

PREVENTING INADVERTENT WAR

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR SINO-AMERICAN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study of Sino-American crisis management is in its infancy. While officials in both the United States (U.S.) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) were discouraged at some aspects of their crisis management of post-Cold War crises, there has been relatively little progress in either isolating the barriers to effective crisis management or improving crisis-management procedures, practices or organization.

This paper attempts to begin a discussion on these issues. What can the U.S. and PRC governments do, both separately and bilaterally, to better manage future crises? How can non-governmental organizations help? And what are the prospects for short-, mid-, and long-term action?

To answer these questions, this paper first turns to the past, to examine how Sino-American crises since the end of the Cold War inform us in our efforts to improve crisis management in the future. Specifically, this paper will examine:

- *The Taiwan Straits crisis of 1995 and 1996*, following the U.S. government's decision, under pressure from a Taiwan-friendly Congress, to allow Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui to visit the United States in 1995;
- *The aftermath of the U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1999*; and
- *The response to the collision of a U.S. Navy EP-3 surveillance plane and a Chinese F-8 fighter over the South China Sea, and the U.S. plane's subsequent emergency landing on Chinese territory in 2001.*

In each case, the immaturity of Sino-American crisis management procedures and organization threatened to lead to the outbreak of violence between the U.S. and PRC governments, though certainly neither government wished for violent conflict. In each case, combinations of international misunderstanding, policy decisions and organizational shortcomings led to increased tensions before the crisis was resolved.

The constraints of domestic politics and public communications, as well as the limits of national security organization in crisis time, make crisis management challenging on both sides of the Pacific. While more developed organizationally, the U.S. finds it difficult to communicate to both domestic and foreign audiences in a way that effectively conveys each communication's intended meaning and elicits the desired (or at least a predictable) response. The government of the PRC, in contrast, has ably used each post-Cold War crisis to at least some rhetorical advantage – but remains concerned with its lack of institutional maturity in its national security management structure and with the speed with which it tends to lose control over the country's nationalist impulses.

Discussions between even thoughtful American and Chinese observers of and participants in the three crises described in this paper remain difficult. Significant disagreement continues to exist on the basic facts of each case – and interpretations vary even more widely.

Each crisis tends to demonstrate to U.S. observers a unique element of Chinese crisis management – the first, the unique position of Taiwan in the Chinese leadership's hierarchy of interests; the second, the difficulties inherent in managing a domestic-international “two-level game;” and the third, the challenges crisis management poses to Chinese national-security management and organization, and its

leadership's preference for often time-consuming consensus-based decision-making. To many Chinese observers, however, each new crisis brings reinforcing insights into their view of a U.S. government acting to increase its global hegemony, misperceiving China's intentions and objectives, and failing, in at least the Belgrade embassy and EP-3 cases, to learn from each previous incident.

Each incident has much to teach policy-makers in Washington and Beijing. Among the most important of these lessons:

1. The United States' initial statement will likely be immensely important.
2. Senior leaders in both the U.S. and PRC should be wary of the failings of their own bureaucracies, and recognize the possibility that similar mistakes are being made by the other.
3. Both the U.S. and the PRC should endeavor to slow down the crisis and limit the number of "speakers."
4. It is important to establish personal relationships at the highest levels.
5. The U.S. and PRC should work to improve their overall, non-crisis relationship.
6. The diffusion of power within the PRC government and the weakness of the PLA relative to the U.S. military are likely to lead to less transparency and less willingness of individual officials to communicate with the U.S. without a decision by the senior leadership.
7. The limited existing channels for crisis management are not working.
8. In crisis decision-making, the U.S. must take into account the domestic political context of PRC actions.
9. The U.S. should be concerned about how poorly American motives and actions are explained to the Chinese people.
10. It is difficult to overstate the paramount importance of Taiwan to the Chinese government and people.

To improve the effectiveness of crisis management in the future, the U.S. and China must take action both unilaterally and bilaterally, as well as with the help of non-governmental organizations. To these ends, this paper offers the following recommendations:

1. For U.S. Implementation

A. Short-term recommendations

- Increase attention to the international ramifications of public pronouncements
- Increase White House control of crisis-time public statements
- Conduct a China Policy Review
- Stabilize contacts with Taiwan

- Recruit and retain NSC staff with detailed knowledge of crisis management theory and history
- Encourage a successful transition from the “third generation” of Chinese leadership to the “fourth generation”

B. Medium-term recommendations

- Begin in-depth China policy and contingency planning
- Design a public diplomacy strategy for the U.S. government to better communicate directly with the Chinese people

C. Long-term recommendation

- Reorganize the State Department’s China programs under the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs

2. For PRC implementation

A. Short-term recommendations

- Improve interagency coordination within the existing government structure
- Encourage increasingly specific crisis-management studies at Chinese institutions

B. Medium-term recommendations

- Facilitate low-level contact directly with top leadership’s staff in times of crisis
- Expand the breadth of sources and the content of information the leadership considers during crises
- Begin in-depth U.S. policy and contingency planning

C. Long-term recommendation

- Create a National Security Council-like body in the PRC

3. For bilateral and trilateral implementation

A. Short-term recommendations

- Increase high-level contact through:
 - Annual meetings between the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense with their counterparts
 - Regular presidential meetings
 - A Vice Presidential-Premier exchange structure similar to the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission
 - A binding commitment to answer the Washington-Beijing hotline
- Restart military-to-military exchanges
- Increase the number and scope of non-military exchanges

B. Medium-term recommendations

- Negotiate a procedural, but not substantive, transparency agreement
- Further expand military-to-military contacts by:
 - continuing and expanding the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement
 - exploring confidence-building measures
 - beginning mid-level functional exchanges
 - conducting familiarization briefings
- Increase dialogue on crisis prevention

C. Long-term recommendations

- Begin negotiating an Agreement on the Basic Principles of Sino-American Relations
- Extend military-to-military contacts along the principles of reciprocity and joint activity
 - Work toward the establishment of crisis control centers
 - Work toward PRC-Taiwan crisis-management and confidence-building discussions

4. For NGO implementation

A. Short-term recommendation

- Design and prepare a Track II mechanism for crisis management

B. Medium-term recommendation

- Chinese NGOs should hold closed-door discussions on the future of the international system, the effects of American power and the future of Sino-American relations

INTRODUCTION

RETHINKING SINO-AMERICAN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

“Diplomacy with the Chinese is a matter of building ladders for them to climb down.”

— Sir Anthony Galsworthy, U.K. Ambassador to the PRC¹

“People here think that American hegemony does not care about others, always makes demands, requires others to do things, and always think[s] others responsible.”

— Chinese observer on U.S. foreign policy²

Downtown Beijing is bustling with the buzz of the marketplace – from Starbucks and McDonald’s to Audi and Volkswagen, Western-style big business is transforming Chinese society. In today’s China, the businessman is ascendant – and the ideologue has gone into hiding.

Proponents of engagement with China believe that Western ideas of how a government ought to treat its citizens are eventually exported along with the cultural content of Western consumer goods. Though political liberalization may be slow to come, cultural contact has been made – Beijing’s young punks and hipsters might as well be living in Hong Kong, London or New York.

This interaction, moreover, has not been unidirectional. Two hundred thousand Americans visit the People’s Republic of China (PRC) each year, and the United States’ (U.S.) economic ties to China have increased. Bilateral trade between the U.S. and China approached \$120 billion in 2000, a six-fold increase from 1990.³ Socially and economically, engagement has begun its work – China and the United States are closer than they have ever been.

Not so in Sino-American security relations. Mutual mistrust continues to reign, and recurrent crises challenge the irregular, but considerable, progress the U.S. and PRC governments have made to improve their bilateral relationship.

However unlikely, violent conflict between the U.S. and China remains a real possibility. Few people on either side of the Pacific wish for war to come, but few think it unimaginable.

Most analysts in both the U.S. and China believe that if war comes, it will be inadvertent – the culmination of a crisis that eludes the control of one government or the other, or both. What if, for example, Chinese protestors had accidentally killed U.S. embassy staff during anti-American protests following the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 as the Chinese police looked on, or frightened Marines had opened fire on Chinese civilians? What if PLA troops had fired on the U.S. surveillance plane that landed without permission on Hainan Island in 2001, or U.S. soldiers had attempted to defend the plane?

The study of Sino-American crisis management is in its infancy. While both the U.S. and PRC governments were discouraged at some aspects of their crisis management of post-Cold War crises, there has been relatively little progress in either isolating the barriers to effective crisis management or improving crisis-management procedures, practices or organization.

This paper attempts to begin a discussion on these issues. What can the U.S. and PRC governments do, both separately and bilaterally, to better manage future crises? How can non-governmental organizations help? And what are the prospects for short-, mid-, and long-term action?

To answer these questions, we must first turn to the past, to examine how Sino-American crises since the end of the Cold War inform us in our efforts to improve crisis management in the future. Specifically, this paper will examine:

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In each case, the immaturity of Sino-American crisis management procedures and organization threatened to lead to the outbreak of violence between the U.S. and PRC governments, though certainly neither government wished for violent conflict.⁴ In each case, combinations of international misunderstanding, policy decisions and organizational shortcomings led to increased tensions before the crisis was resolved.

Some would argue that one or all of these incidents were not true crises – that they were merely conflicts of national interests for which neither the U.S. or China was willing to go to war. On what basis, then, can we call these incidents crises?

Political scientists Glenn Snyder and Paul Diesing write that an international crisis “is a sequence of interactions between the governments of two or more sovereign states in severe conflict, short of actual war, but involving the perception of a dangerously high probability of war.”⁵ Perceptions of increased tensions are important here – not some objective measure of conflict. If one or more states feel that an incident has sparked a crisis, then a crisis it is.

These perceptions of crisis derive from participants' judgments of the effects of the incident in question. These judgments are based on assessments of 1.) whether the incident threatens basic values or national interests, 2.) whether that threat necessitates a response, 3.) whether the incident demands that response within a limited time frame, and 4.) whether the likelihood of violent conflict has increased.⁶

Table 1. U.S. Perceptions of Crisis in Post-Cold War World

In the following events, did the U.S. leadership perceive ...	Threat to National Interests	Necessary to Respond	Limited Time Frame	Increased Likelihood of U.S.-PRC Violent Conflict
Tiananmen Square, 1989	? (humanitarian)	Yes	No	No
Taiwan Straits, 1995-1996	Yes (Defending Taiwanese democracy)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Asian Financial Crisis, 1997	Yes (economic)	Yes	Yes	No
Belgrade embassy bombing, 1999	Yes (Americans' safety)	Yes	Yes	Yes
EP-3, 2001	Yes (Americans' safety, sensitive information affecting national security)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 2. PRC Perceptions of Crisis in Post-Cold War World

In the following events, does the PRC leadership perceive ...	Threat to National Interests	Necessary to Respond	Limited Time Frame	Increased Likelihood of U.S.-PRC Violent Conflict
Tiananmen Square, 1989	Yes (domestic stability)	Yes	Yes	No
Taiwan Straits, 1995-1996	Yes (territorial integrity)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Asian Financial Crisis, 1997	Yes (economic)	Yes	Yes	No
Belgrade embassy bombing, 1999	Yes (Chinese lives, domestic stability)	Yes	Yes	Yes
EP-3, 2001	Yes (sovereignty)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Crisis management is the sum of efforts to make sure crises do not lead countries in conflict to involuntarily escalate toward war. This paper concentrates on attempts to manage conflict before it becomes inadvertent war – that is, when surprising or irregular incidents spark crises that create commitment traps⁷ or a loss of control that leads to war. If one or more countries are determined to go to war, there is little that crisis-management mechanisms can do to stop them.

As former U.S. defense officials William Perry and Ashton Carter offer, “[i]n its role as a rising power, China often provokes fear and uncertainty; new powers have historically not been easily accommodated by the international system, and their rise has often resulted in violent conflict.”⁸ However, there is much both the United States and China can do, both unilaterally and bilaterally, to decrease the likelihood of such conflict.

* * *

Despite their disparate origins, the Taiwan Straits, Belgrade embassy bombing and EP-3 crises illuminate four consistent themes in Sino-American relations and crisis management.

