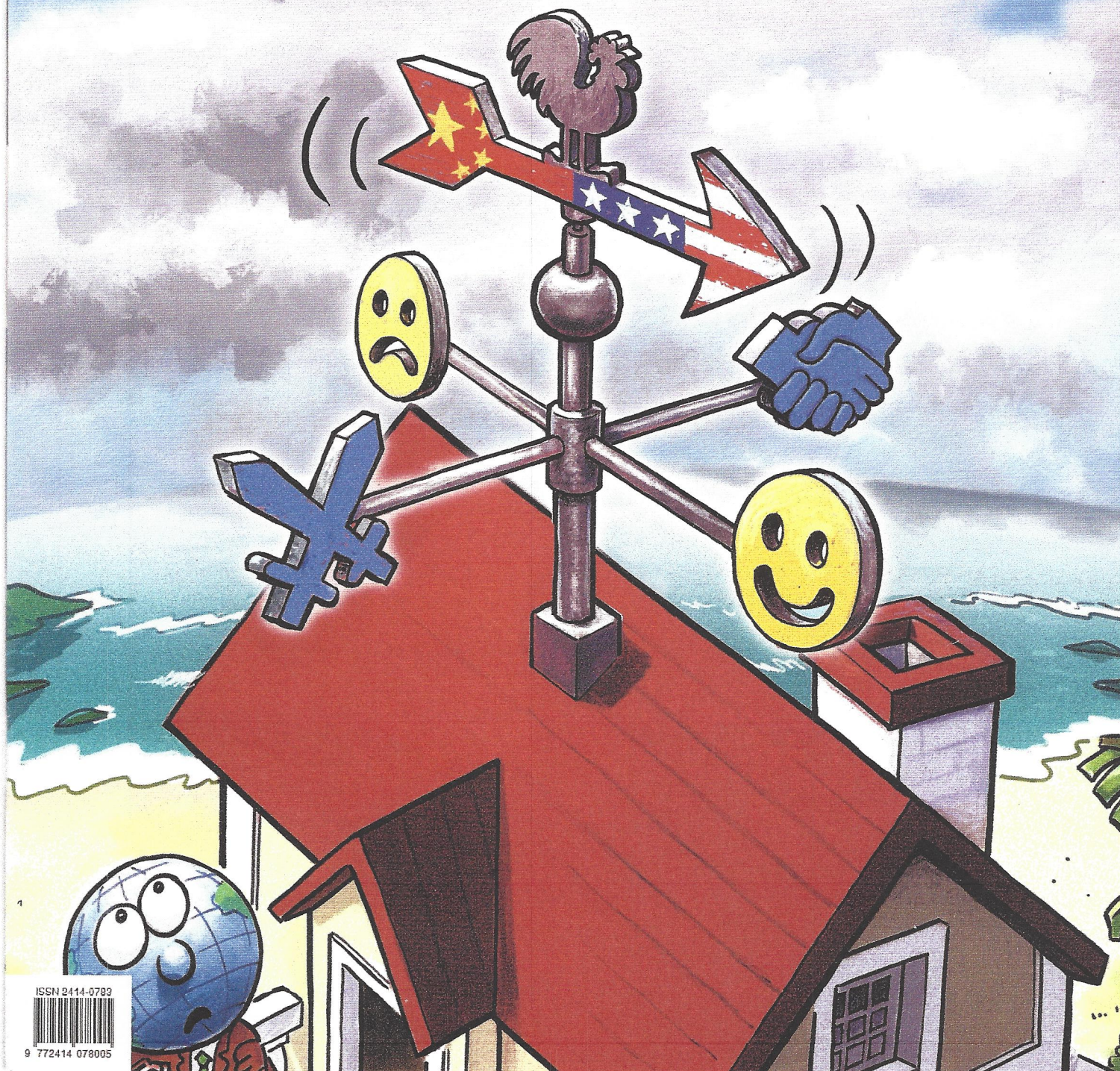


CHINA US Focus Digest

A Change in the Winds?



