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Public and Elite Views of the U.S.-China Relationship

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Transcript by Federal News Service

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MICHAEL SWAINE: Good morning.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

MR. SWAINE: My name is Michael Swaine. I'm a senior associate here at the Carnegie Endowment working on China/Asia issues, particularly in the security realm.

[00:00:14]

And thank you all for coming this morning to this rollout in the U.S. of what we call the U.S.-China Security Perceptions Project Joint Report. I think you've all been given the English version. There is a Chinese version as well on your seats. What I'd like to do is, first of all, introduce the panel, and then I'll say some remarks about this project, its history, background, what we hope to achieve with it in this iteration and hopefully in future iterations of it, and then I'll say a few remarks about what I see as some of the significant findings in this report, in this polling and survey effort, and then I will turn to the two discussants to provide some comments. And let me introduce them.

[00:01:07]

To my far left is J. Stapleton Roy, who many of you, I'm sure, know or know of. He's distinguished scholar and founding director emeritus of the Kissinger Institute on China and the United States at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars. Stape is a distinguished scholar and a former long-term U.S. official who has been involved in U.S.-China relations for many, many decades, has been involved in some of the pivotal decisions and policy actions that have been taken by the United States in dealing with China and Asia, indeed, over the 45 years that he served in the foreign service, including posts as ambassador to Singapore, China and Indonesia and as assistant secretary of state for intelligence and research.

Stape is also a partner in this effort. The Kissinger Center at the Woodrow Wilson Institute has been one of the partners on the U.S. side, along with Carnegie and the Pew Research Corporation, in supporting this project.

[00:02:14]

To my immediate left is Phil Saunders. He's director of studies and the director of the Center for Study of Chinese Military Affairs at the National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies. He was previously at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, where he served as the director of East Asia nonproliferation program and has taught on Chinese politics, Chinese foreign policy and East Asian security. And many of us in the field know Phil for his knowledge, expertise and background particularly on China military, defense and strategy-related issues.

So let me say a few words, before talking about the results of this, about the project. This project actually was – has been several years in the making, and it actually began with an initiative from the Chinese side.



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Some of you may note in the report the main Chinese collaborator is a major general in the Chinese military named Loyuen (ph). Now, for some of you who follow the Chinese media, that name might be recognized by you. Loyuen (ph), who is a retired senior person at the Institute of Strategic Studies at the Academy of Military Sciences, which is the foremost research institute of the Chinese military, is also somebody who is quite well-known for his very outspoken comments in the public media in China on Chinese defense issues and U.S.-China relations as well. And indeed, he's probably regarded by many people as a hard-liner on relations with the United States.

[00:03:55]

So some people might be surprised that Loyuen (ph) came to us with this idea to do a survey and interviews of elites and publics in both China and the United States on security-related issues. But in fact, what that reflects is that he has a strong desire to try to improve understanding between the United States and China. He's a strong nationalist. He's not shy about expressing his opinions. But he does believe that the relationship is very important and it needs to be strengthened in many ways.

[00:04:31]

So he came to us with this idea. Myself, Stape and others thought it was an excellent idea, and we then proceeded to try to obtain funding to support this polling effort. And I can tell you from direct experience now that polling costs a lot of money. (Laughter.) And we really had to generate a significant amount of funding to just do this one round of polling. And it – we – one of the key elements to this is that we found a polling organizations in both the United States and China that were very rigorous in their approach and very well-regarded. As I said a second ago, on the U.S. side, it's the Pew Research Corporation, which many of you, I'm sure, know is very famous for conducting polling both in the United States and in other countries about various major issues affecting the U.S. They became involved in this early on and were very committed to the project. On the Chinese side, we have a polling organization called the Research Center on Contemporary China that is located at Beijing University and directed by a gentleman named Shen Mingming, who is a U.S.-trained political scientist but very knowledgeable about statistical methods and polling and has conducted the Beijing-area survey poll in Beijing for some time with a colleague who was also involved in this project, Ian Josten (sp) of Harvard University.

[00:05:57]

So we had some very stellar individuals on the polling side on – in both countries involved in this effort. And what we also wanted to do is we wanted to get a questionnaire that was as close as possible to being identical in both countries so that we could really hopefully compare across the two countries to some degree. We also wanted to capture elites that were as close as possible in similarity to each other, although that is a much more challenging problem and one that we haven't completely resolved at this time. But we did identify five major elites, or was it six? I can't remember.



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MR. : Five.

MR. SWAINE: Five major elites that we polled in surveys on these security issues in both countries. And they included – let me get this right – government officials, military, business elites, media – who am I missing?

MR. : Scholars.

MR. SWAINE: Scholars! How could I miss them? (Laughter.)

[00:07:02]

MR. : You can't forget the scholars.

MR. SWAINE: And –

MR. : Assuming they're elites. (Laughter.)

MR. SWAINE: Yes, right, exactly, assuming they're elites – and scholars. We can get into some of the discussions about methodology and the sampling and all of that, but the sampling – suffice it to say my general take is that on the – on the methodology side, the general public survey – and we also did general public polling – was very rigorous and probably pretty accurate in both countries. We didn't – in the Chinese case, we – they didn't survey true rural elites, rural – (inaudible) – elites, people who are really out in the countryside. They surveyed large urban districts, which are much bigger than urban downtown areas. They extend well into the countryside. But it's not a fully national population sample, but it is a sample that is very representative of a large group of individuals in China whose opinion is watched, is looked at (separate ?).

[00:08:10]

On the U.S. side, it was more broadly representative of the national sample. But in both cases, the sampling effort was very rigorous.

On the elite side, it was still pretty rigorous, pretty strong – pardon me. Pew was able to work from sources that were – that were very representative of these five different groups through different associations and other membership rosters and such to get access to elites to conduct surveys with them.

[00:08:40]

On the Chinese side, it was – it was good for a first effort. I mean, there was a very serious effort to try to access the equivalent of those five elites in China. Probably the less successful one thus far was in the military area, as you might



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imagine. The Chinese largely limited their survey of elites on the Chinese side to military scholars, not to retired active – retired former operational, if you will, field officers, as the U.S. did. The U.S. had retired military, but they included a wide range of – a wider range of types of military elites than the Chinese case. We hope to remedy that in the future.

Another thing is that the government officials in the Chinese case were largely – not exclusively, but largely, they were not central officials; they were provincial and local officials. And that possibly had skewed some of the – some of the findings in one direction, although we're not sure about that, and we want to try and examine that more closely in the future.

[00:09:50]

But suffice it to say that for a first effort, I think it was very well-done and as good as I think you can get, particularly given the range of elites that we did poll on this. And as I say, we hope very much that this is just a first step.

[00:10:07]

We want this to be in some ways a baseline for what we hope to be an annual or a fairly regular series of polls and ultimately ones that include what are called flash polling, which is polling that can occur after some kind of an event that happens – say, for example, the recent announcement by the Chinese of an air defense identification zone – where we can go in and look at the attitudes of publics and elites in both countries about that idea, about that concept and try to get a sense over time as to how this – well, first of all, how it might be affected by an incident, and then over time, just be able to track, through a time progression, perceptions of elites and public on these critical issues.

