
INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS CHRISTENSEN

THE CHINESE MILITARY AND POST 9/11 SINO-US RELATIONS

BY LEIF-ERIC EASLEY

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HAQ: What is the status of US-China anti-terrorism cooperation after the 9/11 attacks? In particular, what are China's interests relative to the US-led war on terror and recent focus on Iraq?

Christensen: My understanding is that China is not an incredibly important player in the war on terrorism but that it has been relatively cooperative with the United States since 9/11. There was cooperation in intelligence, although it is unclear from open sources how extensive that was. More importantly, China was a cooperative team player in the UN, by supporting the UN resolution for a vigorous response to the threat from Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. My impression is that there are various reasons for this cooperation: first, China has a terrorist threat of its own in Northwest China, which Beijing calls the East-Turkistan Independence Movement. [US Deputy Secretary of State] Richard Armitage had declared that the US viewed the Independence Movement as a terrorist organization. It's unclear how much of that movement is linked with international terrorists, but everyone in the know seems to think that some element of the Movement has been linked to Al Qaeda through Afghanistan so there is a common interest between the two countries in addressing that issue.

There are other common interests that aren't emphasized enough in the Western media. For one, China was very nervous after 9/11 that an American failure in the war on terror would seriously hurt the American economy, since it is dependent on trade with the US to produce jobs. Many people emphasize anti-Western nationalism as a legitimating factor for the CCP, but that's only part of the story. There are other important forms of nationalism, like China being considered a responsible power in the international realm. Then there's also the issue of job production and keeping people relatively satisfied with the economic situation. Those latter two things point in the direction of Chinese cooperation. On that score I think Russia's cooperation was very important as well. I don't think China wants to be alone in opposing the US on important international issues.

China also did one very important thing, sometimes underestimated in the Western media, to further the US-led war against terrorism. Very early on, China backed President Musharraf's decision in Pakistan to support the US war effort. A lot of people at that time did not know what Pakistan was going to do and worried about the domestic stability of Pakistan if President Musharraf agreed to cooperate with the US in an attack on a Muslim country, which in this case was Afghanistan under the Taliban. I think China's early support for Musharraf and its determination to cooperate with the US was important for President Musharraf because he had domestic interests running against his decision. It was significant for China to urge Pakistan to cooperate with the US because at the time, China was Pakistan's most important foreign ally.

HAQ: How do Chinese and American interests line up with respect to Iraq?

Christensen: China is obviously very nervous about an American effort to overthrow a sovereign regime in Iraq. China has cooperated more than

what some probably would have expected in pressuring Iraq to cooperate with the UN on weapons inspections. This is not all that surprising given that although China abstained in the vote on the original Gulf War, it understood that the cross-border invasion provided a legitimate reason to use force against Iraq. The disarmament agreements that Iraq signed were the terms for peace after that war. So I think China can justify its claim that Iraq is in violation of international law.

It's not surprising that China would put pressure on Iraq to cooperate with the UN on weapons inspections, but that's very different from China being happy about or fully supporting an American drive for regime change. My sense is that if China is faced with a choice in which by supporting one you end up tacitly supporting the other, China will either abstain from a UN vote [on Iraq] or it will support it, depending on how tough the wording is in the resolution drafted. I don't believe China will veto, especially on its own.

HAQ: The PLA [People's Liberation Army] is spending billions of dollars each year on its modernization program – just how much is debatable because of varying standards in accounting for military spending. In short, transparency of the Chinese military is lacking. What are the long-term strategic goals of the PLA's modernization?

Christensen: I think the goals are fairly straightforward. China lacks a blue-water navy, and it lacks the ability to project power past its shores and in the air. China also lacks high-tech capabilities within its military. It lacks the personnel and training necessary to compete with first class modern militaries. It's got a very, very long way to go. If you look at the broadest type of modernization that's going on in China, the goals are relatively abstract in improving China's overall capability to project power from its shores and to match potential enemies decades in the future.

Most people pay attention to the more immediate military modernization focused on Taiwan. I think on that score, China wants to have talented well-trained soldiers and it has adopted certain measures to bring that about. But it also wants to develop relatively quickly a coercive capacity against Taiwan involving various weapons systems, and I think it is pouring quite a bit of money into that. There seems to be a consensus among PLA watchers in Washington and Tokyo and elsewhere, that the tenor of the Chinese exercises have become much more serious and focused on real-world scenarios relating to Taiwan, with more actual training for combat.