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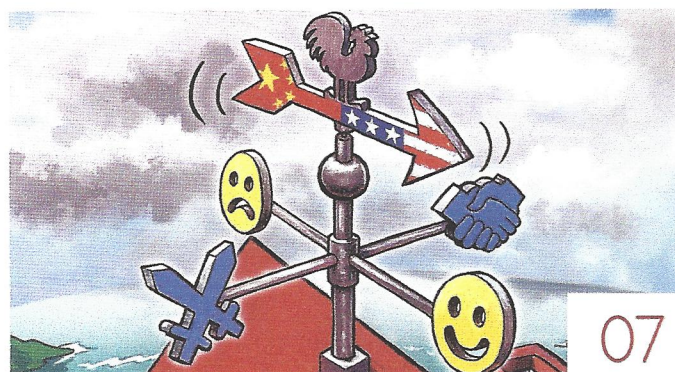
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COVER STORY

The Best and the Worst of Times

Common strategic interests of both countries require the U.S. and China to contribute to a new security framework in Asia-Pacific, by working together towards a better security arrangement for the region. Over-reliance on military alliances targeting third parties cannot replace efforts to provide adequate security for all.

4 EDITOR'S NOTE

7 COVER STORY

The Best and the Worst of Times

He Yafei, former Vice Minister, State Council Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs

11 CHINA-U.S. RELATIONS

U.S.-China Relationship Can Use Another Anson Burlingame

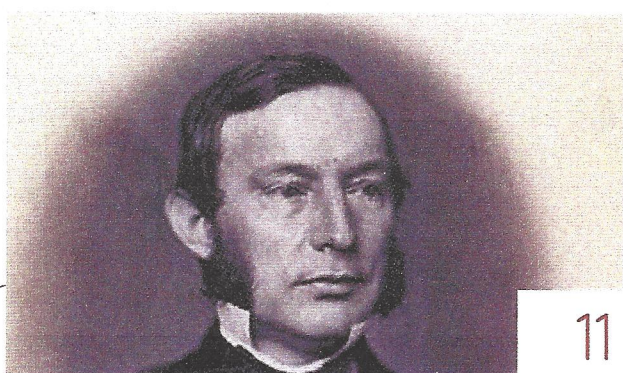
Don M. Tow, President, New Jersey Alliance for Learning and Preserving the History of WWII in Asia

17 "Beautiful Country" but Dispensable?

Patrick Mendis, Associate-in-Research, Harvard University

22 Shaping Trump's Outlook Toward China

George Koo, Board Member, New America Media



11

CHINA-U.S. RELATIONS

U.S.-China Relationship Can Use Another Anson Burlingame

Anson Burlingame recognized about 150 years ago that, in the long run, the best interests of the U.S. and the American people are best served by a China policy based on equality of nations.



38

ECONOMY

Is the U.S. Ceding Innovation Leadership?

By the early 2020s, rivalry for innovation will accelerate between the U.S. and China. Ironically, the Trump White House has opted for a poor-economy industrial policy, whereas China has embraced a rich-economy policy.

26

KOREAN PENINSULA

Iron Curtain Rises with THAAD

Fan Gaoyue, Retired Senior Colonel and Former Chief Specialist at PLA Academy of Military Science

30

THAAD: U.S. Assets, Lotte Liabilities?

Xu Duo, Fox Fellow, Yale University

34

Trump's Bargaining Chips

Sampson Oppedisano, Legislative Coordinator to New York State Assemblywoman Galef

38

ECONOMY

Is the U.S. Ceding Innovation Leadership?

Dan Steinbock, Founder, Difference Group

43

As RMB's Role Grows, Could the U.S. be Left Behind?

Richard C. K. Burdekin, Jonathan B. Lovelace
Professor of Economics, Claremont McKenna College

47

Real China-U.S. Trade Balance

Lawrence Lau, Xikang Chen and Yanyan Xiong

51

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Goals for a Code of Conduct

Zhou Bo, Honorary Fellow, PLA Academy of Military Science

55

Tillerson's Brush with South China Sea History

Sourabh Gupta, Senior Fellow, Institute for China-America Studies



Editor's Note

Zhang Ping

China-U.S. Ties Begin to Smooth Out

Despite concerns that relations between China and the U.S. might get tougher after Trump takes office, more signs indicate that the bilateral ties are tilting toward a steadier path.