So that, sort of in a nutshell, is where we stand on the project now. We conducted – let me just tell you a little bit about the process. We conducted these polls last year, so they occurred before the current – for example, the brouhaha now over the Senkaku-Diaoyu Islands and the ADIZ. So it was all conducted before that time. But it was conducted relatively simultaneously in China and the United States.

[00:11:25]

And we conducted the elite and the public polls in the mid/late summer last year, getting into the fall, and then following that we held workshops, one workshop in Beijing, one workshop in the United States, with kind of representatives of the different elites in the two areas talking about the findings of the polling. We gave them the full details of the polling effort and then we discussed what these findings seemed to indicate or mean.

Now, you always have to be very careful when you draw conclusions, particularly hard and fast conclusions, and especially conclusions that may have implications for policy from one series of polling on surveys. You don't want to over – you don't want to over-judge the results to give you more than you think is reliable. So that's another reason why we want to conduct more polls. But we did have some suggestions and ideas about what the meaning of these polls are for U.S.-China relations and what implications they might have for policy.



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[00:12:27]

So let me just say a few points about the findings. And first let me say a couple of things about what is perhaps not that surprising. This is very valuable, at the same time. If polling of elites and publics confirms certain views, that's an important thing to note. If it is establishing a certain basis and greater rigor for a certain common conception about their relationship, that's important. And this polling does that in some ways. And then I will talk a little bit about what's perhaps less surprising – pardon me, more surprising, less conventional, about some of the findings.

The first probably unsurprising result is that trust in China and the United States is not high. There's very high levels of mutual distrust, especially among military elites, especially on the United States side, but on both sides as well. So that's not a terribly surprising thing. We went into some detail as to which levels of society – educational levels, et cetera – display these levels of distrust. And older people tend to have more distrust than younger people towards the other country, and that's a notable finding. So we discussed a lot about this whole issue of trust in the workshops and what it means and what it doesn't mean, how important it is or not. And possibly we'll have some comment on this from the two panelists and we can talk about this in the Q and A.

[00:14:05]

Second major thing was that the relationship is characterized not by adversarial words or adversarial concepts or mind sets but by one of competition. Overwhelmingly, individuals on both sides, particularly within the elites on both sides, look at the relationship as one of competition and not one of either partnership or adversarial, enemy relations. The number of people who look at the other side as an enemy is very low in both countries, although there is one notable outlier, and that is in the case of Chinese government officials. Chinese government officials, 27 percent, over one-quarter, said they viewed the United States as an enemy.

Now, we had some discussion in the workshops about that finding. It was something of an anomaly because it really stands out, particularly from other elites and particularly from the U.S. side, where the percentages of people in the elite side that look at China as an enemy are very, very low. And we thought that it might have to do with the fact that we have primarily local officials who are being polled here.

[00:15:10]

Local officials in China, they have less contact with the outside, to some degree, I would say. They also have more responsibility for domestic security issues, and the issue of China's – America's threat, as its perceived in some quarters, to the Chinese system, the Chinese party leadership, et cetera, might be higher among local officials, so they might have that kind of a finding of that kind of a perception, at least among a quarter of them. I mean, three-quarters of them did not see the United States as an enemy. So – but we don't know that for sure, and we want to do more work on that.

A third area that's probably not so surprising is that there was strong criticism by each side of the high-profile issues in the relationship. That is to say, many of the Chinese, including people in the public, criticize the United States for arms sales to Taiwan. I mean, that was a very high result in the polling on the Chinese side. Even among the public, it was quite



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significant. So there is good awareness of that issue within the Chinese public, and there's a high awareness of the need – of the source of that as a problem.

[00:16:25]

On the U.S. side, particularly among the elites, there was a strong degree of focus on things like cyber – cybersecurity, violation of intellectual property rights, trade issues, that sort of thing—as a major criticism of China. In this sense, each side, I think, had a view that the other side cheats in these areas or isn't honest to its position, it states things that are not in accordance with the truth, et cetera. So you have that as a basis, no doubt for some of the distrust that exists.

A third one was that trust in China among U.S. business elites is fairly low, or I should say lower than it has been, at least based on other polls in the past. I mean, business in the past has been probably more bullish on China. This polling suggested that there was a higher percentage of distrust, if you will, about China in the business area, perhaps reflecting some of the recent issues to do with cybersecurity, IPR and other things.

[00:17:36]

Now, another very interesting finding that is perhaps not that surprising, but it's not something that people really talk about that much, is that clear majorities of every U.S. elite believe that global stability is best served by the U.S. remaining the leading superpower. I mean there was a fairly high strong recognition among U.S. elites that this was an important thing, that this preserves global stability, for the U.S. to remain as a leading superpower. However – and no U.S. elite favors China replacing the U.S. as a superpower. I mean, there was, like, zero, very, very low support for that. But interestingly enough, on the Chinese side it was a somewhat different kind of a view, and I'll get to that in a second.

[00:18:28]

Another issue that was perhaps not that surprising, because we've heard this before, is that the U.S. public as a whole, in looking at China as a concern or a threat, are more focused on economic issues than on military or security issues, in that hard security sense. They're more concerned about the trade deficit, they're more concerned about loss of jobs, they're more concerned about China holding large amounts of American debt. This is the public.

U.S. elites are much less concerned about those issues, much less concerned. And U.S. elites are more concerned about other aspects – as I said, cybersecurity and that sort of thing – than they are about those economic factors.

Another thing that perhaps is not that surprising is that both sides say that the other side doesn't take the view of other countries sufficiently into account when it makes policy. This is the almost exact mirror image. The Chinese side believes the U.S. doesn't take other countries into account when it makes policies. The U.S. side thinks the exact same about the Chinese. So you have that kind of a mirror imaging going on, in a sense, or identical perception going on that is not necessarily surprising, but it's interesting that it's so highly correlated in – similarly in both countries.



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[00:19:50]

Now, let me speak a little bit about what's less – what's more surprising. By and large, in my estimation, these polls do not confirm the impression that you have in the mass media of Chinese – (inaudible) – let's say, the idea of a hyper-nationalistic public that is out there looking the United States as a threat, urging China to be tougher and more – and using its military more in dealing with the United States when it affronts China is some way, being very vocal in this – in this regard.

[00:20:30]

By and large, this isn't really the picture that you draw from this on the Chinese side. Many Chinese think that the U.S.-China relationship now – it's a – it's a small majority but it's there – that the U.S.-China relationship is basically good. And many Chinese, particularly elites, think that the U.S.-China relationship needs to be better and there should be more cooperation and that economics – despite all of the criticism in the economic area – that economics serves as the best way to improve cooperation between the two countries.

And in the U.S., you have somewhat similar types of views. That the two sides need to cooperate, that they have to get along. They see each other as competitors, yes. The level of trust is low, yes. But they also think their relationship is in pretty good shape, but needs to be worked on. So it's not that sort of extremist kind of view in either – on either side that you might think would be confirmed by this kind of polling.

[00:21:33]

Now, strong majorities of U.S. elites, I should say, cited building a strong relationship as important as a U.S. policy priority, but only one-third of the U.S. public stressed this need. Over half of the U.S. public stressed that China – that the U.S. needs to be tough on China, but again in the economic and trade areas – that it needs to be tough in those areas and, to some degree, in the promotion of human rights. I mean, that's a view in the – in the U.S. public.