1. Sino-American crises are often influenced by domestic pressure on each country’s leadership. In each case, crises involving the U.S. and Chinese governments have also involved the political views, policy preferences and historical experience of U.S. and Chinese citizens. At the outset of the EP-3 crisis, the U.S. government felt domestic pressure to use strongly worded rhetoric to put pressure on Chinese decision-makers to quickly return the airplane’s crew (see Chapter One) – or, it was thought, the American people would see the standoff as a sequel to the 1979-1981 Iranian hostage crisis. In the aftermath of the Belgrade embassy bombing, the Chinese government’s set of policy options was constrained by the nationalist sentiment sparked by the bombing. As one analyst put it, the Chinese “leadership is as much, if not more, aware of how something will play with the public as how it will play with other members of the leadership.”⁹

Robert Putnam has called such dynamics “two-level games.”

At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups. At the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments. Neither of the two games can be ignored by central decision-makers, so long as their countries remain

interdependent, yet sovereign ... The unusual complexity of this two-level game is that moves that are rational for a player at one board may be impolitic for that same player at the other board.¹⁰

Two-level games had an impact on each of the crises. In all three cases, the governments were constrained by domestic bureaucratic and public opinion – and, often, as we will see, toward a more confrontational and less cooperative position.

2. These “two-level games” create two audiences – one domestic, one international – for every public statement, making crisis-time communications exceptionally difficult. Crisis management necessitates an extraordinary control of language and action. Anything said or done can serve as a signal of one’s intentions or policy goals – as such, it becomes important to very carefully plan every statement and every application of one’s military and diplomatic instruments of power.

The imperative of disciplined language and actions, however, may be in opposition to the dictates of the two-level game. For example, if one’s goal is to avoid war, one will often want to take a hard rhetorical position for domestic consumption, while attempting to avoid inflaming opinion abroad or signaling belligerent intentions to other governments. This is a tremendously difficult task, one made increasingly difficult by global media, which does not discern domestic audiences from international ones.

3. The domestic benefits of announcing a strong commitment to national security at home increases the likelihood of misperception abroad by increasing observers’ belief in the home country’s belligerency. Both the U.S. and PRC government feel that their motives, policy goals, capabilities and strategic outlook are fundamentally misperceived by the other. U.S. China analyst Michael Pillsbury notes Chinese misperception of the U.S. in four areas:¹¹

- China overestimates U.S. hostility to the PRC
- China overestimates U.S. weakness
- China overestimates the future rate of decline of the United States
- China underestimates the cost and risks of future war¹²

Chinese observers and officials also feel that the U.S. government has consistently misperceived its intentions and strategic outlook. China is and has always been a “peace-loving country,” committed to “peace and stability,” says nearly every Chinese observer.¹³

This outlook, they believe, has led to “more mature” Chinese foreign-policy organization and posture in recent years, as well as a moderation of Chinese leaders’ approach to security issues, particularly in crisis time.¹⁴ China’s leaders “are basically committed to a moderate approach in managing crises,” said one Chinese observer. “There’s a great worry among me and my colleagues in international studies that [Chinese] development toward [a] more moderate, more reasonable approach toward international policy and the modernization of [the] Chinese foreign-policy making process is possible to be stopped or reversed in coming years,” because of perceived hostile American intent.¹⁵

Despite a commitment to modernization, many Chinese officials and observers do perceive American hostile intent, particularly on the part of the U.S. Department of Defense. Said one Chinese observer: senior U.S. defense officials “don’t like Chinese. They are very anti-China people.”¹⁶

Misperceptions cascade to make crisis management more difficult. A rhetorical hard line may be meant for domestic consumption or to signal resolve, but is often misperceived as a signal of belligerent intentions, particularly given both sides’ readiness to perceive the other’s ill will. A hard-line response creates a cycle in which each actor is responding to their perception of increased belligerence by their opponent – without any increased desire by either party for violent conflict.

4. Given these public communication constraints, a country’s organization for crisis management becomes increasingly important. In the age of instantaneous communication and global media, it is important not only to

respond effectively to both domestic and international audiences, but also to do so relatively quickly. Time lags increase the uncertainty of other state actors and international publics, further destabilizing potential crisis situations.

Increasing time constraints make decision-making and policy implementation more difficult. When faster responses are necessary, it is a more demanding task to gain consensus among top decision-makers on what actions to take, and more challenging to ensure adequate control and oversight over the organizations that will implement decisions made at the highest levels.

Therefore, the organization and management of national-security bureaucracies is of very real and increasing importance to crisis management – as Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow point out in their *Essence of Decision*, “previously established organizational structures and procedures provide and authenticate the information likely to be most important, generate the menu of options that will likely be judged realistic, and exhaust the options that can be executed with high confidence.”¹⁷ As Chapters One and Two will describe, serious questions about organization and management continue to haunt Sino-American crisis management.

U.S. Crisis-Time National Security Organization

In crisis time, U.S. national-security organization centers around the highest decision-making authority, the President. Since the end of World War II, Presidents have tended to concentrate decision-making power, particularly during crises, with their most trusted advisers, who usually work directly for the President at the White House.¹⁸

In national-security crises, the President will rely on his national security adviser, as well as the members of the National Security Council (see Table 3).

Table 3. The U.S. National Security Council¹⁹

Members of the U.S. National Security Council, 2002	
Statutory Members:	
• President	
• Vice-President	
• Secretary of State	
• Secretary of Defense	
Statutory Advisers:	
• The director of the Central Intelligence Agency	
• The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff	
Other Attendees:	
• Assistant for National Security Affairs	
• The White House Chief of Staff	
• Secretary of the Treasury	
• Assistant for Economic Policy	
• The White House Counsel to the President	
• The Attorney General	
• The Director of the Office of Management and Budget	

The National Security Council, then, has overlapping functions – it provides a forum for deliberation, as well as an opportunity for policy coordination between the cabinet departments with responsibility for implementation. The Secretary of Defense, as a member of the National Security Council, is therefore responsible not only to advise the President on defense-related matters, but also to ensure the effective implementation of presidential decisions once he returns to the Pentagon.

Recent bureaucratic reorganizations have other notable implications for crisis management. Since the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act, the Secretary of Defense has much more leverage over the defense bureaucracy – “the secretary’s role has been greatly strengthened and the department centralized in order to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the military instrument.”²⁰

International crisis-related information is provided by the diplomatic corps, the military and intelligence agencies. The State Department is organized into both geographic and substantive foci – but most information relevant to the conduct of U.S.-China crisis management is likely to come from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, or U.S. consulates in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Shenyang. The U.S. military is divided into regional commands – U.S.-China crisis management falls under the purview of Pacific Command, based in Hawaii.

Chinese Crisis-Time National Security Organization²¹

Like the American system, the Chinese crisis time national-security organization centers on the top leadership. In each crisis, the leadership “core” meets and decides on a path of action. That core may consist of the Politburo Standing Committee, a subset of its members, a selection of party “elders,” or any other advisers the leadership may want to consult with.

Table 4. Current Politburo Standing Committee Members²²

Current Politburo Standing Committee Members	
•	Jiang Zemin – President; Communist Party of China (CPC) General Secretary; Central Military Commission (CMC) Chairman
•	Li Peng – National People’s Congress Chairman
•	Zhu Rongji – Premier
•	Li Ruihuan – CPC Central Committee
•	Hu Jintao – Vice President; Central Party School President; CMC Vice Chairman
•	Wei Jianxing – Central Discipline Inspection Commission Secretary
•	Li Lanqing – Vice Premier

What’s most notable from the Politburo Standing Committee roster is the underrepresentation of foreign-policy principals in its deliberations. President Jiang and Vice-President Hu are members of the Central Military Commission (CMC) – but to assure their own power, not to represent the PLA’s views in the Politburo Standing Committee’s (or some smaller group’s) deliberations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs remains unrepresented.

Despite their lack of official representation in crisis time high-level deliberations, inputs to the leadership’s decision-making may come from a variety of groups – from the military through the CMC, and from the ministries responsible for foreign affairs, state security or national defense through the State Council and the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG).

Figure 1. Chinese National-Security Organization

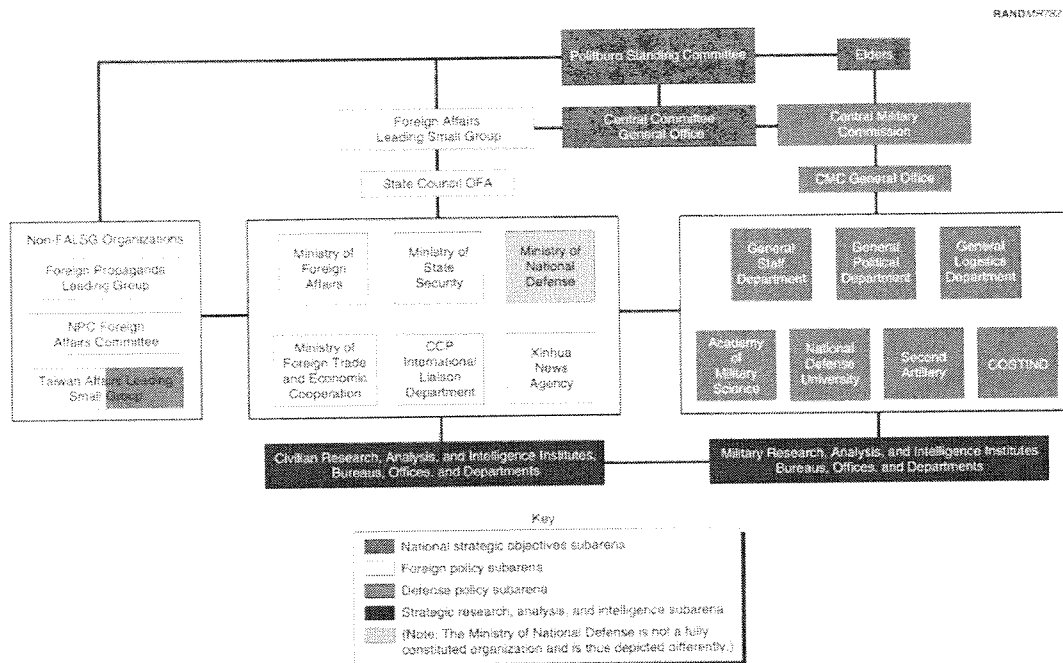


Figure 1—China's National Security Policy Arena

Source: Swaine, Michael D. *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*. Washington, D.C.: RAND Corporation, 1998, revised edition, pg 5.

Each of these organizations' relevance depends on the leadership's preference. In some cases, the venue for discussions will be the FALSG (which President Jiang also chairs); in others – like, as far as an outside observer can tell, the EP-3 crisis – the leadership will discuss the crisis with only unchallenged Central Military Commission input.

The Chinese system is highly personalized in crisis time – it is, in every case, what the leadership wants it to be at that moment. While each of the relevant bureaucracies has responsibilities for implementation in crises, they will not act until the leadership has decided on a course of action and announces that course to the bureaucracy.

Effectively responding to these four major concerns necessitates both learning from the past and looking to the future. To do so, in Chapter One, this essay will describe the diplomatic and security interactions between the U.S. and Chinese governments in three post-Cold War Sino-American crises. In Chapter Two, the paper will briefly outline the theory of crisis management and its applications during the Cold War. In Chapter Three, the paper will interpret the events described in Chapter One, and analyze the factors facilitating and discouraging the swift and peaceful resolution of each crisis, to inform efforts to improve U.S.-PRC crisis management. In Chapter Four, the paper will derive lessons for Sino-American crisis management from the narratives in Chapter One and the analysis in Chapter Three. In Chapter Five, the paper will offer recommendations for the U.S. government and the Chinese government to implement unilaterally, bilaterally and trilaterally (with Taiwan), or with the help of non-governmental organizations, to help better manage crises in the future.

CHAPTER ONE

A HISTORY OF THREE CRISES IN SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS: TENSIONS ACROSS THE TAIWAN STRAIT, THE BELGRADE EMBASSY BOMBING AND HAINAN ISLAND

To improve Sino-American crisis management, we must first understand the events surrounding the three major crises in U.S.-PRC security relations since the end of the Cold War. This is particularly challenging in the case of Sino-American relations, as there remains significant difference of opinion between Chinese and American participants and observers as to the circumstances and meaning of the events in question.