HAQ: Aside from purchasing destroyers, subs, fighters, and

missiles from Russia, what tactical and financial decisions are being made by the PLA? Is there some emphasis on anti-ship mines that can be used for blockades around Taiwan, or are there any plans in sight for an aircraft carrier?

Christensen: The doctrinal emphasis has been on coercive strategies. There has been a lot of writing recently about sea blockades by PLA military officers, and there's a big section of a PLA doctrinal book that I wrote about in my spring 2001



Professor Thomas Christensen of MIT speaks to HAQ in early October about the Chinese military and recent changes in Sino-US relations.

International Security article [“Posing Problems without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for US Security Policy,” *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 4, Spring 2001] that emphasizes the importance of being able to use blockades, including sea mines, to bring an unidentified opponent to agree to China's terms. I think the submarines, the sea mines, and to some degree even more accurate ballistic missiles and land attack cruise missiles could all be useful for a blockade, as would anti-ship cruise missiles. China is working hard to develop more sophisticated anti-ship cruise missiles, including those that can be fired from submarines. This is a very tough task, but once China has that capability, it's very difficult for an opponent like Taiwan to counter. That capability could cause real damage if implemented. Taiwan is a very trade dependent economy.

Such capabilities are extremely serious given the fact that the Taiwan issue does exist and will continue to pose a problem in the foreseeable future. Because of the geographic proximity of Taiwan to the mainland, China doesn't require a lot of power projection capability to take the fight to Taiwan in a coercive capacity. Even if China lacks the capability to do a traditional D-day style amphibious invasion of Taiwan, it can still bring a lot of military pressure to bear on Taiwan.

As far as an aircraft carrier goes, there have been constant rumors that China is going to develop an aircraft carrier or purchase one from one of the former Soviet Republics. There is little doubt about its continued interest in aircraft carriers, but I don't think that there is a major effort by the PLA to acquire an aircraft carrier. There are many reasons for this. An aircraft carrier would not be particularly useful in Taiwan. I think Taiwan scenarios are driving near-term modernization strategies. Aircraft carriers are incredibly difficult to run. To actually land planes on aircraft carriers, to take planes off of aircraft carriers, to maintain the planes and the necessary parts are all very difficult and expensive. Protecting an aircraft carrier, especially far from home, is an enormous task. It involves a huge carrier battle group and I

think enough Chinese analysts realize that any aircraft carrier capability that they develop would be extremely vulnerable to attack from any high-tech enemy, so it may be a big waste of resources.

All that being said, aircraft carriers do carry a lot of prestige value. Almost all countries in history have acquired certain weapons because of the prestige value involved, and aircraft carriers say something about a nation. Many Chinese military officers that I have met have been somewhat jealous of India because India has aircraft carriers and China doesn't. From a purely strategic and tactical point of view, I would argue that major expenditures on the aircraft carriers in China would make China weaker instead of stronger because China would pour so many resources into the carrier itself and into the carrier battle groups that would protect the carrier. Those resources would be at risk in the first hour of a real war with a real enemy. China would probably weaken itself over the long term with the pursuit of aircraft carriers as opposed to other things. Resources are finite, and you have to make choices.

HAQ: Returning to the topic of Taiwan, Chen Shui-bian has made a recent string of comments stressing the need for Taiwan to "stand up" for its own survival by ensuring its economic development and strong national defense in the face of mainland threats. Touting Taiwan's democratic system, Chen has spoke of legislation for an independence referendum and even gone as far as to say that China and Taiwan are each countries on their own side of the Strait. In April last year, President Bush seemed to flirt with a departure from America's policy of strategic ambiguity (established by the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué) when he said the US would do whatever it takes to defend Taiwan. The cross-Strait dialogue appears frozen, US arms sales continue to the island, and Taiwanese economic links to the mainland tighten in the background. Where are we on the Taiwan issue and what is the current thinking in Beijing?

Christensen: I haven't been back to Beijing since earlier this year, so it's hard to tell what the current thinking is, but from what I've read, I think that Beijing has been relatively moderate in its response to Chen Shui-bian's statements. There were people in Beijing who were trying to judge whether Chen was first and foremost a pragmatic politician who valued his term of office more than anything else, or whether he was actually someone who was going to push for Taiwan's sovereignty. The recent statements have probably settled that in favor of people who say that Chen really does want to push for Taiwan's sovereignty over time.