A much smaller percentage of the U.S. public stressed the need to advance things like freedom – greater freedom for Tibet or sell arms to Taiwan. I mean, there was a fairly low amount of the American public attention to and interest in the idea of the need for the U.S. to sell arms to Taiwan. It just wasn't as high. In the U.S. elites, it was much higher. And this, I think, is because of just basically a lack of recognition, a lack of understanding, perhaps, about what exactly is U.S. policy towards Taiwan and the degree to which the United States does or does not sell arms to Taiwan.

[00:22:45]

A few other things that I found interesting: U.S. elites expressed less concern than the U.S. public about China's emergence as a world power. Well, I've already said, but the threat is mainly in the economic area. U.S. elites and the public place the threat posed by China to the well-being of the U.S. below other threats – this is important – such as



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financial instability, Islamic fundamentalism and Iran. We ask questions listing a group of possible threats. And China ranked below those kinds of threats. It wasn't high up on the – on the general sort of threat perception scale, if you will.

There was also a high level of what we call sort of a sense of cultural superiority in both countries – that is to say, each country saw themselves as having a very strong and superior, in many ways, culture. This was particularly strong on the Chinese side. It was less so on the U.S. side, but it was still pretty remarkable. Another interesting thing, many – we gave the public a chance to respond to certain adjectives to describe the – themselves and the other country. And some of them were negative. Some of them were positive.

[00:24:16]

You know, on the – on the positive side, it was sort of – it was honest, competitive – I can't remember some of them – there were – there were a lot. They're in the – they're in the report there. On the negative side, it was things like violent or aggressive, greedy, et cetera, et cetera. It was interesting that the Chinese – the Chinese public tended to see themselves in a positive light and in some ways see the United States in a negative light, with some exceptions. There was some recognition of the United States as a highly competitive society in not necessarily a negative way, in economic terms, and some other facets of it.

But on the U.S. side, it was interesting – the U.S. side would criticize the Chinese in some way for some negative attributes, yes, but Americans were also very critical of themselves. There was also fairly high levels of U.S. public statement about the United States, about Americans being arrogant, being greedy. I think those are some of the adjectives that came in fairly high.

MR. : Selfish and rude.

MR. SWAINE: Selfish and rude, thank you, Burt (sp). (Laughter.)

[00:25:30]

So on the – on the U.S. side there was this kind of self-reflection in a somewhat negative way. And it's kind of it – it's interest – to think about why that might be the case, that wasn't the case on the Chinese side. It might be because of the period we're going through in the United States right now, where it's sort of shaken a lot of people's confidence and other things. But I thought it was – and anyway, it was – it was very interesting.

One last thing that I wanted to say about – is the issue of sort of distribution of power. We ask questions – and this was of particular interest to me in this polling. We asked questions of the Chinese and the Americans, both the public and elites in different ways, about what they think best serves stability in the global system. And as you might expect, Chinese in general said stability should be served through shared leadership. There should be a sharing of leadership in the world system by the United States and China and perhaps other powers as well.



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[00:26:32]

This was very strong and it was very uniform – tended to be quite uniform across the different areas, particularly among the elites. The public doesn't have too much of a perception of this kind of an issue, but there was still a sense that shared leadership was really important and that the – and particularly that China shouldn't be the single leader in the world. And China shouldn't be assertive.

Now, this is all in line with sort of the Chinese notion that multipolarity is sort of the major trend in the world and that China shouldn't be out there sort of in front of other people because probably China's a developing society, China has a lot of its own domestic problems, et cetera, et cetera. But still, the – it was notable that many Chinese didn't believe that that was the case.

[00:27:20]

In fact, there was also a significant, albeit minority – there was a significant number of Chinese who said they thought they United States should be the world leader, which was an interesting finding. This is not a majority or even a plurality, but it was there. I mean, there was a significant – it was more than a couple of percentage points. And that was an interesting finding.

On the U.S. side, there was also a belief in the need for shared leadership among public and elites. But among U.S. elites, as I said earlier, there was a strong desire that that leadership – that the United States sort of be first among equals, that the United States should be assertive in its – in its leadership. Interestingly enough, among the U.S. public you didn't have that kind of view. You had the view that shared leadership was important. And there wasn't any strong belief that the United States should be number one among many or that this should be – we should be in some ways more assertive, which is an interesting thing.

[00:28:19]

There as a bit of a dichotomy there between the elite views in the U.S. and public views in the U.S. about this issue. Although you have to, of course, look at that with a grain of salt because you have to be clear about what it is that Americans are thinking about when they think about that issue of shared leadership or non-shared leadership because Americans do poll highly on numbers, for example, of should America be the strongest military power in the world. There you get high support for that, even among the American public. But you don't – from this poll – you don't get support among the public for the idea of being more assertive in its leadership role. And that could be a reflection of the times we're in, again, but not sure. I mean, we'd like to do more polling to find that out.



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Anyway, that's enough for me. I've spoken too much already. I've given you some of the – what I think are some of the important findings of this report. Stap and Phil might differ in some – in some regard, I don't know, or provide additional points. But now I'd like to turn it over to them. Stap, if you'd like to make some comments first, please?

[00:29:21]

J. STAPLETON ROY: Thank you, Michael. You haven't been fair to the discussants. You've gone through the report so thoroughly, that you – (laughter) – have largely only permitted us the role of echoes. But there are some things, I think, that are worth stressing, even if I repeat some points that Michael made.

When the possibility of this project first emerged, I reacted very enthusiastically about the concept, but I was very skeptical about the implementation. We were dealing with sensitive issues, touching on security, we didn't have experience in actually trying to extract views from both publics and elites in the two countries in those areas, and we had lots of experience in the difficulties that you encounter in trying – in outsiders trying to do polling inside China.

So there were lots of reasons to wonder whether or not the grand concept of the project would be implementable. And at every stage of the way, we thought that we might encounter difficulties, for example, in coming up with common questions, were we going to play games with each other and try to work in, you know, tricky little words and things of this sort? Very pleasantly surprised: All of the problem areas that we had anticipated would emerge, didn't emerge. The Chinese side was consistently scholarly, balanced, interested in producing the best possible reporting, including the best possible questions. I have had quite a bit of experience in this area, and I confess I have never been so pleasantly surprised in any other area as I was in connection with this particular survey.

[00:31:23]

What conclusions can we draw from that? The conclusion I draw is both China and the United States at both the public and the elite level recognize that how our relationship develops is very important for our own countries. And as a result, there was a serious interest in China in learning more about how Americans think about security issues and how Chinese think about security issues, because the Chinese officialdom is not necessarily attuned to public attitudes on this, because this is not a typical type of survey. So I think from that standpoint, it was a pleasant surprise.

The second aspect is this project was conceived long before – or at least, substantially before – the two governments had endorsed the concept of trying to create a new model of great power relations that could bring our strategic rivalry under policy control. And yet, you need precisely the sort of data that is in the survey, both to conceptualize what are the areas that need attention if the two countries are serious about trying to prevent history repeating itself through the inherent rivalry that emerges when rising powers seem to be challenging the position of established powers.