It is perhaps an understatement to write that Sino-American relations since the end of the Cold War have been uneven. After the Chinese crackdown on protestors in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989, then-U.S. President George H.W. Bush attempted to minimize damage to Sino-American relations.²³ For his efforts, he was criticized during his 1992 reelection campaign by his opponent, Bill Clinton, who charged that the Bush administration "turned its back on those struggling for democracy in China."²⁴

In the wake of Bush's defeat, the new Administration strengthened its rhetoric, pressing the Chinese government to improve its human rights record, thereby increasing tensions. To borrow one analyst's metaphor, at this time, "the United States and China were two ships passing in a fog of recrimination and denunciation."²⁵

By 1994, though, the governments were once again reaching out to each other – Secretary of State Warren Christopher visited Beijing, and the U.S. canceled plans to link Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status to concerns over human rights.²⁶ Relations were improving and contact between the U.S. and Chinese governments increasing – until Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States in June 1995 sparked crisis in the Taiwan Straits.

For a year following the inconclusive resolution of the Taiwan Straits crisis, U.S. President Bill Clinton and PRC President Jiang Zemin once again returned to the task of improving Sino-American relations, with the goal of undoing the damage done in 1995 and 1996. In the fall of 1997, President Jiang visited Washington, and in June 1998, President Clinton visited Beijing. In April 1999, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji visited the U.S., successfully strengthening ties between the governments despite President Clinton's last-minute refusal to offer China accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, less than a month after Premier Zhu's return, a U.S. B-2 dropped five bombs on the Chinese embassy in Belgrade.²⁷

Still, following the embassy bombing, the two governments continued their efforts toward better bilateral relations. On November 15, 1999, the U.S. and China reached agreement to allow China to join the WTO.²⁸

The 2000 campaign, and the election of President George W. Bush, would again increase tensions as a result of the candidate's efforts distance himself from what he and his advisers thought was a Clinton Administration overly forgiving of Chinese missteps on crucial security and political issues from proliferation to religious freedom. Bush's campaign rhetoric inspired great apprehension among Chinese leaders, as Bush told the American public that

... We must see China clearly – not through the filters of posturing and partisanship. China is rising, and that is inevitable. Here, our interests are plain: We welcome a free and prosperous China. We predict no conflict. We intend no threat. And there are areas where we must try to cooperate ...

... [But,] China is a competitor, not a strategic partner. We must deal with China without ill-will – but without illusions.²⁹

This shift to seeing the PRC as a strategic competitor rather than as a partner left Chinese observers uncertain of what was to come in Sino-American relations – the relationship had become, in the words of one Chinese observer, one of “not enemy, not friend.”³⁰ Shortly after President Bush’s inauguration, tensions would become crisis with the collision of a U.S. EP-3 and a Chinese F-8 over the South China Sea.

* * *

The three major crises – the Taiwan Straits crisis of 1995-1996, the bombing of the PRC Embassy in Belgrade in 1999, and the collision of a U.S. surveillance plane and a Chinese intercept flight in 2001 – marked the nadirs of post-Cold War Sino-American relations.

These incidents are outlined chronologically, and not in any ranking of relevance or impact. In fact, each crisis tends to demonstrate to U.S. observers an unique element of Chinese crisis management – the first, the unique position of Taiwan in the Chinese leadership’s hierarchy of interests; the second, the difficulties inherent in managing a domestic-international “two-level game”; and the third, the challenges crisis management poses to Chinese national-security management and organization, and its leadership’s preference for often time-consuming consensus decision-making. To many Chinese observers, however, each new crisis brings reinforcing, rather than unique, insights – into their view of a U.S. government acting to increase its global hegemony, misperceiving China’s intentions and objectives, and failing, in at least the Belgrade embassy and EP-3 cases, to learn from each successive incident.³¹

I. The Taiwan Straits Crisis, 1995-1996

For a chronology of the Taiwan Straits crisis, see Appendix C, pg. 57.

In January 1995, President Jiang announced a new Chinese policy initiative on Taiwan, his Eight-Point Initiative.³² This announcement was the culmination of the President's efforts at consolidating power over Taiwan policy since assuming the chairmanship of the Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group (TALSG) in mid-1993, as well as the product of more than two years of policy debate and review within the PRC government over Taiwan.³³

The Chinese believed they were taking a moderate tact – President Jiang's eight points on Taiwan policy seemed, in the PRC leadership's minds, a fair way to restart dialogue on issues between Taiwan and the mainland.³⁴ The approach was gradualist – “the Jiang eight points did not anticipate ... ‘speedy’ reunification; rather, it sought only agreement on a transitional framework that would stabilize the status quo, facilitate economic exchanges, and generally preempt any permanent separation of Taiwan from the Mainland.”³⁵ Moreover, in presenting his eight points, President Jiang used the most conciliatory language he had used to date – “Chinese should not fight Chinese,” he said.³⁶ At the same time, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) also moved to strengthen its presence opposite Taiwan, increasing forces there in 1993 and 1994.³⁷

The issuance of an American visa to Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui, so he could visit his *alma mater*, Cornell University, in early June 1995, changed the Chinese position quickly. The PRC interpreted U.S. actions as a change in U.S. policy toward the recognition of Taiwan and as a sign of warming relations between Taiwan and the U.S., despite U.S. protests that President Lee's appearance was nothing other than a private visit.³⁸

President Lee's trip was damaging on two fronts. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher had assured Qian Qichen, a Politburo member, State Council vice premier in charge of foreign affairs, former minister of foreign affairs, and deputy head of the TALSG and the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG), that President Clinton would resist Congressional pressure and refuse to approve a visa for President Lee. However, when the depth of the U.S. Congress' commitment to allowing President Lee to travel to the United States became clear to President Clinton – it seemed possible, after all, for Congress to pass legislation requiring the Clinton Administration to admit Lee to the United States – President Clinton gave in.³⁹ Qian, who had assumed that President Clinton's commitment was irreversible, was embarrassed, and shifted his support toward a tougher stand on Taiwan policy. Said Qian: “I was assured a visa would not be issued. Imagine what I thought and what was thought of me when the visa was granted.”⁴⁰

Later, Chinese anger was further stoked by the tone of the Taiwanese leader's remarks as he arrived in the United States. At Cornell, President Lee increased Chinese discomfort by speaking on “the accomplishments of the ‘Republic of China on Taiwan.’”⁴¹ As U.S. China scholar David M. Lampton notes, by mid-1995, “Jiang Zemin's capacity to bear the political weight of critics at home was nearing the breaking point.”⁴²

Indeed, domestic pressure in the PRC necessitated a response by Jiang. According to one Chinese observer, “no Chinese leader can accept doing nothing” in the face of President Lee's pronouncements. “So China must do something. It has no choice.”⁴³

Certainly, action seemed necessary to Chinese policy-makers, but what should it be? After the U.S. State Department issued its visa, but before President Lee's statements in the United States, “[t]he Chinese leadership ... decided to take a firm but restrained stance ...”⁴⁴ Ongoing military-to-military contacts were suspended, as were other diplomatic interactions – on June 16, 1995, Beijing recalled its ambassador to the United States, Li Daoyu.⁴⁵

After President Lee's visit, however, the tone changed – becoming much harsher. The Chinese leadership thought President Lee had made “highly provocative statements. These actions convinced Jiang and others that the military's recommendations should be implemented ... In mid-July the PLA leadership proposed a series of military exercises and short-range ballistic missile firings before the Taiwanese legislative elections in December 1995 and the presidential election in March 1996.”⁴⁶

This impulse toward a more aggressive response was strengthened by the composition of a leadership group that had added two high-ranking military officers to the usual list of participants in its deliberations. According to analyst Andrew Scobell,

In mid-June 1995, after Lee Teng-hui's triumphal return from his U.S. trip, an emergency session of Beijing's top policy-making body on Taiwan, [the TALSG], was called. The two civilian leaders of the TALSG, Chairman Jiang Zemin and Vice Chair and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, were confronted by three irate military men insisting it was time for harsher action. Normally the body has only one military representative, Deputy Chief of the General Staff Xiong Guangkai (who sits alongside half a dozen civilians, including Jiang, Qian, Wang Daohan [head of Beijing's quasi-official Associations for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait], and Wang Zhaoguo [director of the Chinese Communist Party United Front Work Department]). Also present this time were the two most senior figures in the PLA – Generals Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen. These men definitely charged the atmosphere and ensured a swift change of policy.⁴⁷

On July 18, 1995, the PLA announced that it would conduct missile tests over the next week. Between July 21 and July 26, the PLA launched six short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) into the East China Sea, 90 miles to the northeast of the Taiwanese capital of Taipei.⁴⁸ Nearly a month later, from August 15 through August 25, 20 PLA Navy ships and 40 PLA Air Force airplanes conducted a “guided missile and artillery firing exercise” in the same area.⁴⁹ On August 18, the PRC conducted an underground nuclear test.⁵⁰

So far, the U.S. response had been muted. The PRC had succeeded in making its position on U.S.-Taiwan ties and Taiwanese moves toward independence clear. The U.S., meanwhile, had not reacted – “if any response was forthcoming from Washington, [Chinese leaders expected] it would be simply token. Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph S. Nye visited Beijing in mid-November, and Chinese officials pressed him to find out what a U.S. response to another military show of force in the Taiwan Strait might be. Nye was apparently stern but vague about possible American reactions.”⁵¹

Meanwhile, the PRC was also moving to increase control over military activity near Taiwan. In mid-October 1995, Central Military Commission (CMC) Vice-Chair and Director of the PLA's General Staff Zhang Wannian was put in charge of a Beijing-based Headquarters for Operations Targeting Taiwan.⁵² In this exercise in coercive diplomacy, the PRC government was working to ensure civilian control of the military.

In November, just before Taiwanese legislative elections, the PLA conducted naval and amphibious exercises on an island near Taiwan.⁵³ In the eyes of the Chinese government, these months of exercises had reached their objective in handicapping pro-independence candidates at the Taiwanese polls – the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) only gained three new seats, for a total of 54, while the pro-reunification New Party gained 14 seats, for a total of 21.⁵⁴

However, these exercises also sparked the first visible U.S. response to the on-going crisis. On December 19, 1995, the aircraft carrier *Nimitz* and four escort ships passed through the Taiwan Strait – according to the U.S., to avoid bad weather. Observers of Sino-American relations were skeptical. “Weather is the convenient rationale,” said an American analyst, “but there's no question in my mind that sailing the *Nimitz* through the strait is a conscious political signal and reminder to Beijing.”⁵⁵ Moreover, the Hong Kong Royal Observatory “had no record of a tropical storm off Taiwan at the time of the *Nimitz* voyage.”⁵⁶ In any case, it was the first passage of the Taiwan Strait by a U.S. carrier since 1989.

For the first two months of 1996, the Taiwan Straits remained quiet. The PRC leadership had decided to go ahead with another round of missile tests in March, and was making preparations to do so.

As the Taiwanese election set for March 23, 1996, approached, the PRC announced another round of missile tests on March 5, this time firing over Taiwan, at the shipping routes off the Taiwanese coast – “bracketing” their Taiwanese target.⁵⁷ These exercises were scheduled to take place between March 8 and March 15.⁵⁸

On March 5, U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry, Secretary of State Christopher and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake met with Chinese Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Liu Huaqiu, “to deliver a strong and unambiguous message”⁵⁹ that the PRC should not proceed with missile tests.