Both Beijing and Washington are said to be busy preparing for a meeting in early April, possibly at Mar-a-Lago in Florida, between President Xi Jinping and President Trump. It's rare for a sitting U.S. president to meet so early in his presidency with China's top leader.

That is a welcome twist. In the early days since taking office, Trump surprised many with his remarks on Taiwan. He continued his antagonistic campaign rhetoric on trade and other issues concerning China.

Fortunately, China didn't overreact. Through quiet diplomacy and acting in calm confidence, China instead sought a positive tone. The phone call between Xi and Trump on Feb 10 was pivotal in avoiding a hard landing in ties after Trump backtracked on his remarks challenging the one-China policy.

Uncertainties remain – frictions over trade and investment reciprocity, geopolitical rivalry in the Asia-Pacific, and lingering suspicions over each other's long-term strategic intentions are unknowns that can still set the relationship back.

Yet shared interests and the pressing need for forging partnerships to deal with regional and global flashpoints and issues dictate that the

two countries need to cooperate instead of being at loggerheads with each other.

This view is shared by our contributor He Yafei, who outlines why the world can expect China-US ties to move ahead steadily.

For this issue, we add a dose of history by printing a piece by our Chinese-American contributor Don M. Tow on Anson Burlingame, a U.S. diplomat to imperial China in the 1860s, who later served as China's envoy to the U.S. and to European powers.

Harvard researcher Patrick Mendis discusses the aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from TPP, questioning if Trump's "Make America Great Again" could eventually leave the U.S. less relevant in the Asia-Pacific region.

Three articles are about the recent developments on the Korean Peninsula, including one by Sampson Oppedisano, who takes stock of President Trump's options in dealing with North Korea, and another by Yale scholar Xu Duo, who cautions against using economic sanctions to punish South Korea for going along with the U.S. in installing THAAD anti-missile system.

Anson Burlingame (1820-1870)



U.S.-China Relationship Can Use Another Anson Burlingame

Tow traces a history of U.S.-China foreign relations, beginning in the 1860s to today, focusing on a policy he calls "surround/isolate/weaken." The reason that policy toward China of the past 65-plus-years hasn't worked is because it is based on "might makes right", and not based on understanding, fair play, and win-win solutions. Anson Burlingame recognized about 150 years ago that, in the long run, the best interests of the U.S. and the American people are best served by a China policy based on equality of nations.



Don M. Tow

*President,
New Jersey Alliance for
Learning and Preserving the
History of WWII in Asia*

Who was Anson Burlingame?

Anson Burlingame, a name of which most people have probably never heard, was a unique diplomat. He was appointed by President Abraham Lincoln as U.S. Ambassador to China in 1861-1867. Then, China appointed him as China's Ambassador to All the Treaty Powers, including the U.S., in 1867. He served in that role until 1870, when he caught pneumonia on a mission to Russia and died at the early age of 49 in St. Petersburg.

The middle of the 19th century was a period where China

was forced to sign many unequal treaties with various foreign powers, including the U.S. China was essentially partitioned so that she did not even have sovereignty over her own country. China became weaker physically, militarily, and economically. Many of her citizens were addicted to opium brought in and sold by Britain, which generated strong resentment against the foreign powers among the Chinese people. Burlingame, as the U.S. Ambassador to China, not only saw that this kind of foreign policy was immoral and unjust, but had the foresight to realize that, in the long run, this approach



was not in the best interests of the U.S. and the American people. If this continued, sooner or later the Chinese people would rise up and throw out all the foreign powers. Then, the U.S. would be shut off from a huge market for American products and access to China's vast natural resources and cheap labor.

Burlingame began pushing for changes in U.S. foreign policy starting with allowing Chinese citizens to be witnesses in the American courts in China. Taking the cue from the American domestic abolitionist movement of 1860s promoting the "equality of men," he worked with Secretary of State William H. Seward to change the American foreign policy toward China to be based on the "equality of nations." China sensed that Burlingame was a man of integrity and wisdom, with the vision to see what, in the long term, was in the best interests of the U.S. and China. So, China offered Burlingame the job of China's Ambassador to All the Treaty Powers, including the U.S. Realizing that this opportunity could alter the relationship

between the U.S. and China in ways that would benefit both nations, Burlingame set aside his personal goal of running for higher office in the U.S. and accepted the position.