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But you don't – you can't just take a snapshot of this; you need – you need periodic snapshots so that you can get a sense of trend lines. For example, if five years from now, in all of the key indicator areas, we find that perceptions are worse, then clearly, either the two governments are not doing the right things, or they're only paying lip service to the concept of trying to bring the strategic rivalry under control.

So I think, from that standpoint, even with all of the flaws that Michael mentioned, in terms of the quality of the polled groups, was not equally strong, and so there's a lot of additional work that needs to be done to try to improve the quality of the elite groups. I think the public area, as Michael said, was pretty satisfactory in terms of getting a large number of essentially urban residents, and I would argue that what rule people think about these types of issues is not terribly important.

[00:34:09]

I have spent a lot of time in rural areas in the United States, and the fact that you're a diplomat means that you have nothing of interest to say to any of the people there. (Laughter.) They're interested in wheat prices or they're interested in, you know, the weather and how it's going to affect crops, corn huskers and things of that sort. I worked as a migrant fruit worker and frankly, foreign policy did not figure in my conversations with fellow migrant fruit workers. So bringing them into the poll, I don't think, is a high-priority problem.

One of the areas that isn't easily correctible is that some key concepts – you really don't have perfect words that have the same connotations in the two languages. I think Michael mentioned the difference between threat and danger, but the concept of assertive is also a very difficult concept to find the right way of expressing in China, that conveys the sense in which it's used in English. For example, my wife is a strong supporter of assertiveness training for women; in other words, we believe that women don't get as much status as they deserve, because they're not assertive enough in demanding equal treatment. So assertive in English can have a positive connotation or a necessary connotation, whereas it also has a negative connotation. And when we use it with China is becoming more assertive, you know, the question is, are – is it – does it mean the same thing as aggressive, or does it merely mean pushing its interests forward in a more positive, as opposed to passive way? These are issues that can affect the way that people respond to questioning and so that's the type of issue that one has to be aware of in trying to interpret the results of the survey.

[00:36:16]

Michael mentioned the interesting fact that over a quarter of Chinese government officials see the United States as an enemy, but while this is the first survey specifically dealing with this broad range of security issues, there are earlier surveys. And the interesting thing is, two years earlier, there was a poll inside China of the United States and the number of Chinese who saw the United States as an enemy was single digits. So in a very short period of time, you would have had, at least at the government official level in China, a change in attitude toward the United States – why? Michael mentioned one of the reasons, but I would come up with a different explanation. 2010 is when the island disputes in the South China Sea



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and the East China Sea began to emerge as serious difficulties between China and neighboring countries, such as Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, et cetera. And the United States had an alliance with Japan and had an alliance with the Philippines, and the Chinese saw the United States as essentially backing countries that were trying to encroach on China's territorial interests.

[00:37:38]

Now, Americans will pay no attention to these disputes. I mean, how many Americans have a clue where the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands are located? Or how many Americans are aware of the Spratly Island group? This is simply a non-issue in the United States, so from 2010 to 2012, when we did the polling, there was no reason for Americans, based on that factor, to change their attitudes towards China. But in China, there was a reason for Chinese to see the United States as behaving in a way that at least a portion of China's officialdom and public and other elites saw us as backing hostile forces against China.

So I think you can learn something from these results, but you have to have those benchmarks in order to be able to interpret them accurately. And that's why it's so important, I think, that this survey is able to continue.

[00:38:36]

Now, Michael touched on these characteristics. If you have the thing – if you look at the chart on page 12, it is interesting that both Americans and Chinese consider the Chinese more hardworking; that doesn't surprise me, particularly. Americans think we're more hardworking and the Chinese think we're hardworking, but we both agree that the Chinese are more hardworking than us, regardless. The Chinese, however, give us the edge in terms of inventiveness, even though the edge is greater in terms of our own self-assessment than in terms of the Chinese.

In some of the other positive areas, such as honesty, tolerance, generosity, you have what you would expect: Americans think we have more of those traits; Chinese think Chinese have more of those traits. But look at selfish: Selfish is one of the exceptions. The Chinese consider Chinese more selfish than Americans, whereas the Americans, in other negative traits, consistently thought Americans were more aggressive, greedier, ruder, violent, et cetera. It's interesting, because that's one of the aberrations and therefore, when you're trying to manage relationships, this – these give you insights into how people perceive themselves.

[00:40:01]

Michael touched on it, but I would just repeat it: It hits you dramatically if you look at the chart on page 28, that so many Americans think we rely too much on military strength and so many Chinese think that China relies too little on military strength. Those figures hit you from the charts. If you look at – 40 percent of Americans, for example, at the public level, think that the United States relies too much on military strength. And if you go to the military, over 50 percent of the American military who were part of the poll think we rely too much on military strength.



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Whereas, if you look at the Chinese side, the figure is quite different. Fifty-six percent of the Chinese military think that China relies too little on military strength. So these are – these are significant findings that have relevance in terms of perceptions, which is what the survey was designed to tease out. So I think that if you look at the survey, you can learn a lot of useful things, but you have to be careful, because first of all, there are flaws in the survey which affect the outcome. Second, as I mentioned, there are problems with terminology, and thirdly, there are only certain areas where we have benchmarks that enable us to say how our attitude's changing, and without those benchmarks, we can read too much into results, because they might reflect the morning headlines or things of this sort that don't reflect underlying, deeply-thought-through attitudes on the part of the participants in the poll.

I'll end my comments there and turn it over to Phil.

[00:41:57]

MR. SAUNDERS: An even harder act to follow. This is an interesting topic to look at polling. And just to provide a little context that one of the consistent findings of surveys of American public opinion on foreign policy during the Cold War was that the two things the American public consistently said they wanted is, they wanted strength – they wanted a strong America, and they wanted peace – an America that was not starting wars. And those things are not necessarily perfectly compatible, depending on the broader policy context.

So it's worth remembering as a caution, that especially public opinion surveys can be a pretty crude instrument. I think this is a very valuable effort to understand what U.S. and Chinese leaks in public are thinking about bilateral relations. It's a good thing that it's a Chinese initiative, although I think I would add there that (logen ?) comes out of the propaganda – the political part of the party, and part of good propaganda is knowing what's working and what is not. So there's – you know, which is not inconsistent with what Michael said, but just – and I would echo what was said about Xianmin Meng (ph), who has a very good reputation in the field for this.

[00:43:15]

I would note that the report distills the key findings from this – the full details of the U.S. poll are available, and there's a link to it online. I couldn't find the full details of the Chinese poll on the Chinese website.

[00:43:30]

MR. SWAINE: Let me just say – yeah, the Chinese poll was still in the process of final translation into both – into English primarily, and it is, I think, going to be released today. I'm not entirely sure. But there is a full Chinese report on the polling results in China, as there has been on the U.S. side. Pew published – and these are both part of the – all of the documents online. Pew did publish a report on what's called the top-line findings on the U.S. side some months ago.

MR. SAUNDERS: Anyway, if you were interested, those provide additional details in rawer numbers. It's great to hear that the in polling China will be both released and translated. And I think Michael was very upfront about the



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limitations of the data and some of the problems with comparability, and also about the efforts that will be made to try to address these in future surveys.