On March 8, three missiles were launched, “landing about twenty miles from ports in Taiwan’s north and south.”⁶⁰ Notes Secretary Perry: “[o]ur diplomatic approach, although uncommonly blunt, had not been effective.”⁶¹ According to Lampton, the PLA missile launches “effectively closed large areas of international waters, created turmoil in Taiwan’s financial markets, and drove capital abroad. Taipei’s foreign exchange reserves fell 8.4 percent in March and the Taiwan government was forced to prop up the stock market with \$3 billion.”⁶²

On March 7 (March 8 in Beijing, after the first missile tests), Secretary Christopher called the PRC tests “unnecessarily reckless” and “unnecessarily risky,”⁶³ while Secretary Perry promised “grave consequences” if China hit Taiwan. With more exercises and missile launches scheduled from March 12th through the 20th, Secretary Christopher noted that “we’ve made it quite clear to the Chinese that if they try to resolve this policy through force, rather than through peace, that that’ll be a grave matter with us. We’ve made that as clear as we possible can to them, because we don’t want any miscalculation on their part.”⁶⁴

On March 10, the Pentagon announced that the President had decided to send two aircraft carrier groups. The first carrier to arrive was, with some perhaps unintended symbolism, the *Independence*.⁶⁵

In mid-March 1996, the *Nimitz* aircraft carrier battle group joined the *Independence* – 16 ships in all – in approaching Taiwan to signal to the Chinese American resolve in its defense of the island republic. Another missile was fired on March 13th, and air and sea exercises continued through March 20th along the Chinese coast opposite Taiwan,⁶⁶ but they were significantly curtailed.⁶⁷

Though the American carrier groups never traveled through the Taiwan Straits, Lampton notes that “[t]his is a story of face lost in both Beijing and Taipei at the Clinton administration’s hands, mutual misjudgments about reactions in Beijing, Taipei and Washington, and divergent domestic politics and core interests in the three capitals.”⁶⁸ By mid-March, the Chinese had substantively backed down –

[f]rom 10 March, statements by Chinese foreign ministry spokesmen promised that Chinese forces would “resort to non-peaceful means” if “foreign forces” attempted to “invade” Taiwan – quite different from a blanket threat against those who “interfered” in China’s reunification. “Thus,” in the words on one analyst, “China blinked.”⁶⁹

Improvement in relations would be difficult, as the Chinese still believed the Americans had gone too far in their support for Taiwan. Noted one Chinese observer – “in any country, there are many important things that deal with national interest and dignity. [The U.S.] caused very serious indignation among the Chinese.”⁷⁰

At the same time, though, most Chinese observers believe that China met all of its objectives in the Taiwan Straits crisis. “China sent a very clear message” to the U.S., said one observer, that it “should be careful in moving ahead with relations with Taiwan,” and deterred Taiwan from seeking independence.⁷¹

In June 1998, on a visit to Shanghai, President Clinton made efforts to redress a perceived imbalance in U.S. Taiwan policy with what became know as his “Four No’s,” saying that “[w]e don’t support independence for Taiwan, or two Chinas, or one Taiwan-one China. And we don’t believe that Taiwan should be a member of any organization for which statehood is a requirement.”⁷²

II. The Belgrade Embassy Bombing

On the night of May 7, 1999, during a U.S. intervention in Yugoslavia that raised Chinese fears of unfettered American involvement in other countries' domestic affairs, a U.S. B-2 bomber dropped five Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) 2000 lb. GPS-guided bombs on the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Three Chinese citizens – journalists Shao Yunhan, Xu Xinghu and Zhu Zing⁷³ — were killed, and more than 20 were injured.⁷⁴

On May 8, as President Clinton toured an Oklahoma devastated by severe weather, he made a short statement on the incident, apologizing to the Chinese government and people. Dressed casually for a tour of the disaster area, and giving his remarks on an airport tarmac, the President's remarks seemed to many Chinese observers perfunctory and not presidential – as if he weren't really taking the incident seriously.⁷⁵

At Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma, President Clinton commented briefly on the incident to reporters:

... [L]ast night the NATO air strikes included a number of command and control targets in Belgrade, targets that involved [Serbian President Slobodan] Milosevic's ability to do what he has done in Kosovo to run the people out and repress them. Unfortunately, the Chinese embassy was inadvertently damaged, and people lost their lives, and others have been injured.

It was a tragic mistake, and I want to offer my sincere regret and my condolences to both the leaders and the people of China. Having said that, let me also remind you that it is clear that we're doing everything we can to avoid innocent civilian casualties ... It doesn't remove the sadness from the people in China and from the other innocent civilians that have been hurt, but we are doing our best. And I think it's important to remember why these air strikes are necessary. Many thousands of Kosovars have been killed. There have been rapes; they have been burned out of their homes; their records have been destroyed; and hundreds of thousands have been turned into refugees.⁷⁶

Asked whether Russian officials' characterization of the bombing as "barbaric" would derail efforts towards peace in Yugoslavia, Clinton said U.S. actions weren't "barbaric. What is barbaric is what Mr. Milosevic has done. It's tragic. It's awful. But it's a tragedy, and it was an accident. What is barbaric is the intentional ethnic cleansing that [Milosevic] has provoked for a decade now ..."⁷⁷

Chinese decision-makers were not appeased by what they saw as a half-apology and implicit criticism for long-time Chinese support for Milosevic. As David M. Lampton offers, "this belief [that the U.S. was not sufficiently apologetic] persisted despite the facts that the secretary of state and the U.S. ambassador to China also had quickly made more formal apologies and President Clinton had followed up his airport statement with both a letter and an attempted phone call to President Jiang that was not initially taken. Chinese sensibilities were further offended when the apology was linked to an explanation that asserted that unfortunate errors happen in war and that Yugoslav President Milosevic was the real culprit."⁷⁸

The view that the U.S. President could have responded in a more solemn and less equivocal fashion is widely held among policy-makers and scholars in Beijing. A Chinese observer echoes Lampton – the "first [U.S.] response was not constructive – Clinton blamed Milosevic for the bombing ... The sufferings are on both sides. You should say sorry to the other side, you should mention the Chinese suffering, in particular because China suffered more."⁷⁹ In many observers' analyses, this initial statement by the U.S. forced a harder position on the part of the Chinese government by precipitating a strongly nationalistic popular response.

Chinese observers agree that the Chinese government's role in fomenting protest was neither completely passive nor completely active – "I don't like to say [that the government] agitated [these protests], but at first, it is encouraged ... There have been many other protests that the government has not permitted."⁸⁰

Ambassador Sasser shares that assessment: "the news started leaking in over the Internet before the official Chinese media could deal with it. The university students in Beijing were taking it off the Internet. Others were seeing it on Hong Kong Television. And the anger started boiling up and the Chinese government, simply rather than trying to

encourage it, they just simply got out in front of the crowds before it ran over them ...”⁸¹ According to two American analysts,

Public outrage was so great that the Chinese authorities had no choice but to yield to the demand to take to the streets, despite the very real danger that demonstrations could get out of hand (especially since many of the early demonstrators were young working-class males). Buses were dispatched to bring students from the Haidian district of northwest Beijing (where the universities are concentrated) to the American embassy. Nationalism in China is very much a double-edged sword; if students and others had not been permitted to vent their feelings against the United States, they no doubt would have found release through criticism of the Chinese government.⁸²

In China, questions were also quickly raised about the veracity of American statements that the bombing was accidental. The Chinese press repeatedly reported that the bombing was not an accident – and American explanations and justifications for the war in Yugoslavia never appeared in the Chinese media.⁸³

The Chinese people were not informed of U.S. apologies, were not told that the U.S. and NATO were attempting to halt Yugoslavia’s leaders’ attempts at ethnic cleansing, and were encouraged by *People’s Daily* “Commentator” articles that called “the bombing a ‘flagrant attack,’ ‘deliberate,’ ‘a willful murder,’ ‘a bloody atrocity,’ ‘new gunboat diplomacy,’ and a ‘barbaric crime.’”⁸⁴ The *People’s Daily* also suggested a cover-up: “NATO’s subsequent chicanery, with claims that it did ‘not intentionally target the Chinese embassy,’ could not cover up the bloody fact ... Three missiles blasted the embassy from different angles, which completely exposed the aggressors’ evil intentions and spilled Chinese blood in an act for which they must be accountable.”⁸⁵

Such rhetoric seems to have had an effect on Chinese public opinion. According to a telephone poll of undisclosed validity by *Beijing Youth Daily* of 800 Chinese citizens, “40 percent of respondents say NATO’s intention [in bombing the Chinese embassy in Belgrade] was to test China’s reaction. Sixteen percent say that NATO aims to silence China’s opposition to the bombing of Yugoslavia. Another 14 percent say the United States is bullying countries which dare to say no to the only superpower in the world. Seven percent say the U.S. is showing off its power. Six percent of the people say the United States is so arrogant that it has gone crazy.”⁸⁶

In retrospect, said then-U.S. Ambassador to China James Sasser, “I think intellectually they know that this was not a policy decision made by the President of the United States or the National Security Council or any place high in the United States Government. But there is a sense that this was something carried out by a rogue element either in the Central Intelligence Agency or in the Department of Defense. And we’ve had a very, very difficult time convincing them that that’s not the case.”⁸⁷ A Chinese observer agreed, saying that “the result here [was] debate – is it that there was [a] mistake, or was there an interest group behind this event?”⁸⁸

By May 8, anti-American demonstrations had broken out across China, and would last through May 10. Large-scale protests were held in front of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing – where Americans feared for their security to the point that they began burning embassy documents. Protestors threw bricks and Molotov cocktails at the Beijing embassy, set fire to the U.S. consular general’s residence in Chengdu, attacked the U.S. consulate in Shenyang with rocks, and protested outside missions in Shanghai and Guangzhou.⁸⁹

According to Ambassador Sasser, on May 9, “you could hear the windows crashing and the glass going everywhere. Even when I tried to lie down on the floor for a couple of hours of sleep, I could still hear the chanting and rock throwing. It lasted all night.”⁹⁰ He added that “it appeared for a time that the police lines might not be able to hold the demonstrators back.”⁹¹

Other nongovernmental facilities associated with Americans were also targeted. A Beijing McDonald’s restaurant was closed by protestors for a few hours, and, in Xi’an, a Hyatt Regency hotel where President Clinton had stayed in 1998 was attacked until managers agreed to take down a picture of Clinton at the hotel and donate an American flag to be burned.⁹²

In Beijing, Chinese police monitored the crowds, but did not stop protestors from throwing rocks at the U.S. embassy.⁹³ According to *Asiaweek.com*, “Security official [said] they deliberately sent unarmed police to Beijing’s embassy district and that the officers were ordered to use friendly persuasion over force. Of course, that worked

both ways. At the height of the protests outside the U.S. embassy, one officer reportedly told a student: ‘Your rocks are too heavy. There are smaller ones over there.’”⁹⁴

Ambassador Sasser was trapped in the U.S. Embassy with 13 Marines and embassy officials – “[t]hey started breaking windows in my residence last night,” he said from inside the embassy. “We certainly can understand their hurt and anger arising out of this terrible, tragic accident in Belgrade, but that was unintentional and we have apologized for that. But what’s occurring now is to some extent intentional.”⁹⁵ Beyond the window-breaking, protestors burned flags and carried strongly worded condemnations on protest signs, reading, among others, “To Hell with the U.S.,” “Kill Bill Clinton,” “Clinton equals Hitler,” and “Down with American imperialism!”⁹⁶

The demonstrators were encouraged, but not organized, by the PRC leadership. Notes Lampton: “Americans are sadly mistaken, for example, if they think that the Chinese demonstrations against U.S. diplomatic facilities ... were simply government-managed riots. Rather, the government was, in part (and only in part), trying to surf a wave of popular anger.”⁹⁷

Chinese news accounts counted “tens of thousands of students” in the streets.⁹⁸ According to the *Xinhua* news agency, “[e]very university [involved in the protest] was marked by a squad of students who held high their university flag, stopped briefly at the embassy gate and shouted slogans in protest even louder when passing by the gate. Among the columns of protestors, some college students held in front of their chest a large paper printed with the pattern of a target, the popular symbol for the Yugoslav people’s spirit against foreign invasion.”⁹⁹

On May 9, Vice President Hu Jintao appeared on Chinese television to attempt to contain the protests. “We believe that the broad masses will, proceeding from the fundamental interests of the nation and taking the overall situation into account, carry out the activities in good order and in accordance with law ... so as to ensure social stability,” he said. The Vice President also guaranteed the safety of “foreign diplomatic missions and institutes, foreign nationals in China, and foreigners who come to China for economic and trade, or educational and cultural activities.”¹⁰⁰

“We must prevent overreaction,” Vice President Hu added.¹⁰¹ Whether coincidentally or as a result of his speech, the protests would soon wind down, though the PRC government announced the next day that it would “halt its cooperation ‘with the United States in the fields of proliferation prevention, arms control and international security,’” and “suspend its dialogue with the United States on human rights”¹⁰² because of the bombing.

On May 10, President Clinton responded with his own remarks, at a White House meeting scheduled to discuss strategy on children and violence in the wake of the April 20th high school student shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado.¹⁰³

... I have already expressed our apology and our condolences to President Jiang and to the Chinese people. And I have reaffirmed my commitment to strengthen our relationship with China.

But I think it’s very important to remember that this was an isolated, tragic event, while the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, which has led to the killing of thousands of people and the relocation of hundreds of thousands, is a deliberate and systematic crime. Until NATO’s simple conditions are met, therefore, the military campaign will continue.

But again I want to say to the Chinese people and to the leaders of China, I apologize; I regret this. But I think it is very important to draw a clear distinction between a tragic mistake and a deliberate act of ethnic cleansing. And the United States will continue to make that distinction.¹⁰⁴

Soon after the President’s statement, demonstrators began dispersing. According to most Chinese observers, though, the crisis ended not because of this apology, but because of the rising danger of continuing protests to the regime itself.