Burlingame Treaty of 1868

It was not an easy task to persuade the U.S. Senate to change a foreign policy of unequal treaties to a foreign policy based on the equality of nations. Using all his oratorical skills and working closely with Secretary of State Seward, Burlingame was successful in persuading the U.S. Senate to ratify what came to be known as the Burlingame Treaty, which President Andrew Johnson signed in 1868. This treaty was based on equality of nations and provided reciprocity on various foreign relationships between the U.S. and China.

Such a treaty would have established a solid foundation for selling American products in China, accessing China's vast natural resources, and utilizing China's cheap labor, and would have resulted in a win-win situation for both

Taking the cue from the American domestic abolitionist movement of 1860s promoting the "equality of men," he worked with Secretary of State William H. Seward to change the American foreign policy toward China to be based on the "equality of nations."

countries. Unfortunately, Burlingame died in February 1870 while on a mission to Russia. Most of the treaty was never implemented. Furthermore, with President Lincoln assassinated and Reconstruction politics creating turmoil, the Burlingame Treaty was basically repealed in the following decade. In a reactionary period, the U.S. reasserted its imperialistic attitude toward China based on military might, and extremely discriminatory anti-Chinese laws were passed in the U.S., with the most noteworthy being the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which is the only law in American history to deny citizenship or entry based on a specific nationality. This act remained in effect until 1943 when the U.S. and China were allies during World War II.

Mark Twain wrote the following obituary for Burlingame: "In real greatness, ability, grandeur of character, and achievement, Anson Burlingame stood head and shoulders above all the Americans of to-day, save one or two... He was a good man, and a very great

man. America lost a son, and all the world a servant, when he died."

America's foreign policy toward China since World War II

Ever since the late 1940s, when it appeared that the Chinese Communists would win the civil war in China, the U.S. has adopted a China policy that is not based on equality of nations but rather a policy to surround, isolate, and weaken China.

The first policy was the decision not to prosecute Emperor Hirohito, even though he was a hands-on emperor who was fully aware of and approved what Japan did during the war.^[1] If the Emperor of Japan did not do anything wrong, then Japan does not have to apologize for its massive atrocities during WWII, which Japan still has not, even though 71 years have passed since the end of WWII.

After the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, U.S. did not

The so-called pivot to Asia by the U.S. is really just a continuation of her long policy to surround, isolate, and weaken China.

recognize the PRC for 30 years. The U.S. orchestrated the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty that was the official treaty ending WWII with Japan. China, the country that suffered the most damage from Japan, was not (neither the PRC nor the Taipei-based Republic of China) invited to attend, although over 50 other countries were invited. This treaty only stated that Japan should relinquish former Chinese territories such as Taiwan, but did not explicitly say that they should be returned to China. This ambiguity could be considered the beginning of a long diplomatic

claim that these islands are covered under the Japan-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty. In other words, U.S. showed itself willing to go to war with China with no moral or legal justification.

Regarding the South China Sea dispute, American mass media and speeches of American political leaders constantly criticize China for violating international laws as specified under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). However, studying the facts about this issue



The Chinese mission led by Anson Burlingame met with the U.S. President Andrew Jackson.

Johnson

battle over how the U.S. and China should recognize Taiwan.

On December 25, 1953, the U.S. Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands issued, with no legal grounds whatsoever, Civil Administration Proclamation No. 27 and unilaterally included the Diaoyu Islands as part of the Ryukyu Islands, whose administrative rights would be handed over to Japan in 1972. Although on many occasions the U.S. would state that it does not take a position regarding the territorial sovereignty of the Diaoyu Islands, the U.S. would also

will lead to the conclusion that, yes, there is an abuse of power, but the country doing the abuse is the U.S., not China. The U.S. has accused China of military aggression and creating instabilities in the world, but it is the U.S. that has military bases all around China, and has military alliances with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand. The U.S.'s huge 7th Fleet is patrolling the waters all around China with 60-70 ships and submarines, 200 to 300 aircrafts, and about 40,000 sailors and marines.