[00:44:27]

You know, there's a problem there that if you're serving a different group of Chinese military – hopefully a more representative one, it won't be as comparable, but will have greater confidence that it's representative of those who are influencing policy today. So I think that's worth doing despite the problems with comparability.

And I think the report highlights the fact that economic ties have provided the ballast in U.S.-China relations, with the business community being an especially strong pillar. And that support has eroded somewhat, as they've run into more problems with market access in China, what they see as discriminatory rules that work against foreign companies in general and U.S. companies sometimes in particular. And then, the problem of cyberespionage for commercial purposes.

And that's, I think, a concern in the U.S. policy side of things, because the business lobby has been a very important force for stability in good U.S.-China relations, and my sense is they're somewhat less active in positive ways than in the past. There is a point worth noting about elites having personal experience being targeted for cyberespionage, and I think it's correct that that does affect views and it does undermine trust. And maybe I'd make the subsidiary point that some within the U.S. system – some of the officials, especially on the military side that I know most closely, who are working most closely China as attaches or doing mil-to-mil contacts, you know, are targeted pretty aggressively by Chinese intelligence services, and that does, in my experience, color their views. They come back from Beijing often with a more negative view of the Chinese military and security services than they started with.

That raises a bigger question – is trust the right criterion here? Because I think China often seems to define this in terms of U.S. concessions on issue that matter to them, such as Taiwan arms sales. The U.S. tends to focus on practical cooperation, and I think the report suggests that you can maybe put aside this abstract question of trust and see what happens practically, but it's worth highlighting some recent examples where that hasn't worked out so well.

[00:46:45]

So, for example, in the Scarborough Shoal dispute, the U.S. brokered a disengagement by both sides from the islands, and then the Chinese paramilitary forces went back. That didn't build trust. The U.S. and China have been talking about no surprises, and then we had the ADIZ announcement with advanced notice, but minimal – in minutes, not hours or days. That didn't build trust.

So even if it's correct to focus on more detailed, practical cooperation, experience has been a mixed bag, and sometimes a negative one. I found it interesting, as Michael highlighted, that 27 percent of the Chinese government officials saw the U.S. as an enemy. You know, here, perhaps, the fact that they are provincial and local officials with presumably less contact and practical experience working with the U.S. may mean they get all the propaganda and only limited personal contact, and they may be part of the explanation there.



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[00:47:56]

It was also an interesting finding that retired U.S. officers have such a negative view of China, and I think there, one question is, to what extent does this reflect the views of active duty officers? And I think this is a mixed finding, in my experience, that it's certainly not a wholly negative view. There's a lot of U.S. officers who see practical value in cooperation with China, but I also think it's the case that bilateral competitive dynamics in the military area are having a bigger impact. I wrote about this in 2009 in a publication called "Managing Strategic Competition with China," and I think this survey provides a lot of evidence that I was right to be concerned about it.

But I think this particularly matters in a time of declining budgets, because there's more pressure to justify higher-end systems, and often the easiest way to do that is to point to threats. And China, with the investment they're making in military capabilities, and especially some high-end capabilities, is a potential poster boy – or an actual poster boy for a lot of that. So it's true in the U.S. now, and it may be coming true in China if the economy continues to slow and defense budgets start to grow more slowly. There are already some grumblings about which services are getting what share of the budget, and so you may see those pressures increase.

[00:49:28]

The report has a careful – very careful, nuanced treatment of the Taiwan issue, and I suspect this was the result of careful negotiation on Michael's part, and that's appropriate, because this isn't an issue that most of the U.S. public follows in close detail, and in the event of a crisis, it would be shaped. I think the finding in the report that – who is perceived as starting the crisis, whether it's Taiwan moving towards independence or an unprovoked PRC attack, would matter a lot, but I'll just highlight that in reality it can be harder to distinguish those things than you would think.

[00:50:08]

I think also the point about the lack of Chinese understanding of containment – China doesn't have any real allies. Their substitute for that is partners, strategic partners of various descriptions, and the expectations of partners are very different and much lower – that is, less degree of commitment in a partnership than there is in an alliance.

But there's a tendency to view both the rebalance, in security terms, and economic competition as part of a broader containment strategy or at least to interpret or portray them that way. And I think that's an interesting finding that comes out of the polling and perhaps suggests two lines of approach. You know, one is distinguishing what U.S. policy is today from what it was in the 1950s, when we really were trying to contain China. And some Chinese scholars and military scholars are well aware of that difference and will acknowledge it, but I think it's less understood in the public, and maybe that's something that scholars could do more on that. And part of it, I think, on the Chinese side, is to have a sense of discipline, that there's a tendency to want to tie specific economic disputes to bigger strategic problems in order to get some leverage or pressure the other side to make concessions on them, you know. So minor trade sanctions or a tough line on WTO negotiations are seen as part of a broader containment side. That may give you a little tactical leverage on the specific issues, but it may be corrosive of the broader relationship, and that's something to keep in mind.



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[00:51:55]

Stape touched on the assertive issue. I guess the specific question is whether “active” might be a better phrase, which is more value-neutral, active or passive.

I think I disagree with something Michael said about the need to reconcile U.S. and Chinese attitudes toward what’s the best distribution of power in the international system. And I think there’s a broader point there that some of the things – you know, the size of China’s economy – that’s not really susceptible to government policy control. The strength of the military is a cumulative result of government policy choices over a matter of certainly years and usually decades, and the policy is under much more immediate control.

[00:52:45]

So trying to have an identical view of or a more congruent view of what distribution of power in the system is best – I’m not sure that’s a feasible goal, and it’s also not something directly under government control. I mean, even if we thought a better – a more equal distribution was better, we’re not going to act to restrain U.S. growth and – nor will China.

I think that’s a broader point there that there’s limited attention to means in the report, that it’s sort of a crude measure of economic power or military power. The finding that Chinese want more military power is interesting and significant.

[00:53:23]

But one thing that’s not discussed here is some of the means that in the 1990s U.S. elites saw as potentially alleviating concerns about China: the prospect of political change or democratization in China, which obviously has not happened – I would say you have a somewhat more open and responsive government, but it’s one that has explicitly ruled out movement to multiparty democracy, and the current leadership is focused on entrenching Communist – the Communist Party’s power and resisting any independent political alternatives – and then the socializing or constraining effects of international rules and institutions. And there I would argue there have been some of those, and it has had some effect on Chinese policy. But a stronger China is less constrained by them and sometimes is actively working to reduce the impact of those constraints.

And I think the – this gets into a broader question not fully touched on here about what Chinese aspirations are legitimate, do American elites view as legitimate, does the American public view as legitimate? Taiwan unification? I mean, our policy has a path to that, while not necessarily endorsing that as the final goal. Chinese growth? I don’t think we’re trying to contain China, so we view that as legitimate.

[00:54:53]



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But when you get to the question of territorial disputes or stronger military capabilities, I don't think there's agreement on that in the United States.

Similarly, with the issue of sharing of leadership, part of that depends on a Chinese willingness to provide public goods, to take a broader view of their interests and to take on more responsibilities, and that's been in somewhat short supply, in my judgment. It – the Chinese policy, as I see it, usually is pretty narrowly self-interested and is justified and sold that way to the Chinese public. So that's a question.