“The government quickly sensed that this type of demonstration is damaging to themselves as well,” said one observer. Another Chinese observer pointed out that, in addition to the regime’s fear that popular protests might go too far – especially with the tenth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown approaching on June 4th – negotiations with the U.S. were beginning to show results. As more Chinese organizations clamored to join the

protests, the Chinese government used police and government statements like Vice President Hu's to calm and then end the protests.¹⁰⁵ On May 12, Ambassador Sasser was able to leave the Beijing embassy for the first time since May 8.¹⁰⁶

The next day, a memorial ceremony was held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing for the three Chinese killed. In a speech there, President Jiang echoed Vice President Hu's tone, saying that "the great People's Republic of China can never be bullied," but that China should "continue to unrelentingly maintain the social stability, which is the fundamental assurance for implementing our reform and construction tasks."¹⁰⁷ On balance, said one Chinese observer, "the Chinese government ... acted very wisely" – Sino-American relations were not permanently damaged, China received both compensation and an apology, and domestic nationalist sentiment was expressed without getting irreversibly out of hand.¹⁰⁸

However, President Jiang and President Clinton had not yet spoken since the beginning of the incident. On May 14, they spoke, using the hotline that had been ignored since May 7. According to a Chinese account,

Clinton expressed his sincere regrets for the tragedy that happened in Belgrade and his personal condolences to the injured staff and family members of the victims. Clinton promised that there would be an investigation of the incident and that he would let the Chinese people know the truth as soon as possible. He said that Sino-U.S. relations are very important, adding that he would make the utmost effort to deal with the tragedy to bring bilateral relations back to normal development ... [The bombing, said Jiang,] is a serious infringement on Chinese sovereignty and a gross trampling on the U.N. Charter and norms in international relations and added that it was an unexpected disaster for the Chinese people.¹⁰⁹

According to then-White House Press Secretary Joe Lockhart,

... the President once again expressed his sincere regrets and condolences to President Jiang and the Chinese people concerning the tragic accident of last week. The President expressed his desire that we move beyond this tragic accident in our relationship. President Jiang took the opportunity to express his views. I will, obviously, leave it to him to do that.¹¹⁰

On June 17, Undersecretary of State and Presidential Special Envoy Thomas Pickering personally delivered the U.S. government's explanation for the incident to the Chinese government, which the PRC deemed "unconvincing."¹¹¹ Undersecretary Pickering pointed to three basic failures [*his full report is attached as Appendix D, pg. 60*]:

- "the technique used to locate the intended target was severely flawed" – land navigation techniques used in this case, which involve comparing addresses from one street to another, were inappropriate for precision targeting, and should not have been used. The true target, the headquarters of the Yugoslav Federal Directorate for Supply and Procurement (FDSP), was actually located 300 meters away.
- "none of the military or intelligence databases used to verify target information contained the correct location of the Chinese embassy"
- "nowhere in the target review process was either of the first two mistakes detected"¹¹²

Some news accounts later objected to this account. The British *Observer* reported in October 1999 that "the Chinese embassy was removed from a prohibited targets list after NATO electronic intelligence detected it sending army signals to Milosevic's forces ... A NATO flight control officer in Naples also confirmed to us that a map of 'non-targets': churches, hospitals and embassies, including the Chinese, did exist. On this 'don't hit' map, the Chinese embassy was correctly located at its current site, and not where it had been until 1996 – as claimed by the U.S. and NATO."¹¹³

The U.S. paid \$28 million in compensation for property damage, and \$4.5 million to the families of those killed and injured.¹¹⁴ In April 2000, the CIA fired an operations officer and reprimanded six managers involved in the targeting.¹¹⁵

III. The EP-3 Incident

For a chronology of the EP-3 incident, please see Appendix E, pg. 67.

On April 1, 2001, a U.S. Navy EP-3 surveillance plane with 24 aboard collided with one of two pursuing Chinese F-8 fighters in international airspace 104 kilometers southeast of Hainan Island. One F-8 landed safely, but the F-8 involved in the collision fell into the sea, killing its pilot, Wang Wei.¹¹⁶

The incident followed months of increasingly dangerous Chinese intercepts in the South China Sea – escalation that had previously led the U.S. to complain to PLA officials about close calls involving Wang Wei, the lost pilot. According to then-U.S. Ambassador to China Joseph Prueher, the U.S. had increased the number of surveillance flights “quite a bit,” which “rankled the Chinese.”¹¹⁷

From the beginning, the U.S. and China blamed each other for the collision. According to the EP-3’s pilot, Navy Lieutenant Shane Osborn, the EP-3 was flying on autopilot, level at 180 knots airspeed, conducting electronic surveillance along China’s coast.

We were obviously being intercepted, and the [F-8] was approaching much closer than normal, about three to five feet off our wing ... The aircraft made two close approaches, [with the pilot] making gestures. And, then, on the third one, his closure rate was too high, and he impacted the No. 1 propeller, which caused a violent shaking of the aircraft. And then, his nose impacted our nose, and our nose cone flew off, and the airplane immediately snap-rolled to about 130 degrees in low bank and became uncontrollable.¹¹⁸

However, Zhao Yu, the pilot of the F-8 that landed safely, had a different account. After the EP-3 “suddenly veered”¹¹⁹ into Wang Wei’s F-8, according to Zhao:

I saw the head and left wing of the U.S. plane bump into Wang Wei’s plane. At the same time, the outside propeller of the U.S. plane’s left wing smashed the vertical tail wing of the plane piloted by Wang Wei into pieces. I reminded Wang Wei, “Your plane’s vertical tail has been struck off. Pay attention to remain in condition, pay attention to remain in condition.” Wang Wei replied, “Roger.” About 30 seconds later, I found Wang Wei’s plane was rolling to the right side and plunging. The plane was out of control. Wang Wei requested to parachute. I replied: “Permission granted.” Afterward, I lost contact with Wang Wei.¹²⁰

American officials are skeptical of the Chinese account, “arguing that the EP-3 was too lumbering and slow to perform such a maneuver, and that the international norm placed the onus for safety on the smaller, faster and nimble Chinese fighter aircraft.”¹²¹ Independent accounts confirm that this is likely the case. A British Broadcasting Corporation report quotes Western analysts, including defense analysts at Jane’s Defense as saying that while “the slightest misjudgment by either the U.S. or Chinese pilot could have caused the collision,” knowledgeable observers “generally argue that the U.S. plane was unlikely to veer suddenly to the left, as claimed by Beijing. It is a big and cumbersome plane that the far more nimble Chinese jets should have been able to avoid.”¹²²

Following several attempted radio communications with Chinese ground air-traffic controllers,¹²³ the EP-3 landed without authorization at Lingui Airport in Hainan, and was surrounded by Chinese troops. The EP-3 crew then sent a message to the U.S. that it had landed safely, and cut power.¹²⁴ About an hour later, Washington informed the U.S. embassy in Beijing that the plane was on Hainan Island.¹²⁵

Ambassador Prueher began attempting to contact officials of both the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) – but no one answered the phone.¹²⁶ Eleven hours later, and nearly twelve hours after the incident, the Ambassador was contacted by Chinese government officials for the first time, when Assistant Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhong called him to the offices of the MFA to blame the collision on the EP-3 and protest the American violation of Chinese airspace. According to Ambassador Prueher, the Chinese leadership had “set its position based on what they wanted to do,” and not on the facts.¹²⁷

It is, of course, difficult for outside observers to trace the flow of information and discussions within the relatively opaque Chinese government. The most common account is that the Chinese leadership was unable to respond

quickly to the incident because the PRC's leaders were at a tree-planting ceremony outside the capital, Beijing, which they could not leave or postpone because of the presence of the Chinese national media.¹²⁸ However, one Chinese observer pointed out that this explanation was likely inaccurate, as the leadership has access to telecommunications links to its staff and other leaders at all times.¹²⁹

The delay, then, was more likely due to the organizational constraints of the Chinese political system – a policy-making process one Chinese observer described as in “chaos” on April 1.¹³⁰ For one, the PLA's vertical structure makes reporting incidents time-consuming, as information moves up the chain step-by-step, instead of directly to the top. According to RAND analyst James Mulvenon

... PLA-friendly information [was] likely first gathered at Lingshui Airbase and then passed up the chain. Using open sources, it [is] currently unclear whether the commander relayed the information to Guangzhou Military Region [MR] Air Force headquarters, which would have likely passed it sequentially to the Guangzhou MR headquarters to the General Staff Department and finally to the Central Military Commission [CMC], or whether the information was “skip-echeloned” directly to the General Staff Department.¹³¹ Regardless, the vertically stove-piped nature of the PLA's organizational structure meant that the information likely passed to civilians at a very high level of the system, perhaps directly from the CMC to the Politburo Standing Committee.¹³²

Without a parallel mechanism for independent civilian verification of information provided by the PLA, this “stovepipe” structure¹³³ makes sanitization of information more likely – particularly by “senior military officials predisposed to tell a PLA-friendly story and place the actions of the U.S. in the worst possible light.”¹³⁴ By the time the information reached top decision-makers, “you had a fairly clear position on the part of the PLA Navy ... People had become vested in their positions” on what had happened¹³⁵ — that the EP-3 had turned into the F-8, and had done so in Chinese airspace.¹³⁶ Though it soon became clear that the incident had occurred in what China claims as its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) — and not in its airspace — at the outset, the military position became the government's position. For civilian leaders, there was “no strong incentive to question the military view.”¹³⁷

Bureaucratically, no civilian leader could accuse the PLA of deliberately violating party discipline and lying to the Center without strong evidence, yet that evidence could only be obtained by questioning the story. Like most of leaders vying for position before the 16th Party Congress in 2002, Jiang Zemin likely had a personal reason to back the military's line, since the continued support of the senior military leadership would be an important constituency for his bid to retain the chairmanship of the Central Military Commission. Politically, it would have been very difficult for the [Chinese Communist Party (CPC)] to pursue the possibility that Wang Wei caused the accident, because the “China-as-victim-of-hegemonist-aggression” storyline meshed easily with the growing and vocal nationalism of the population, and possessed many of the same dynamics as the *Yin He* incident¹³⁸ and the Belgrade bombing. Here again, Beijing was “riding the tiger,” reaping the negative implications of its implicit decision to encourage nationalism as a normative replacement for the decline of communist ideology ... Once Wang Wei was effectively designated as a martyr, any possibility of backing away from the official story of the collision was eliminated.¹³⁹

This account, which points to PLA misrepresentation of the facts of the incident, is disputed by Chinese observers. According to one observer, there was no effort “deliberately to cover the facts. That's not true.”¹⁴⁰ One observer close to the Chinese leadership's discussions believed, to the contrary, that the Chinese government was being very responsive – “from our side, we wanted to take some time to go through procedure.” Said this observer: “the Chinese government was very responsive. The leadership did really want to not damage relations [between the U.S. and China]. Both governments wanted to see [the] incident over as soon as possible.”¹⁴¹

Whatever the governments' desires, initial statements by both the U.S. and the PRC were not conciliatory.

First with substantive comments¹⁴² was Admiral Dennis Blair, the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command. During a press conference at Hawaii's Camp Smith 18 hours after the incident occurred, he said the following:

Now, let me tell you what should have happened in a situation like this. If a Chinese aircraft had been 70 miles off of Kaneohe [Air Station] here in Hawaii, had had some sort of collision or damage, and declared an in-flight emergency and said that it was coming into Kaneohe, we would have assisted ...

We would have respected the immunity of the aircraft ...

We are waiting, right now, for the Chinese government to give us the kind of cooperation that's expected of countries in situations like this, so that we can repair the plane, our people can return, and we can go about our business ...

Big airplanes like this fly straight and level on their path. Little airplanes zip around them. I don't think there's much question as to who has the impact under international airspace rules. The faster, more maneuverable, aircraft has the obligation to stay out of the way of the slower aircraft. Our aircraft fly routinely straight and level. It's pretty obvious as to who bumped into whom ...