I think the mainland's response has been relatively muted for a couple of reasons: one is that it's a bad time for China to take a tough position. There's a transition going on in China and in that transition no one wants to say that the mainland's treatment of the Taiwan issue has been a failure. It's a bad time to say things are getting out of control and that things have gone wrong in the last five years. There's a reluctance for people to speak up in a way that would be critical of

President Jiang in what are potentially his last months in office. If he's to hang on, then one could be seen as criticizing President Jiang and his efforts to maintain some position in the party. Another reason is that there is a summit coming up in October with President Bush and China is famous for trying to create a good atmosphere for summits. So some of that moderation may be temporary.

But there's a broader issue in that China is building up coercive capacity to put pressure on Taiwan. This is taking time and only really started in a serious way in 1999. It's part of a multiyear process of building up that coercive capacity so I don't think China wants to put pressure on Taiwan on Taiwan's timetable. I think it wants to wait until it's ready to put pressure on Taiwan.

HAQ: So time is on the side of the mainland, in the minds of the leadership in Beijing?

Christensen: It's a bit of a race in the sense that some of the political trend lines are running against China. The economic trend lines are running with China, and the military trend lines are such that China will have more options against Taiwan in the future than it does now. If it deems that it can wait, Beijing probably wants to wait, but it also worries a lot about domestic politics in Taiwan and the US-Taiwan relationship. One of the reasons they've been relatively mild in their response to President Chen's statements is that Washington was quick to criticize President Chen after those statements. I think Beijing is taking that as American cooperation with China as a result of the war on terror, as an effort to keep Taiwan off the crisis radar screen in the US while Washington handles other issues and that's all well and good in Beijing.

You said that in April 2001 President Bush flirted with moving away from the policy of strategic ambiguity. I think he was trying to make clear that we have a military commitment to Taiwan but he and others have stated subsequently that the US does not support Taiwanese independence. It's not really clear even now exactly how far the US military commitment extends. Whether it extends to a declaration of independence by Taiwan in the future is not entirely clear. We certainly did lean more in the direction of an unconditional commitment, but whether or not we will cross that line and adopt an unconditional commitment is still ambiguous.

HAQ: On the topic of military confidence issues in China: last month the Chinese destroyer, the *Qingdao*, completed the PRC navy's first circumnavigation of the world. The journey included numerous ports of call and naval exchanges abroad while supporting China's nationalist pride at home. What is your sense of the PLA's morale and confidence? What perceptions and psychologies are operating inside the PLA which might assert itself on the international stage?

Christensen: The military is certainly concerned about its public image and has tried very hard to portray itself in two different ways. One is as defenders of Chinese national sovereignty on issues like Taiwan, and to say that their tradi-

tional role is to defend Chinese territorial integrity against foreign incursions. That has been a very big push, and it's an understandable push given the very negative public views, particularly in the capital, after Tiananmen. Numerous military officers that I've spoken to have been very upset about the international and domestic image that the PLA got from the Tiananmen massacre. They basically state that "we are professional soldiers, we believe in national defense as do professional soldiers elsewhere, and we didn't sign up to clear cities of protesters." I have even heard criticism of civilian leaders for not understanding the type of force they were unleashing in the city and complaints that they should have adopted different measures, including deployment of people's armed police and regular police forces that can handle rioters. The other image that has been pushed is the PLA as the defender of the people rather than the attacker of the people. That has been most prominent during natural disasters in the last few years when large numbers of PLA forces were used to help people stave off floods, with very high profile coverage in the news.

Things like circumnavigation of the world demonstrate some new and impressive logistic capabilities. China had a terrible time getting across the Pacific to visit Hawaii with its navy a few years back, so this is a sort of breakthrough. It's a long way from a battle-ready power projection capability, but it does have prestige value. As I said before, prestige is very important to militaries. Efforts like a manned spacecraft, which China is trying hard to create, are really national prestige issues, not just for the military but also for the country. China isn't unusual in this regard.

HAQ: Publicly, Beijing's response to the US withdrawal from the ABM [Anti-ballistic Missile] Treaty has been muted. But because China is viewed as a potential American adversary in some circles and has only a limited number of long-range nuclear missiles, military planners in the PRC must question whether their strategic nuclear force is in danger of being captured by an operational missile defense system. To what extent is this a concern and how is missile defense being calculated into Chinese security policy?