[00:55:32]

Then two final points:

One is that we're told Chinese leaders monitor online opinion obsessively, that they sometimes get briefed two times a day on what are trends in Weibo, what are the netizens grumbling about now. To do this kind of a poll that is more rigorous in terms of methodology, that is using a random sampling, that's asking broader questions, that probably provides a truer sense of what the average Chinese urban resident is thinking, and that's a good thing for the Chinese government to be getting that kind of data and relying on it more than a self-selected sample of netizens on Weibo. So I think that's a contribution that the poll has made already in kind of popularizing this methodology and providing some new information on an important subject to the Chinese leadership.

And that brings me to the final point: that as Stape said and as Michael said, a one-off poll is valuable in a lot of ways, but a continuing series that provides comparative data is even more valuable. And this poll, by virtue of when it was taken, doesn't fully account for some recent developments, like the U.S. rebalance; the Sunnylands summit, on the positive side; the Senkaku/Diaoyu Island flare-up, on the negative side. This highlights the importance of continuing the project. Longitudinal data over time would be even more valuable and, I think, would provide some more positive feedback on the policy efforts of both the U.S. and Chinese governments to try to manage the relationship, to deal with tensions and to increase cooperation. So maybe we'll pass the hat at the end of the session – (laughter) – and see what we can do. If you have friends at foundations, let them know if you found this work valuable.

[00:57:36]

So let me stop there.

MR. SWAINE: Great. Well, thank you very much, Phil and Stape.

Well, we have about a half an hour, a little under, left, and any comments, any questions? Yes, sir, in the front. Could you identify yourself?



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Q: Yeah. Robert Lund (sp), State Department. I wonder if there were any – if there were any sensitive issues that you were – that you wanted to include in the poll that you were not able to, and I wonder if you have any gauge either from part of the instrument of the questionnaire itself or from discussions with the interviewers or with Zhang Miming (sp) about the degree to which he felt respondents in China were being candid in giving their responses, and I think particularly of the government elite in China.

[00:58:25]

MR. SAUNDERS: Mmm hmm. Yeah, both good questions.

You know, my memory might fail me in this regard, but I don't recall a – as Stape suggested, I don't recall a single specific question that we threw out because of an objection from one side or the other. Do you, Stape?

MR. ROY: No.

MR. SAUNDERS: The bigger issue, the bigger challenge was how to get – how to cover all the questions we wanted to cover in about 30 questions. I mean, professional pollsters say that when you get beyond 30 questions or so, your utility for the polling goes down significantly, because people just don't want to answer that many questions.

[00:59:16]

So you know, I had a lot of other questions that I – that I would like to have asked and was – we were basically told, you know, well, you can ask it, but, A, the cost will go up, and, B, you may not get everybody answering the poll. So we had to sort of draw a line somewhere, but it was more that than it was anything else.

On the honesty of the answers, that is a really hard thing to answer. I think probably on the general public side, these were pretty honest reactions, based upon, you know, experience. There has been a lot of polling done of the public – in both, of course, the U.S. and China, though. And the same methodology was used, and it's been regarded as pretty reliable.

[01:00:07]

The issue is on the elite side. And there it's very hard to say. Now there wasn't a direct connection between those people who were answering the elite – the elite poll and say – (in Chinese) – in terms of, “oh, we know this is Major General Loyan's (ph) poll and we need to answer it in ways that, you know, validate his views or some such. I mean, as he himself has said, quite a few of the results of this polling are not necessarily what he would have liked to have seen. And so I don't know if he put it quite that way, but he recognized that there were certain variations there that were quite remarkable or notable.



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[01:00:55]

And so, you know, you have to think that in some cases people were willing out these polls, elites in china, for example, for the first time. They had never been exposed to this before. Some people may have said, OK, you know, what is the right answer that I should be giving? But the results didn't seem to suggest that. I mean, you didn't really have that kind of consistency among – across the different elites or within the elites. It was really quite varied in some ways. So it's something that we're going to look at more closely in the future, but it's not something that I could say to you categorically, oh there were – you know, they looked at this totally objectively. I mean, I guess you could ask the same question about U.S. elites as well. If they – I mean, we have some, you know, consideration about polling American elites who were sitting in positions, who are currently serving in positions and the fact that quite a few of them could very well be very hesitant to express their own views about some of these issues, even in an anonymous poll. And it was treated anonymously. I mean, the people received the elite polls. They didn't know who filled out what. They just got – they just got questionnaires filled out with no name that was identified by the people who were then taking them in. So we'll have to see in the future.

Rachel, were you going to say something? Rachel's been a pivotal person involved in the project, and she probably knows the details better than I do. So –

MS. ODELL: Yeah, just to comment on the first question about the questions on the actual survey. You know, just to reiterate, they didn't put any – throw any objections up to questions. In fact, we were pretty surprised. They allowed a question about whether we thought – whether you think economic growth will lead to China becoming more democratic. They didn't even raise, you know, an eyebrow at that. So the only difference is they actually added a question that went into more detail on some of these issues, and so – which was kind – we were expecting the opposite. So there's one more question on the Chinese survey than the U.S. survey, but that's really the only significant difference between the two.

[01:03:10]

MR. SWAINE: Yes, sir. Can you identify yourself?

Q: Yeah, I'm from China Daily. Thank you for the panelists. And you said that there are a lot of questions that see a gap between the American public and the American officials, and I'm wondering if there's also some parts of the question that you see the Chinese public don't see the same way as the Chinese government officials, because you said that there are more than a quarter of the Chinese government officials view the U.S. as an enemy. How do the Chinese public see this kind of issue, and what are the parts that China public don't see this question as their government officials? Thank you.

[01:04:05]

MR. SWAINE: I'm just trying to think now. Which was –



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MR. ROY: Well, if you look at the page eight, you see that 12 percent of the Chinese public identified the United States as an enemy, versus 27 percent for the Chinese government officials. But the military was even lower than the Chinese public in identifying the United States.

MR. : Which page, Steve?

MR. ROY: Page –

MR. : Eleven.

MR. ROY: Eleven, yes, excuse me, eleven.

[01:04:33]

MR. SWAINE: Yeah, you can see that there. I mean, in some – in some questions the Chinese public – I think the Chinese public, if I recall correctly – Rachel, correct me – the Chinese public had less positive overall a view of the relationship as needing to be strengthened than the elites did. The Chinese elites were more focused on that particular point than the Chinese public was. In the Chinese public, was there a discrepancy in terms of the military presence of the United States?

MS. ODELL: Yes.

MR. SWAINE: I mean, there was a significant amount of Chinese who looked at the military presence of the United States in the Western Pacific as a threat. As I said earlier, the Chinese tended to look at the – oh, I only said that about the U.S., sorry. The Chinese side tended to look at the United States as more of a hard security threat/military than certainly as an economic threat, where it was the reverse on the U.S. side.

What were you going to say?

MS. ODELL: You know, just –

MR. SWAINE: Here's a microphone.

[01:05:48]

MS. ODELL: They did – the public did express less of a priority on building cooperative relations, even though they also favored cooperative relations. But they also expressed somewhat less intense concerns over issues like the U.S. military – or military presence in the Western Pacific, U.S. containment of, you know, China's rise, those sorts of things. So elites in general were just – had more intense feelings, I think would be most – on both the positive and the negative.