If I had to guess right now, I would say it's an accident. It's not a normal practice to play bumper cars in the air. It's too dangerous for everybody, and clearly, it was dangerous in this Chinese case, as well ...¹⁴³

Such accusatory rhetoric would continue on both sides. On April 3 – at the same time U.S. officials were allowed to visit the EP-3 crew for the first time — President Jiang said the U.S. should “bear full responsibilities” for the collision. “It is the U.S. plane that violated flight rules by displaying dangerous moves, bumped into and destroyed our plane, and as a result the pilot is missing,” said President Jiang. “The U.S. plane bumped into our plane, invaded the Chinese territorial airspace and landed at our airport in violation of international laws and practices.”¹⁴⁴

At this time, President Jiang laid out four conditions for the resolution of the crisis — an American apology, an explanation of the incident, compensation, and the halt to all future reconnaissance flights.¹⁴⁵ Initially, the President's four conditions were uniformly adopted by the Chinese media, with both *Liberation Army Daily* and *People's Daily* strongly supporting President Jiang's position.¹⁴⁶

Despite this strong language by President Jiang, there seems to have been an effort to keep potential domestic outrage limited, in contrast to the relatively free reign given nationalist rhetoric after the Belgrade embassy bombing. News programs generally reported on the Hainan Island incident late in their broadcasts. The April 2 editorial of the *Liberation Army Daily* contained a strongly anti-American editorial – but it ran only on page four.¹⁴⁷

Hours later, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell responded, saying the U.S. had “nothing to apologize for,”¹⁴⁸ while President George W. Bush reinforced his Secretary of State's position by saying it was “time for the Chinese government to return our plane. The accident has the potential of undermining our hopes for a fruitful and productive relationship between our two countries.”¹⁴⁹ According to one of the President's advisers, these statements “were designed to get the attention of China's leaders, and they worked.”¹⁵⁰

On April 2, three U.S. destroyers, the *USS Higgins*, the *USS Hewitt* and the *USS Fitzgerald*, were ordered to remain in the region. They had been 130 miles from Hainan Island at the time of the collision, traveling from a port call in Hong Kong toward the United States' west coast.¹⁵¹ The next day, they were ordered to leave the area.¹⁵²

April 4 saw continued vehement Chinese condemnation of U.S. actions. PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan reportedly said that the U.S. “has displayed an arrogant air, used lame arguments, confounded right and wrong and made groundless accusations against China.”¹⁵³

Meanwhile, in Washington, the Administration began to tone down its rhetoric. President Bush told his advisers that it was time to start “looking for a way out of this.”¹⁵⁴ In response, Secretary Powell sent a letter to Deputy Prime Minister Qian Qichen expressing regret for the still-missing pilot and his family. The MFA called the letter a “step in the right direction,” but still insisted on a full apology, and continued to blame the U.S. for the incident.¹⁵⁵

In Beijing, according to some analysts, some differences began to appear between the Chinese bureaucracies. The PLA media, including notably *Liberation Army Daily*, continued to use strong, accusatory language. Other media, including the *People's Daily*, attempted more conciliatory language. By April 5, the *People's Daily* was editorializing that "neither Beijing nor Washington wants to see a full-blown crisis over this collision,"¹⁵⁶ while the PLA media was writing that "the Chinese people cannot be bullied and Chinese soldiers cannot be intimidated!"¹⁵⁷ Still, the PRC leadership refused to allow any public protest.¹⁵⁸

On April 5, President Jiang left for a 12-day visit to Latin America.¹⁵⁹ Outside observers argue over what his departure meant. Some offer that a consensus must have been reached among senior Chinese policy-makers – that the only question remaining was how to extract necessarily apologetic language from the U.S.¹⁶⁰ – while others posit that the President Jiang had left the problem, as a sort of test, to his heir apparent, PRC Vice President Hu Jintao.¹⁶¹

Chinese observers find the former theory more compelling than the latter, but note that President Jiang travels with telecommunications equipment enabling him to participate in any discussions and make any decisions that may be necessary during his absence from Beijing.¹⁶² *CNN* analyst Willy Wo-Lap Lam concurs: "[i]n theory, Jiang ... has asked heir-apparent Vice President Hu Jintao to take charge of negotiations with the Bush administration. [In reality,] Jiang ... has been running the show by remote control together with Vice Premier Qian Qichen."¹⁶³

Despite President Jiang's departure, negotiations continued in Beijing, while the Administration in Washington debated what language to use in each successive attempt at a statement of regret. By Sunday, April 8, they had decided to try "very sorry" rather than "sorry" to describe U.S. regrets over the loss of the Chinese F-8 pilot.¹⁶⁴

On the American Sunday morning political talk shows, high-level U.S. officials again stated the U.S. position. On CBS, Secretary of State Powell said that the U.S. did "acknowledge that we violated their airspace, but look at the emergency circumstances that that pilot was facing. And we regret that. We've expressed sorrow for it, and we're sorry that that happened. But it can't be seen as an apology – accepting responsibility."¹⁶⁵ Vice-President Cheney told NBC that he thought "we're clearly in a situation, and I hope the Chinese understand this as well, too, that every day that goes by without having it resolved raises the risk to the long-term relationship. There are clearly significant interests on the part of both nations of getting this resolved and not have a lasting impact, and we're working hard to try to achieve that."¹⁶⁶

Escalation was contemplated by the Administration and rejected. On April 10, the White House rejected the recommendation of CINCPAC Blair that the U.S. dispatch the *Kitty Hawk* aircraft carrier group, scheduled to leave the next day from Thailand, up the Chinese coast as a signal of resolve.¹⁶⁷ At the same time, though, the Administration was involved in behind-the-scenes diplomacy, asking officials in the United Kingdom, France, Brazil and Canada to press the Chinese leadership to release the EP-3 crew.¹⁶⁸

Chinese officials spent much of April 10 trying to decide how to respond to the last U.S. overtures. On April 11, Ambassador Prueher was asked for the "final copy" of the U.S. letter of regret. Addressed to Minister of Foreign Affairs Tang and signed by Ambassador Prueher, it read:

Both President Bush and Secretary of State Powell have expressed their sincere regret over your missing pilot and aircraft. Please convey to the Chinese people and to the family of pilot Wang Wei that we are very sorry for their loss ... Although the full picture of what transpired is still unclear, according to our information, our severely crippled aircraft made an emergency landing after following international emergency procedures. We are very sorry the entering of China's airspace and the landing did not have verbal clearance, but very pleased the crew landed safely. We appreciate China's efforts to see to the well-being of our crew.¹⁶⁹

This message was delivered in English only, to allow the Chinese their own translation.¹⁷⁰ At 7:30 a.m., local time, on April 12, the EP-3 crew left Hainan Island on a commercial jet.¹⁷¹

Focus then shifted to removing the plane and repairing U.S.-Chinese relations. A meeting between Ambassador Prueher and the MFA was set for April 18. The meeting lasted 90 minutes, with both sides stating their

understanding of how the collision occurred, and the U.S. proposing a plan for the return of the plane and how to preclude or minimize opportunities for future collisions – proposals that elicited no immediate response.¹⁷²

In the period following the release of the EP-3 crew, officials in both countries continued to argue over their understanding of the facts and meaning of the crisis. “The reality is that the People’s Republic of China for 12 days has been characterizing the collision in a way that is different from what our crew has reported to me,” said U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld after the crew’s release. “And those are facts. There’s no spin. There’s no adjectives involved. It’s simply a factual presentation of what took place.”¹⁷³

On April 14, MFA spokesman Zhang Qiyue responded, saying that “the U.S. side, disregarding the facts, continued to confuse right and wrong and even falsely accuse the Chinese side in irresponsible comments made successively by high-ranking members of the U.S. administration in an attempt to shirk its responsibility ... The U.S. side should realize that the release of the 24 crew members of the U.S. reconnaissance plane by China out of humanitarian considerations does not mean the end of the case.”¹⁷⁴

On May 8, reports surfaced that the U.S. had resumed reconnaissance flights along the Chinese coast. A MFA spokesperson responded by offering that “[t]he American side must draw a lesson and correct such an erroneous act. The Chinese side will continue to lodge solemn representations on the issue with the American side.”¹⁷⁵

The EP-3 was disassembled beginning June 13 – because the Chinese government insisted that it was “impossible for the U.S. EP-3 plane to fly back to the U.S. from Hainan Island”¹⁷⁶ – and transported back to the U.S. on July 3. Resolution has not yet come on compensation for the use of PRC facilities.

The U.S. has resumed surveillance flights along the Chinese coast – and close intercepts continue. According to the *Washington Times*, on January 7, 2002, a Chinese F-8 flew within 500 feet of a U.S. P-3 patrol aircraft.¹⁷⁷

CHAPTER TWO

CRISIS MANAGEMENT -- THEORY AND BACKGROUND

When crises happen, what is the ideal response? What does international relations theory have to say about the necessary elements of effective crisis management?

The development of crisis-management theory helps us identify several areas where preparation may prevent inadvertent war between the U.S. and China. Though most were formulated for the purpose of Cold War nuclear crisis management, much of the theory remains relevant today.

The key tension in crisis management is how to accomplish one's national goals or minimize damage to national interests without escalating a crisis. This necessitates some degree of flexibility – an effective crisis manager must be able to apply a wide range of instruments of national power at appropriate times and in an appropriate manner.

At the same time, long-term stability between potential strategic adversaries necessitates the creation of mechanisms for effective crisis management. However, the institutionalization of rules of crisis conduct may decrease the freedom of action of such a crisis manager.

Therefore, ideal crisis management necessitates a difficult balance between maintaining the flexibility of the instruments of a country's national power (as well as flexibility in the strategic application of these instruments) and agreeing to certain necessarily constraining bilateral or multilateral mechanisms of crisis management.

A. How does crisis become war?

Analysts Joseph Nye, Jr., Hilliard Roderick and Alexander George have identified a number of potential paths from crisis to inadvertent war. Each path is either identifiable in one of the three crises described above, or could reasonably be imagined to present problems in the future given the current relationship between the United States and China and the structural and public communications dilemmas that continue to beset the U.S. and PRC governments.

- ***Faulty communication.*** According to one study, in only four of ten crises was the message sent to one's adversary similar to the message received. Given the global reach of media outlets, the text of messages between capitals is relatively difficult to be misreported. However, divergent interpretations or understandings of perfectly communicated messages are as likely as ever to vary. Significant tensions in both the Belgrade embassy bombing case and the first day of the EP-3 crisis derived from differences on what ought to constitute an appropriate response. Moreover, the democratization of communication – and the “two-level” games this trend creates – means that most communications occurs in full public view.
- ***Psychological stress*** leading to bad decisions. Though none of the crises developed enough intensity to be likely to cause much psychological stress among leaders, an intense crisis over Taiwan could envisionably involve nuclear weapons and increase leaders' stress, resulting in an increased likelihood of miscalculation.
- Organizations continuing to operate on ***inappropriate standard operating procedures***. In April 2001, local Chinese military forces on Hainan Island were unable to respond to the U.S. plane's entry into Chinese airspace. This inflexibility increased tension by ultimately pushing to PRC government toward a factually questionable position that made resolution of the EP-3 crisis more difficult than it might have been.

- *Accident.*¹⁷⁸ Both the EP-3 crisis and Belgrade embassy bombing were sparked by an accident. Another accident – like the accidental death of an American citizen during anti-American protests in Beijing in the wake of the bombing – could have very possibly brought war.
- *“Entrapment”* by allies or treaty.¹⁷⁹ The three-way relationship between Taiwan, the U.S. and the PRC offers significant opportunity for misunderstanding and policy manipulation that could lead the three countries to war. The balance the U.S. must strike between deterring PRC action without encouraging Taiwanese independence is already difficult. The balance for the PRC is equally trying -- if it doesn’t wish for violent conflict, the PRC must also use the threat of force to deter Taiwanese independence without threatening the Taiwanese enough to push the U.S. to increase its military support for the island. It is not difficult to imagine that these balancing acts could easily go awry.
- The tension between using coercive threats to meet objectives, and the need to slow down events in a crisis and the “temptation to exploit advantage in crisis that might force [the opponent to choose] between backing down or initiating the use of force”¹⁸⁰ U.S. and PRC policy-makers have reportedly felt both this tension and this temptation in each of the crises. To date, these tensions and temptations have been well managed.