Christensen: I think that PLA planners worry greatly about their second-strike capability, namely the ability to inflict unacceptable damages onto your adversaries after receiving a first blow, whether it be a conventional blow or a nuclear blow. My strong sense is that PLA experts and officers are worried about this with or without missile defense systems. We don't know from unclassified reports, but there is an unclassified wisdom that China does not have more than two-dozen liquid-fuel missiles that could reach the continental US.

HAQ: So there's a concern that all their silos could be taken out in a first strike?

Christensen: Right, if you could find all of their silos in a reliable way, from a Chinese perspective they may believe

that their current arsenal is at risk of a first strike, even without an operating defensive system. One important thing about liquid-fueled missiles is that the warheads are kept separate from the missiles, so in a crisis, it could take anywhere from several hours to even days for China to load up its nuclear arsenal. This leaves China's missile force vulnerable to pre-emptive attack. Hence China has had a push for a mobile solid-fueled missile force even before the ABM treaty decision was made by the Bush administration.

The only real question is how much resources they will put into that program and how many missiles they will deploy if the US pursues vigorously a national missile defense program. My guess would be that they would accelerate their programs in response to a national missile defense system. The fear is not only that a national missile defense system would be able to capture all of China's

missiles out of the blue, but also that the US could launch the conventional first strike and capture the remaining missiles.

I don't think that China worries about a nuclear first strike by the US, but I do think that China worries greatly about its nuclear arsenal, not just for the traditional reason that it protects China from potential nuclear attack by adversaries. Chinese analysts believe that China as a nuclear power has certain leverage over a country like the United States that conventionally-armed enemies of the United States did not have. I am thinking of countries like Iraq and Yugoslavia during the Kosovo operations. In a Taiwan conflict scenario, what will the US do? What types of missions will they fly over mainland territory and what types of targets will they attack? Will the fact that China is a nuclear power and not just a conventional power limit the extent or range of an American response? I don't think that it is fundamentally wrongheaded on the part of the Chinese to think in those terms. I think they value their nuclear force partially because it limits the damage they would suffer in a conventional war against a superior adversary like the US.

HAQ: After 9/11, President Putin appears to have made a decisive step towards the West. US-Russian relations show evidence of becoming more substantive and cooperative. Russia remains a geostrategic concern for China, as these two military powers share a history of strained relations and a 2,500-mile border. Moreover, it seems clear from its domestic politics that the CCP is deeply intent on avoiding the path of the Soviets. What does all this mean for China's balance of power and in particular, its relations with Russia?

Christensen: I think that Russia is more concerned about China than vice versa. That long border is a part of Russia that Moscow has decreasing control over both economically and politically. The concern in Moscow is that the Russian Pacific Far East could break away eventually and that migration – either intentionally promoted or accidentally and economically driven by China – into the Russian Far East could lead to its Sinification. There's a lot of concern in Russia about this. Given that there are only several million Russians living in the Russian Far East, migration from China into

Russia, as the pessimistic scenario goes, could swamp that population in size and importance over time.

Russia, on the other hand, is making the Chinese military more powerful by selling China almost all of its most impressive weaponry during the last ten years. There's a debate going on in Moscow about the advisability of Russia selling so many weapons systems to China. But I think there are a few things at play here. One is that the Russian defense industry is really reliant on foreign customers. Both China and India buy more weapons than the Russian military itself. Foreign customers help the Russian defense industry, which they can then justify in terms of national defense. Another issue is that Russia probably correctly judges that a lot of these weapons systems are aimed towards the Southeast and Taiwan, away from their border at least for the time being, so they don't pose a big immediate challenge to the Russians.

I don't get the impression that China is very concerned about Russian power projection in East Asia. Sure, Russia will always be a great power actor and China might have to worry about that three or four decades out, but I don't think they worry much about it now. I do think they worry from a prestige point of view about tightening relations between Russia and the US. They don't want to be left out from those types of relationships.

I think there was some frustration in Beijing that Russia was so mild in its response to President Bush's ABM cancellation. There were a lot of very hopeful writings in Beijing on how angry Russia would be if the US were to break this treaty, but it didn't come to pass. I think there's some frustration because at the end of the day, the ABM treaty was a bilateral agreement between Russia and the US. Since China wasn't a signatory, it relied on Russia to put pressure on the US to back down, but Russia didn't do that. I think this has potentially worrisome implications for China if US-Russian cooperation extends to the point that the US could successfully put pressure on Russia to limit its arms sales to China. This could have a huge impact on China's short-term to medium-term defense modernization in the Taiwan context.