MR. SWAINE: Yeah.

Burt.



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MR. : Thanks, Michael (?).

MR. SWAINE: Identify yourself.

[01:06:26]

MR. : I am Burt Title (ph) with the Atlantic Council. I was noticing that the polls are interesting, but so are some of the results of your workshop. And on page – I guess it's page 30, you have this statement that the United States believes – and this is the political philosophy – that it has the best values and political philosophy in the world and feels that it should be the global leader. And I was just wondering, you know, this idea of respect or trust, I've noticed in just talking to very senior officials in the U.S., that they just disrespect China in a sense. They say, well, they do they OK because they're a dictatorship. And so how – I'm wondering if this poll – if these poll results – and politicians also seem to be sort of two-faced in the sense that they'll say in their campaigns how China's really quite a threat or a difficulty or a commercial problem, whereas privately they try to do a lot of collaborative contact and work. Could this poll be used to somehow sort of soften this idea that we've got the best values and that the Chinese values really just need to come around to our side, which also feeds this ability in public on the part of politicians to disrespect China, you could say, or say they're cheaters – that's the word I hear a lot – when they really maybe don't believe that themselves?

[01:07:58]

I also wanted to ask (Steve ?), this idea of the rural people not really having an idea of what's going on. That sort of triggered in me the idea that some of this poll work may be triggering their view of their own government. And you find most of the people here, I suspect, were urban (hukou ?), and therefore they're receiving subsidies that the rural people don't get. And they tend to be unhappy with the way the price rises in food and so forth, or undermining them, and that their government's corrupt and that they view the United States as more of an ideal system because of its democratic principles and so forth. So that you – to what degree is this polling really reflecting views of their own government rather than some sort of objective assessment of the other side? Those – that just seems to me – and on getting more money from more polls, I think that's a good idea. But how do you keep the noise out? For example, if as I think Phil was saying, you've got some crises that come up, and that shows more negative views on the part of the government, how much is that really a trend or how much is it noise that doesn't really reflect what's happening over the long term?

[01:09:04]

MR. ROY: Burt, some of the issues you raise are interesting, but they weren't related to the purpose of the poll. We weren't trying to find out what the attitudes of the American public or various elites are about the United States, we – except in terms of general characteristics of Americans. For example, it's interesting. The – Americans think Americans and Chinese are equally nationalistic. Chinese, according to the poll, think the Chinese are more nationalistic than Americans are. But that doesn't reflect on the government. So the next question is, is we didn't ask questions such as is the government being sufficiently assertive in carrying out – in defending China's territorial interests. It was a more generic question: Does China rely too much on the use of force? Does the United States rely too much on the use of force? Does



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the United States rely too much on the use of force? So in other words, some of the questions you're interested in are interesting but are part of a different poll, and this poll wasn't focused on those types of questions.

[01:10:13]

MR. SWAINE: Yeah, I would just say on your – on your – on your other point, yeah, we didn't see our role necessarily as trying to come up with sort of batting back on certain issues like this question of values.

I mean, what we wanted to highlight was that – from the polling was that both countries have somewhat self-centered view about their own values and their – I mean, we defined it in cultural terms and their sense that these are, you know, important to their identity and that they're seen as in some way better, and that that kind of thing generally militates towards less tolerance towards, you know, other people or other views, and that this is a phenomenon that could be evident in both – in both countries to some degree.

So sort of saying it should be so evident in one country as to another country is, I don't think, what we were trying to get after, but it's an interesting issue that we might want to deal with later.

Rachel, you wanted to make a comment on this too?

RACHEL ODELL: Sure. A quick comment about the type of Chinese public respondents that were included.

The methodology used by the RCCC uses a sort of GPS-based sampling but gets around the issue of who goes. So this is one way that, rather than just relying on those sort of local population register, they're able to capture the views of the migrant populations that don't have urban hukous. I mean, so –

[01:11:59]

MR. SWAINE: Right.

MS. ODELL: – they did poll in cities but not only people with urban hukous.

MR. SWAINE: That's a good point.

Let me get somebody from the back, if there's somebody back there. Yes, the lady in the back.

Q: Hi. My name is Iris Shaw of Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party. My question is in – with regard to page 46 of – at the bottom, "rethink the Taiwan issue." So with regards to arms sales to Taiwan, Kurt Campbell – former Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell, has said in the hearing in 2011 that we – to recite Regan's "six assurances," where U.S. will not consult China on the arms sales to Taiwan. So I just wonder if there's, in the survey, how many



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American respondents are aware of the – that the U.S. should not consult China on the arms sales issue based on the “six assurances” policy.

MR. SWAINE: Well we – we didn’t ask any particular question on the survey that addressed that specific issue. It was a much more general question about arms sales as a concern in the relationship and not so much, do you understand what U.S. – the current U.S. position is on this issue?

[01:13:28]

If I had to guess, I would say that the public has zero recognition of this issue, or close to zero recognition that there even is such a thing as the six assurances. They probably have a slight recognition that the U.S. and China have an issue over Taiwan, and even less recognition that there were communiqués signed between the two countries. I’m sure that it goes down, down, low, low, low.

Then you have to ask, on the elite side, how much of an awareness is there of that issue within the – their views as they considered Taiwan arms sales. And their – you can’t draw any conclusion based on this poll one way or the other. I mean, you’d have to ask specific questions. If I had to guess I’d say people in the government probably has a – have a larger awareness of something like the “six assurances” than people outside the government among U.S. elites, but how strong and what kind of understanding, we can’t make a conclusion based on this.

Sir, yes? Yeah.

Q: Thank you. Sinan Chi (ph) from Georgetown University. I’m not sure you have mentioned this at the beginning of the workshop. I was on my way here. Did you also take into consideration the role of partisanship in shaping the results, or did you choose to ignore that in this survey?

[01:14:54]

MR. SWAINE: Rachel will know that answer.

MS. ODELL: So we did a little bit of informal examination of this question. Iain Johnston at Harvard University informally advised the project and looked at this a little bit, but ultimately we decided that a sort of more in-depth multi-varied analysis of the data that sort of looks at the effect that things like partisan affiliation, age, income, education levels have on the positions people take on these questions would be better for our future studies.

So we’re hoping to move forward with that over the next half a year. We’re going to be convening a group of academics that will look at precisely that question. Right now there are some, you know, references to these demographic questions in the report but they’re not tied to causation.



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You know, one basic observation on the question of partisan affiliation is that perhaps – for example, there are questions about how military elites don’t – or how elites view Obama’s China policy, and military elites tend to look at it not too favorably, but military elites also – you know, a majority are Republicans. So that’s one example of where that certainly could account for part of this but we hope to look at it in greater detail.

[01:16:13]

MR. SWAINE: Sir?

Q: Donald Barnes from the South China University of Technology. There was good discussion about the issue of cybersecurity and the concern of U.S. elites about penetration of their own stores of knowledge and so on and so forth. Is there any awareness or concern about the reverse, that U.S. companies or U.S. governments might be trying to penetrate stores of knowledge in China?