B. Operationalizing crisis control

George outlines seven operational requirements for crisis management:

- Maintain top-level civilian control over military options
- Slow tempo of military movements to facilitate diplomatic exchanges
- Coordinate military movement with diplomatic strategy
- Ensure that military signals of resolve have consistently limited diplomatic objectives
- Avoid giving the impression of resort to large-scale war, as this might prompt a preemptive response
- Choose non-military signals to end crisis
- Offer proposals consistent with the opponent’s fundamental interests.¹⁸¹

The Chinese and American governments have generally followed this road map fairly well in the resolution of crises since the end of the Cold War. However, structural and crisis communications problems threaten to make each of these operational requirements more difficult. Chapter Five offers ideas for making such crisis control easier on both sides of the Pacific – and, therefore, for making inadvertent war less likely.

It is important to note a paradox here, though. Theorists believe that there is such a thing as too much crisis management – if leaders are overconfident in their ability to manage crises, there is less incentive to avoid antagonizing one’s rivals, in effect increasing the likelihood of crisis.

C. A short outline of U.S.-USSR Crisis Management Mechanisms

The U.S.-USSR relationship offers perhaps the closest model for U.S.-PRC efforts at crisis management. Many of the same challenges – a closed Soviet system, and significant mistrust and potential for misperception — present during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union now affect Sino-American relations.

1. Unilateral efforts. With the focus on nuclear weapons and the possibility of the unintended use of nuclear weapons, both the U.S. and USSR worked to improve their own command and control systems, and increase the safety and survivability of their nuclear arsenals.

2. *Negotiations.* The U.S. and USSR also negotiated several crisis prevention and management measures. Each made incremental progress in diminishing the possibility of crisis inadvertently becoming war by devising and institutionalizing rules and norms for “close” contact. None of these agreements precluded violent conflict – however, each made conflict a little less likely.

Of course, it must be noted that these Soviet-era agreements were of a different nature and era than agreements that would help improve Sino-American relations. Focused on and responding to the possibility of mutual nuclear destruction, these agreements attempted to preclude a higher order threat than Sino-American conflict which, if it comes, is likely to be conventional. As such, these agreements offer interesting ideas for starting points, but are unreliable guides for American and Chinese policy-makers seeking to make the Sino-American security relationship fundamentally safer.

- Berlin Air Corridor Agreement (1946) on flight rules and safe access to the city
- U.S. Soviet Hotline Agreements (1963, 1971 and 1984)
- Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War (1971), committing to improve nuclear safeguards and notify of accidents and missiles launched beyond national territory
- Incidents at Sea agreement (1972), which provided rules for close USSR-U.S. military contacts.
- Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War (1973), agreeing to consult if a risk of nuclear war appears.¹⁸²
- Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, beginning with Helsinki Final Act¹⁸³
- Conventional Forces in Europe negotiations, limiting the number of USSR-allied Warsaw Pact and U.S.-allied NATO troops and equipment in certain geographic areas.

CHAPTER THREE

INTERPRETING THREE CRISES IN SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

I. The Taiwan Crisis, 1995-1996

The 1995-1996 crisis across the Taiwan Strait was both an incident that went further than it might have – to the point of U.S. military intervention through the dispatch of two aircraft carrier groups to the waters off Taiwan – but was also stopped short of the potential catastrophe it could have easily become.

Factors encouraging swift and peaceful resolution of the 1995-1996 Taiwan crisis

1. *It was not the intention of China, the U.S. or Taiwan to escalate the crisis.* For the PRC and U.S., the Taiwan Straits crisis was an exercise in coercive diplomacy, but was not meant to escalate to war. Both the U.S. and PRC used the crisis as an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to their respective positions on Taiwan.

Most analysts agree that both the United States and China got some of what they wanted from the crisis. As Alastair Iain Johnston writes, “coercive diplomacy led to an increase in voter support for Beijing’s nemesis, Lee Teng-hui, and it increased worries among surrounding states about how China might handle bilateral disputes with them; but it also showed just how seriously the Chinese regime takes threats to the related interests of territorial integrity and domestic legitimacy.”¹⁸⁴

This coercive warning not only seemed to tone down the pro-independence rhetoric of Taiwanese President Lee, but it also put a virtual end to the President’s “vacation diplomacy.” Since, he has made a handful of visits to other countries, but not many, and none to the United States.¹⁸⁵

Meanwhile, the U.S. was able to signal its commitment to bar any Chinese military attack on Taiwan, without going too far. Notably, the two aircraft carrier battle groups sent to Taiwan never entered the Taiwan Straits – nevertheless, strong U.S. action seems to have ended the crisis. By spring 1996, increasingly menacing Chinese military action had proceeded for nearly a year – but was effectively halted in the space of a few weeks in March 1996, with strong public statements by top U.S. Administration officials and the dispatch of two U.S. aircraft carrier groups to near Taiwan, as outlined in Chapter One.

2. *Luck.* The situation could have easily spiraled out of control if the PRC missiles had hit a ship in international waters or mistakenly landed on Taiwan.

Factors discouraging swift and peaceful resolution of the 1995-1996 Taiwan crisis

1. *The importance of Taiwan to the PRC is difficult to overstate.* Chinese observers are quick to point out the unparalleled importance of Taiwan’s eventual reunification with the Mainland to all of their foreign interlocutors. Moreover, the Chinese are convinced that, should push come to shove, the U.S. will back down – as indicated when then-Deputy Chief of Staff Xiong Guangkai threatened the United States with nuclear attack over the Taiwan issue by stating his belief that the U.S. “cares more about Los Angeles than Taiwan.”¹⁸⁶

2. *The lack of familiarity of U.S. and PRC leadership.* Presidents Jiang and Clinton were not familiar with each other and, as a result, uncertain as to what to expect from one another in each successive military and diplomatic move.

3. *The lack of U.S. China policy development and coordination.* For the first years of the Clinton Administration, many analysts feel that there was little in the way of a coordinated and considered China policy – and where there was policy, it emphasized economic and human-rights issues to the detriment of security concerns. Some analysts believe that with presidential focus on U.S.-China security relations in 1993 and 1994, the PRC leadership would not have challenged the U.S. with missile tests in 1995 and 1996.

4. *The lack of clarity by the PRC leadership on the dynamics of U.S. politics.* The PRC found it difficult to understand why the U.S. Congress was able to pressure the President into allowing the Taiwanese President into the United States. Recalls Lampton: “Emblematic of this was a conversation I had with a very senior Chinese official in early 1995. I told him that he had to expect that Congress would put irresistible pressure on President Clinton to grant a visa ... His paraphrased response was, ‘This will not happen; I have been assured by the Department of State and your secretary of state.’”¹⁸⁷

5. *Trilateral communications problems.* It is difficult for the U.S. to signal its resolve to the PRC to defend Taiwan without encouraging Taiwanese desires for independence, and it is difficult for the Chinese to signal to the Taiwanese how important it is to the PRC that they not declare independence without increasing U.S. fears of Chinese militarism.

II. The Belgrade Embassy Bombing

The handling of the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade demonstrated the lack of American attention to the international implications of their public statements. Combined with a PRC leadership eager to “let off steam,” what the U.S. initially thought was a tragic, but excusable, mistake became an international incident.

Factors encouraging swift and peaceful resolution of the embassy bombing crisis

1. Chinese public reaction pushed the U.S. and PRC governments to seek expedient resolution of the crisis. Attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities in China quickly demonstrated to the American leadership how important the embassy bombing had become to the Chinese people – something that may not have been initially clear to the Clinton Administration.

However, according to Chinese observers, the expression of nationalism also surprised the Chinese leadership. As a result, the protests were regulated and then ended by the authorities before they could get out of hand.¹⁸⁸

2. However belated, the U.S. was willing to explain what had happened and pay compensation. Once the United States attempted to settle this matter, it was forthcoming in describing why it believed the incident happened, and willing to pay compensation to the Chinese government. In publicly going to the PRC to explain, apologize, and pay compensation, the Clinton Administration gave the PRC the “face-saving” it needed.

Factors discouraging swift and peaceful resolution of the embassy bombing crisis

1. Initial statements by the President were not adequately contrite. As outlined in Chapter One, President Clinton first commented on the incident the day after the bombing, in casual clothing, on an airport tarmac. According to Lampton, “it didn’t seem like the President was taking this too seriously – the picture didn’t convey that he took this to be a grave thing. Worse was that he went on to say that the real bad guy was Milosevic,” in effect calling for Chinese support of the U.S. and NATO, rather than simply clearly apologizing and expressing regret.¹⁸⁹ This response reportedly hardened the PRC position.

2. Crisis management communications mechanisms did not function. President Clinton attempted to follow his initial comments with a phone call to President Jiang on the U.S.-PRC hotline. President Jiang did not take the call.

3. The American explanation did not seem credible to the PRC leadership. Given widely publicized American success in precision bombing, and because the U.S. bombs hit the areas of the embassy dedicated to Chinese intelligence-gathering, it did not seem credible to the Chinese leadership and people that the bombing was an accident.

4. The Chinese leadership was eager to allow the Chinese people to “let off steam.” The embassy bombing occurred less than a month before the tenth anniversary of the violent end to the Tiananmen Square protests. To attempt to prevent anti-government demonstrations on the anniversary, the PRC leadership reportedly attempted to redirect public passions by allowing demonstrations – which sometimes became violent – in front of U.S. diplomatic facilities.¹⁹⁰

5. Chinese public opinion was fueled by a PRC media campaign that sparked emotional anti-American sentiment, and systematically underreported U.S. efforts to mitigate the crisis. When Undersecretary Pickering arrived in Beijing in June with an apology and explanation, his presence in the Chinese capital was not reported in the press. As described in Chapter One, inflammatory editorials and omissions of key relevant facts by the PRC media strengthened anti-American sentiment.

III. The EP-3 Incident

It is generally believed that the EP-3 incident was better managed by the U.S. than the Belgrade embassy bombing. At the same time, the crisis informs the U.S. of continued problems in its communications with the PRC, as well as the difficulties the PRC's bureaucratic structure and political development present for effective crisis management.

Factors facilitating swift and peaceful resolution of the EP-3 incident

1. The U.S. government's public communications. After initially harsh rhetoric, the U.S. was more measured in its public statements. This later moderate language contained the crisis — the incident could very well have escalated into a “hostage crisis,” which the Bush Administration avoided by insisting on calling the EP-3 crew “detainees.”¹⁹¹

The U.S. government also effectively defused potential crisis communications problems by limiting the number of voices articulating U.S. policy — “listen to the President and listen to Secretary Powell, we told the Chinese,” recounted Ambassador Prueher. “And their remarks were all moderate and carefully thought through.”¹⁹²

However, such effective communications were only evident after unadvisable comments had been made at the outset — and the Bush Administration had decided to change its tact (see point #5, next page).

2. The limited circle of U.S. “players.” Ambassador Prueher believes that the Bush Administration's relatively small group of players, and their concentrated decision-making circle, greatly increased the chances for a quick and peaceful resolution to the crisis. With only the Ambassador, Secretary of State Powell, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, National Security Adviser Rice and President Bush “playing,” the U.S. could respond in only a little more than an hour to Chinese proposals. “We could put the ball right back in their court,” said Ambassador Prueher.¹⁹³

3. A time of greater complementary interests. With a vote pending on permanent normalized trade relations, U.S. presidential approval necessary for WTO accession, the International Olympic Commission preparing to select a site for the 2008 Olympics, an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit approaching, and economic modernization increasingly dependant on a workable relationship with the U.S., Ambassador Prueher believes that the PRC leadership was more disposed than ever to settle this crisis.¹⁹⁴

Factors discouraging swift and peaceful resolution of the EP-3 incident

1. Inaccurate reports from the PLA. Quite simply, the PRC leadership was working off false information provided to them by the PLA — most centrally to the dispute, that the EP-3 had been responsible for the collision. The results of this dissemination of false information are amplified by China's lack of a National Security Council-like structure or MFA operations center. The information the Chinese leadership relies on in times of security crises is likely to be provided by the military.¹⁹⁵

2. A risk-averse PRC leadership insists on a unified front. The Chinese leadership spent the first day of the crisis deciding what its position should be — and no one in the PRC bureaucracy would comment on the crisis or contact the U.S. government until the leadership had decided on its position. That meant that there was no one for the U.S. to talk to until the PRC leadership had decided what to do — and, therefore, no official U.S.-Chinese communications that could influence the leadership's position.

Fearful of giving an answer that will later be repudiated by the leadership, few PRC bureaucrats will be willing to speak without being authorized to do so. This dynamic demonstrates a key fact of life for Chinese bureaucrats — it's more important to be articulating a consistent position than for that position to be supported by the facts. Given its weakness relative to other PRC government agencies on issues relating to military affairs, the MFA is particularly unlikely to interact with the U.S. without prior approval.