HAQ: There is much speculation over the PRC presidential succession and which posts Jiang Zemin will step down from at the 16th Communist Party Congress in November and the National People's Congress next March. Could you comment on this and any potential policy changes we might see in a Hu Jintao-led China?

Christensen: I really can't. We don't know much about the internal workings of the Chinese Communist Party. There are lots of articles based on rumors from people from the inside and lots of speculation. I tend not to take part in the speculation. I have never been convinced by many of the arguments that any of this matters all that much. A lot of people have all sorts of theories about which positions Jiang Zemin will hold on to and which positions Hu Jintao will have control over and how influential Hu Jintao will be and how influential a retired Jiang Zemin will be. Whereas those types of analyses are very plentiful, the analyses that say why

any particular future leadership configuration matters in terms of Chinese policy towards the US or China's domestic policy are relatively few.

I can imagine some analysis that says that it matters if President Jiang will or will not have a lot of authority either through official office holdings in the post succession CCP or through back channels. The thesis would go something like this: a future President Hu will have an opportunity to adopt some serious political reform over time and a more cautious President Jiang in the background may slow those trends or prevent the implementation of relatively bold reforms. But the big question is just how bold or innovative President Hu Jintao will be. We don't have an answer to that. We know that he has surrounded himself with lots of people who can be labeled as new thinkers but we don't know how his inner thinking works. We don't know how many of those pieces of advice he has taken on board. We don't know how, in domestic political terms, he will judge those proposals as either prudent or imprudent.

At the end of the day, the question is whether the Chinese Communist Party will continue to exist. The CCP is a government whose legitimacy is less and less based on its ideological past, and more and more based on balancing economic and social stability with the demands of maintaining the party's nationalist credentials. These two things can pull in opposite directions on issues such as Taiwan and the WTO. I think any Chinese government, whether it is ruled by Jiang Zemin or Hu Jintao or some combination of the two, will face those challenges. Producing jobs, maintaining stability, and fending off external pressure from the WTO, from Taiwan and the international community, is an incredible balancing act for anybody.

HAQ: How do recent developments on the Korean Peninsula, such as [Japanese Prime Minister] Koizumi's landmark visit to North Korea, figure into Beijing's foreign and security policy? From China's perspective, how important is the outcome of the upcoming South Korean presidential election? What difference does it make to Beijing which party's candidate take the reins from Kim Dae Jung?

Christensen: I'm not sure what is Beijing's perspective on the South Korean elections. Purely speculating, but I can say with some confidence, that Beijing is fairly happy when regional or global actors engage with North Korea and deal with the regime. There are numerous reasons. Beijing's one strategic concept is that engagement is always better than non-engagement. The Chinese believe that about their own interactions with foreign countries and they believe that in principle about other's interactions with third parties. So they have been urging the US and Japan to recognize North Korea and to try to come to some basis for long-term cooperation. So I'm quite sure that Beijing is happy about Koizumi's visit.

The South Korea election issue is much more fluid. I have not interviewed a lot of Chinese experts on South Korea and these things tend to be much more complicated than

they seem on the surface. It's easy to say that they want the more liberal minded candidate to win but that would only be true if they believe that such a regime is stable and wasn't going to suffer some backlash in the future. They also have experience with the Nixon visit in the 1970s and to some degree the Bush administration since 9/11. It's the regime with the toughest domestic reputation that is sometimes able to make headway in bilateral negotiations.

I do think that Beijing took some pleasure from the summit [in June 2000 between North and South Korean heads of state] because of the fact that the US seemed left out. It was a local Asian initiative without US motivation but also against American wishes

to some degree. I was in Beijing during the first summit and I was impressed by the degree of glee that I saw among the Chinese. There was hope that there was a way that the Asians could work out their security problems without American help or intervention.