MR. SWAINE: I don’t think there was anything in the poll itself that addressed that specific issue. I mean, it wasn’t raised by the Chinese as a concern, as – and we had some open-ended question where we could – you know, people could list down what they found to be an issue of concern. And I don’t think any Chinese, or very few Chinese did – there may have been a very low number who mentioned cyber issues. It was – it was overwhelmingly an American concern in the poll.

Ma’am?

Q: I’m Nicola Nymalm from the German Institute of Global and Area Studies, currently visiting at American University. When you look at U.S. perceptions of China as an economic – not military but economic threat or competitor or challenger, do you see any parallels with how Japan was in this role in the ‘80s until the mid-‘90s when the role then shifted to China, so to say? Thank you.

[01:17:58]

MR. SWAINE: Well, that’s an interesting question. Of course that’s outside the – we didn’t make such comparisons in this – in this poll but, I mean, we each have our views on this. I think there are some similarities in the public view of this issue. We can all recall back in the 1980s and 1970s, Japan was a primary focus of American concern as an – as an economic competitor and seen as a threat in some ways, and not open to American products, et cetera, et cetera.

Today I think you have a similar sort of issue. I think it’s – in some ways, arguably, it might have more dimensions to it in the U.S. case today than the Chinese case, both – than in the Japanese case, both pro and con. I think a lot of Americans look at China and have two minds. I mean, a lot of the public, as we’ve seen in this poll, are concerned about Chinese as an economic competitor, that it is exerting an on-balance negative impact on the United States. But that is



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based upon, I think, a sort of headlines perception of trade deficit, American debt, loss of jobs through U.S. investment in China, and moving companies offshore.

Of course, in some circles, though, you have a mixed bag with that. I mean, you certainly have a mixed perception with that among a lot of elites in the United States where many, many states, many local officials, many local politicians and business people are very cognizant of the benefits of economic business with China. So it's much more of a mixed bag. In the old days with Japan I think it was more sort of uniformly negative, and it was dominated by this idea of the Japan being a closed economy and the huge Japanese trade surplus. With China I think it's a much more mixed picture.

[01:19:50]

Then on the other hand, I think people perhaps are more concerned about China – those who are concerned – because of the sheer size of the Chinese economy and the speed of its growth. So they look at the future and say, you know, wow, these negative trends could get much worse. And so, you know, we need to do something about this, which isn't to say it's the right conclusion to draw, but I think that could explain the fact that you probably have some strong feelings about this, maybe even stronger feelings than in the Japanese case today about China.

Q: And the debt – I mean, the U.S. debt that is held by China –

MR. SWAINE: And the debt. Yes, right.

Q: – at a higher volume than –

MR. SWAINE: Right.

Q: – it was with Japan.

MR. SWAINE: I mean, but that's a very – as I said in my comment, that's a very interesting thing, though, to recognize that there is a big gap between the American public and the American elite in looking at that problem. The American leadership, or the elite in the United States, just does not look at the debt issue as a big problem, and that's probably the case with a lot of, I would hazard to guess, economists.

They don't focus on the Chinese holding of U.S. debt as a major problem or as a “sword of Damocles” over – over the U.S., because it threatens the Chinese as much as it does us in the sense that you don't want that debt to go bad because it will – it will damage the Chinese economy perhaps just as much as it would the U.S.

We're almost out of time. Maybe another couple of questions. Yes, sir.

[01:21:21]



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Q: Gerald Chandler (sp). Could you talk some about the Chinese who have studied in the U.S. and returned to China? Do they form part of the elite? Does that help them get into the elite or, in your survey, are they not well represented? And would they have a different point of view than the rest of the Chinese?

MR. SWAINE: Unfortunately – I mean, that’s a very good question, but unfortunately we didn’t – we did break down returned students?

MS. ODELL: We asked about –

MR. SWAINE: See, she knows better than I do.

(Cross talk.)

MS. ODELL – their experience studying, traveling – we asked about their experience studying, traveling and working in, you know, the United States and China but we didn’t analyze yet, you know, what impact that had on their views. So that’s one of the questions that we hope to evaluate in this next phase of the – of the work.

MR. SWAINE: Yeah. So we don’t really have a basis to make some hard judgments about this based on this particular polling. So a lot of what we know about this is anecdotal: how Chinese think about overseas Chinese who, say, had been educated to some degree in the United States and go back to China. You hear all kinds of stories about this, both positive and negative.

[01:22:34]

Some people say that the Chinese are discriminated against if they’ve been educated in the West in terms of getting jobs, particularly if they’re going to go into the government in any – in any official capacity, that that creates a real limitation. Other people say they’re you know, well regarded in certain circles – commercial, et cetera – because of their training, because of what they’ve learned in their – to get their advanced degrees of one sort of or another.

I think it’s a mixed bag. I mean, you have a huge number of people involved now with hundreds of thousands of people, and the number of people who actually – there’s also an issue – I guess you could really precisely identify this, the number of Chinese who actually return to China as opposed to stay in the United States after being educated. I don’t have the – I don’t have those statistics, but –

Q: David Zweig has done some really good work on that –

MR. SWAINE: Has he? OK.



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Q: At Hong Kong –

MR. SWAINE: He’s at Hong Kong – yeah.

Q: – University of Science and Technology.

MR. SWAINE: Yeah, David Zweig – Z-W-E-I-G – works on that.

I think we have time for one more question, if somebody has – yes, sir, you’re the only hand up so you get it.
(Laughter.)

[01:23:38]

Q: My name is Jun Nowasama (ph), visiting fellow your next-door Brookings. I originally come – come from Tokyo, Japan – (inaudible). I have two short questions.

One is you mentioned that Chinese social media on the Internet – (inaudible) – doesn’t affect the perception of Chinese people toward United States, and that – do you have some kind of questionnaire about the information source on your survey, like on which kind of information, the newspaper or website, that you get the information about the United States. That’s the first question.

The second question is, do you have idea to expand this kind of polling toward the U.S. – so survey as China-Japan relationship or China-India relationship – (inaudible)? That is the second question. Thank you.

MR. SWAINE: OK. Thank you. Again, Rachel knows the details on the information sources. Apparently we do – we did ask questions on that.

MS. ODELL: Yeah, I know that we did on the Chinese side. I would have to double-check on the demographic battery – question battery on the U.S. side, but there as some initial – we looked at – did a sort of initial analysis of that, and it didn’t seem to have a strong impact, statistically significant impact, on people’s attitudes, but that’s something we – you know, we’ll look at closer – more closely.

[01:25:15]

On the second question, you know, we don’t have any plans to expand to these other countries specifically, although that’s a great idea. Pew Global Attitudes center – or Global Attitudes Project at the Pew Research Center looks at some of these questions. So, you know, you can use them as a resource.



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And then from a different project we did recently on the U.S.-China-Japan trilateral dynamic, I know that there are – there are actually some really great China-Japan bilateral polling efforts undertaken. I think one's done by Shinhwa and Genron NPO. So anyway, there's others like that.

MR. SWAINE: Yeah. I mean, we have a lot of desires in terms of what we'd like to do with this polling in the future, but it really does hinge a lot on our ability to generate funds to do it.

Anyway, thank you all very much for coming. We really appreciate it. Please give them a hand. (Applause.) go out and sell this effort.

(END)