The so-called pivot to Asia by the U.S. is really

火要出大洋肆掠北
 國有一要事照請
 欽命駐劄中華便宜
 本國南方逆命與兵
 聞困希於此年內將
 事務和碩恭親王
 知照汕頭地方官以便
 合照知

No. 409
 A. Burlingame
 to Prince Kung
 March 8, 1864

姓名	國籍	到任日期	卸任日期
安孫	美國	1864年3月8日	
...

Historical documents bearing Anson Burlingame's name in English and Chinese.

just a continuation of her long policy to surround, isolate, and weaken China.

Is the American foreign policy toward China in the best interests of the U.S. and the American people?

During the 65-plus years of the U.S.'s surround/isolate/weaken foreign policy toward China, China might have been surrounded and often isolated, but today she is definitely not getting weaker nor isolated. Based on the number of countries showing interest in China's "One Belt One Road" initiative to interconnect China and most of Asia and Europe and the related Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), China is growing economically stronger, and more connected with the global economy.

Of course, every country's first priority is for the welfare of their country. I have no quarrel with that. I do, however, wonder if U.S. foreign policy toward China is in the best interests of the U.S. and the American people over the long term.

Allying so closely with Japan could result in irreparable damage to the U.S.' claim as an advocate of justice and human rights, since Japan has never admitted much less apologized for the massive and inhumane atrocities that she inflicted all over Asia during WWII.

Through various mutual-defense treaties, the U.S. is ready to go to war with China over disputes that the U.S. has no legal or moral reasons to be involved. A war with China would be an extremely costly and protracted war, perhaps involving nuclear weapons. There will be no winners in a nuclear war in the 21st century between the world's top two economies.

While competing with China, instead of adopting an uncalled-for antagonistic attitude, the U.S. should work together with China to solve many of the world's critical problems, such as fighting against terrorism, environmental protection, world hunger, and world peace. At the same time, the U.S. can join China and other countries to improve inter-

Through various mutual-defense treaties, the U.S. is ready to go to war with China over disputes that the U.S. has no legal or moral reasons to be involved.

country, inter-continent infrastructure, e.g., transportation via high-speed trains. Working together on these projects not only is beneficial to the world, but U.S. companies and workers would also share in the benefits of working on these huge, cutting-edge, and profitable projects, which could lead to vast economic opportunities that these projects might open up.

Instead of adopting a Tonya Harding-like foreign policy to unfairly attack her main competitor, the U.S. should focus its energy to look within herself to improve her country's competitiveness as a whole, which should bring vast economic benefits to the American people.

In the long run, the current U.S. policy to surround, isolate, and weaken China is not in the best interests of the U.S. and the American people. A win-win-win strategy would be more promising: A win for the U.S. and a win for China is a win for world peace.

With the recent change of political leadership in the U.S., it is an opportune time for the Trump administration to take a fresh look at the U.S.'s foreign policy toward China. President Trump's selection as the U.S. Ambassador to China, Iowa governor Terry Branstad, has a long relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping, which could lead to warmer relationship with China. On the other hand, Trump has always been a severe critic of China. Will he heighten the U.S. policy to surround, isolate, and weaken China, or will he, perhaps after some twists and turns,

realize that the best interests of the U.S. and the American people will be served by a policy that is based on equality of nations. We just have to wait and see.

Like Anson Burlingame's vision, a realistic 21st century U.S. policy toward China must reflect honest history and appreciation of culture, and that different countries with different historical and cultural backgrounds may do things differently. Treating other countries as equals will lead to long-term friendships, cooperation, and win-win for everyone.

Which American leaders will stand up, head and shoulders above the others? The U.S. and the American people, as well as the rest of the world, will benefit from such leadership. Using Mark Twain's words, who will become the next Anson Burlingame, a son of America, and a servant of the world?

[1] Herbert P. Nix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, Gerald Duckworth & Co Ltd; 2001.

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