HAQ: In the wake of 9/11, the Japanese Diet passed laws allowing the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to provide rear-area

support to the US during operations in Afghanistan. Shigeru Ishiba, the new director-general of the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) favors the active use of the SDF to accomplish policy objectives and has in the past advocated Article 9 revision to allow Japan to exercise its right to collective defense. Is so-called "Japanese remilitarization" perceived as a real threat by Beijing? Or are Chinese objections based more on war-legacy domestic politics and a zero-sum calculation, in which a more assertive Japan would detract from the greater potential political and military weight of China?

Christensen: I don't really see that as a choice. Japan's remilitarization is perceived as a real threat by Beijing because of the chance that it would detract from the weight of China. I also think the issue is wrapped up in the history. There is a fairly pervasive public and elite view of Japan in China that Japan cannot be trusted with the trappings of military power in a way that other countries, including the US, are. There are a range of issues at stake in what Chinese security analysts call Japanese remilitarization. In the short term, what does it mean for Japan's posture vis-à-vis Taiwan? Will Japan be more likely to be supportive of US efforts in Taiwan if they are more assertive in general? I think the answer in Beijing is "yes." These trend lines are not good from

Beijing's point of view. They are hoping to separate Japan from the US and Taiwan in this scenario.

Another issue is the domestic politics in Japan. Do piecemeal changes in Japanese military posture lead to more substantial political changes within Japan about the norms relating to the use of force? What Americans and external observers elsewhere might consider to be "normal" or "the normalization of Japan security policy" might be considered a threat by China. Where other countries would see a more normal nation with military capability in line with its economic and political place in the world, China will see a more assertive Japan. That does have something to do with history.

There is no love lost between these two countries. There is a tremendous mistrust of Japan in China. And it plays into the domestic politics we talked about before. The CCP tries to portray itself constantly as standing up for China's interests against foreign incursions. The nationalist elements of CCP legitimacy, while always there, are more important now that communist ideology is bankrupt. There is

no better relationship with which to demonstrate Beijing's nationalist credentials than China's relationship with Japan. This is due to the legacy of the Japanese invasion, and the difficulties in Sino-Japanese relations relating to Japanese textbooks and visits to war shrines that commemorate Japanese war dead.

HAQ: To conclude, can you share your insights on future developments and challenges for US-China relations? What might be the substance of Jiang's upcoming visit to the US?

Christensen: I think US-China relations are temporarily quite good for the reasons I cited before. The summit is coming up. The US has publicly stated its position against President Chen's statements regarding "one country on each side" of the Taiwan Strait. Beijing is not wrong that the US is relatively distracted with other issues right now. It doesn't want problems with Taiwan. So I expect relations to be relatively good in the short term.

My longer-term concerns are two-fold. First of all, China may become rather disappointed with the scope of American political cooperation with China, given American distraction elsewhere. Personally, I think there will be an arms race across the Taiwan Strait of some sort. That arms race may take the



Minister of National Defense General Chi Haotian escorts Secretary of Defense William Cohen as he inspects the troops during an armed forces welcoming ceremony at the Ministry of National Defense Headquarters in Beijing on July 12, 2000.

form of China continuing to build up its forces against the island in a straightforward fashion while the US and Taiwan develop the capability to protect Taiwan. I don't really see anything stopping the train since we are already on that track. The only thing that could stop it would be a unilateral Chinese decision to halt this trend of military buildup. I don't see them doing that since the military card is important leverage from their perspective. So I think you will see that kind of arms race.

My second concern is that in the next couple years, China might be disappointed in the limits of American reciprocity during the war on terror. They might be quite disappointed in the types of weapon systems that the US sells to Taiwan and the types of military coordination between the US and Taiwan. That disappointment might very much change the tone of short term US-China cooperation.

China might also become more and more frustrated with Taiwanese politics. If President Chen were to win reelection in 2004 and make other provocative statements or push for a referendum on Taiwan's sovereign status, this could be a source of great concern for Beijing. I worry about mainland disappointment, including disappointment in the degree to which the Bush Administration will moderate policy towards Taiwan, given the Administration's other concerns in other parts of the world. Not only can China's disappointment result in an increased chance of cross-Strait conflict, it can also manifest itself in the lack of cooperation on weapons proliferation to countries of concern to the US. This has traditionally been a card that China has played.

Whether China will continue in that mode after 9/11 is an open question. I know there is great concern in Washington now about China's proliferation policy. China is making some positive noises and implementing new laws that limit missile sales and restrict the selling of the chemical weapons components to countries of concern to the US. Progress on this issue will be a real sign of whether US-China cooperation continues at its current level.