3. The MFA is less powerful than the PLA. Ambassador Prueher found the MFA less antagonistic to the United States, but without the “pull” to end the crisis. The MFA, he said, was willing to negotiate, but had “little room to maneuver.”¹⁹⁶

It is important to note, however, that the relative power of these institutions depends on the issue – the EP-3 incident directly involved the military and not the Chinese diplomatic service; in the case of the Belgrade embassy bombing, however, the MFA provided most of the relevant crisis-time information to the leadership, as the bombing affected issues — diplomatic relations and embassy security — under their purview.¹⁹⁷

4. The U.S. didn't know who to talk to. With no designated contact in the Chinese government and the Chinese not answering their phones, the U.S. government wasn't sure who to contact. Said Ambassador Prueher, “we got a message through to [General] Xiong Guangkai, but he still hasn't returned the call.”¹⁹⁸

5. Initial U.S. comments may have exacerbated the Chinese leadership's perception of an anti-Chinese U.S. leadership. Without diplomatic contact, the only communications between the governments while the PRC leadership was formulating its response were the public press statements of President Bush and his advisers. President Bush's first statement pushed the Chinese to accede to the U.S. request of “prompt and safe return of the crew, and the return of the aircraft without further damaging or tampering” – certainly not a statement of contrition.

Some analysts, however, argue that, on balance, President Bush's early stance may have facilitated the resolution of the crisis. The President's initial comments “probably added pressure on the Chinese government,” said American China scholar Thomas Christensen, “but it's my feeling that China was going to take a tough stand in any case ... There may have been certain benefits to the U.S. initial tough stand – it allowed the U.S. to step down a bit later.”¹⁹⁹

The United States could have done better in its public communications during the EP-3 crisis in two respects. First, before President Bush spoke, Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command Admiral Dennis Blair made rather accusatory comments of his own, offending the Chinese by refusing to take any American responsibility for the crisis. During crises, the Administration's public communications should be under the control of the White House.

Second, it was likely premature for the President to speak as early as he did on this matter. His comments necessitated a presidential-level response by the Chinese government. Such rhetorical escalation is best avoided – if harsh rhetoric is called for, cabinet-level officials ought to speak it. The President can then later use his authority and credibility to deescalate when negotiations to resolve the crisis are further along.

6. The senior U.S. leadership had not learned from the mistakes of the Belgrade embassy bombing. While this is perhaps understandable, given the change in administrations, President Bush's first statement threatened to create problems similar to those following the Belgrade embassy bombing. As after the embassy incident, the U.S.' first statements would lead the PRC to complain that the U.S. was only focused on its own interests, and not sufficiently contrite for an incident the PRC thought the U.S. caused.²⁰⁰

CHAPTER FOUR

LEARNING FROM THE CRISES: TEN LESSONS FOR MANAGING SINO-AMERICAN CRISES

Analysis of these three crises leads to ten general lessons applicable to future efforts at U.S.-PRC crisis management.

1. The limited existing channels for crisis management are not working. After the Belgrade embassy bombing, President Jiang did not take President Clinton's "hotline" call. It was nearly twelve hours after the EP-3 collision before any contact was made between the U.S. and PRC government – and the U.S. was not allowed to visit the EP-3 crew for two-and-a-half days, and the hotline was never used. The U.S. and PRC must have access to designated spokespeople who can communicate each other's positions reliably and to the highest levels.

2. Senior leaders in both the U.S. and PRC should be wary of their own bureaucracies, and recognize the possibilities of mistakes on the other side. The EP-3 incident lasted longer and created higher tensions than it had to because the PLA gave the PRC leadership false information. The Belgrade embassy bombing occurred because mid-level U.S. military and intelligence officers made a series of mistakes. Both the U.S. and PRC should be wary of the reliability of their own bureaucracies – but also apply that understanding to realize that their counterparts in the other country's senior leadership may not have the information they need or may not be responsible for all of their bureaucracy's errors.

3. The United States and the PRC should work to improve their overall, non-crisis relationship. Reaction to the EP-3 crisis was muted on both sides because of the recognition that both countries needed a cooperative relationship to achieve domestic and foreign policy goals in the near future.

4. It is important to establish personal relationships at the highest levels. Each crisis was worse than it had to be because the U.S. and PRC leadership question each other's motivations and policy goals. The first steps toward decreasing that distrust must be made at the highest levels – eventually, more conservative bureaucracies will follow suit.

5. The United States' initial statement is immensely important. Because the Chinese leadership will most likely caucus in times of crisis, the U.S. is likely to comment first in the event of a crisis. With the "first move," it is important to make a statement that addresses Chinese, as well as American, concerns.

Both the EP-3 and Belgrade embassy bombings could perhaps have been mitigated with an unqualified statement of regret for the loss of Chinese lives. Otherwise, the PRC leadership is immediately thrown into "face-saving" mode, rather than focusing on crisis management.

6. The U.S. should be concerned about how poorly American motives and actions are explained to the Chinese people. In each crisis, strong Chinese nationalist feelings were not tempered by reasonable explanations of American motives and actions. Reactions like the protests following the Belgrade embassy bombing can be expected as long as America's version of events – and, more importantly, its reasons for action – remain untold in China.

7. Both sides should endeavor to slow down the crisis and limit the number of "speakers." The EP-3 incident was resolved more quickly and with less violence than the Belgrade embassy bombing and the Taiwan Strait crisis because both the PRC and the U.S. did its best to use moderate language to decrease mass media incitement of further anti-American or anti-Chinese sentiment.

8. In crisis decision-making, the U.S. must take into account the domestic political context of PRC actions. According to Alan Whiting, “Chinese behavior will progressively move toward the aggressive end of the nationalism spectrum the more of the following conditions prevail ... : when China’s elite is warring amongst itself over substantive issues and when leadership cohesion and stability is low; when the global balance of power is seen as disadvantageous to China; when the United States is challenging Chinese interests across a wide range of issues, as was the case throughout the first half of the 1990s and in 1999; [and] when ‘leftist’ ideology or the Chinese military, or both, are domestically ascendant.”²⁰² Better U.S. understanding of such realities may improve American policymakers’ ability to anticipate Chinese responses to their decisions and U.S. actions.

9. The diffusion of power within the PRC government and the weakness of the PLA relative to the U.S. military are likely to lead to less transparency and less willingness of individual officials to communicate with the U.S. without a decision by the senior leadership. Many Chinese observers and policy-makers feel that transparency only serves to help the U.S. perceive their weakness, and, as a Chinese proverb offers, “when the internal is chaotic, the barbarians will exploit the situation.” As a result, fewer Chinese officials will be willing to communicate with U.S. government officials in times of crisis until the central leadership has decided what to do. “No one wants to stick their neck out,” says Lampton, because it only increases their personal vulnerability.²⁰¹

10. It is difficult to understate the paramount importance of Taiwan to the Chinese government and people. Taiwan is an issue apart for Chinese officials – issues that touch on the island’s status will be more difficult for the Chinese government to manage at home and across the Taiwan Strait. In fact, because of the importance of Taiwan to the Chinese people, a Sino-American conflict in the Taiwan Straits offers the greatest chance of escalation – the domestic costs of inaction may seem to China’s leaders greater than the military, economic and political costs of war with Taiwan and the United States.

The U.S. ignores the domestic pressure on the Chinese government to settle the Taiwan question at its own peril. Public opinion has pushed conflict before — in 1958, crisis broke out in the Taiwan Straits mostly because of domestic pressure on the Chinese leadership.²⁰³ “Taiwan as an issue has a whole range of characteristics that make it less manageable,” said one analyst.²⁰⁴

* * *

In Chapter Five, this paper will draw from these lessons to offer ideas for preventing and managing future crises.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS: IMPROVING SINO-AMERICAN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

“To solve problems, we must have trust; to have trust, we must have understanding; to have understanding, we must communicate effectively.”

— former U.S. Ambassador to the PRC Joseph Prueher²⁰⁵

Given the lessons drawn from the three crises in U.S.-PRC security relations since the end of the Cold War, it is possible to identify significant barriers to effective crisis management. New mechanisms to prevent crises, increase understanding between the U.S. and China, and help control crises when they occur are imperative to the continued peaceful conduct of Sino-American relations. As China’s power grows, there may or may not be increased conflict between the U.S. and the PRC – but, while the countries work toward decreasing conflict, they should also prepare mechanisms and procedures for the peaceful resolution of conflict if tensions increase.

A. Crisis Failures Create Opportunities for Increased Attention to Crisis Management

The greatest opportunity to build toward effective Sino-American crisis management derives from the current willingness to address the challenges the three crises pose. Officials and scholars on both sides of the Pacific are disappointed by their countries’ performance during the Taiwan Straits, Belgrade embassy bombing and EP-3 crises. These officials and scholars’ desire to revisit these events and reassess their meaning constitutes the greatest opportunity for better crisis management the U.S. and PRC have yet seen in their bilateral relations.

B. Barriers to Effective Crisis Management Remain – A Comparative Perspective

The Chinese and American governments are constrained by different forces in their efforts to effectively manage crises.

For the United States, these barriers include:

- ***American exceptionalism.*** The U.S. government often works from the assumption that all other nations ought to understand the foreign-policy work the U.S. feels it is doing on behalf of the international community. As a result, initial U.S. statements in crises tend to be self-justifying and self-interested, with less regard for how international audiences will receive those statements.
- ***A large number of potential “players.”*** Congress and the vast U.S. government bureaucracy vie for influence on U.S. foreign policy – including China policy. In times of crisis, the number of actors tends to decrease to a certain number of trusted presidential advisers, but the proliferation of “players” can lead to Chinese uncertainty as to who is speaking for the United States.
- ***U.S. planning that has not matched the extent of U.S. activity abroad.*** Forward deployment of the American military increases the likelihood of accidents and inadvertent conflict. However, the U.S. government has not adequately planned for these incidents – and, in the case of accidents like the EP-3 collision, is unnecessarily caught off guard. In the EP-3 case, for example, Chinese observers believe strongly that, in the words of one analyst, “the root cause or the main reason is because [the] Americans sent a spy plane to [the] Chinese coast.”²⁰⁶ As the U.S. increases its forward presence around the world after September 11th, it must also increase the scope of its contingency planning for increasing probable accidents.

- ***An American media that demands faster responses than may be conducive to effective crisis management.*** Media in the U.S. demand quick responses by the president and his advisers to emerging crises – often even before all the facts are collected. Also, media also shortens the acceptable time frame for crisis resolution.
- ***A White House that does not give adequate attention to the international ramifications of their public communications.*** In both the EP-3 and Belgrade embassy bombing cases, insufficient regard for the Chinese government’s “face” escalated tensions.
- ***A U.S. government that lacks a consistent China policy.*** Ambiguity in the United States’ three-way relationship between the U.S., China and Taiwan, as well as unresolved policy debates between proponents of engagement and proponents of a more circumscribed Sino-American relationship, serve to confuse policy-makers in all three countries and may lead to dangerous misperceptions in the future.

For the PRC, these barriers include:

- ***Weak interagency coordination and the lack of an interagency crisis-management body.*** In the PRC, there is no effective mechanism for the sharing of information between agencies, and no mechanism for interagency consultations in the event of a crisis. In a crisis, the Chinese bureaucracy effectively grinds to a halt as the leadership decides how to respond.
- ***The relative weakness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*** Though Chinese observers object to this characterization, the PLA seems to the outside observer much more powerful on most issues related to international security in the Chinese bureaucracy than the MFA. Because of a structure that allows the military to report directly to the top leadership – without independent verification of the information they offer the leadership – the PRC leadership is much more likely to be influenced in security crises by the military than by the Chinese diplomatic bureaucracy.
- ***A lack of transparency.*** Crisis management is made much more difficult because the United States is unable to “see” the Chinese government’s crisis decision-making processes, increasing instability by increasing U.S. uncertainty. This lack of transparency also limits foreign understanding of the interaction of factions within the Chinese government. As a result, foreign observers are more likely to imagine and plan for (even possibly react to) worst-case scenarios – for example, that a hard-line faction is dictating Chinese government policy, and must be dealt with severely.
- ***A lack of dialogue.*** Though Chinese studies of crisis management are increasing in number and depth, they remain politically sensitive. As such, from an outside perspective, they don’t appear adequately detailed or critical of the structural and practical barriers to effective crisis information-gathering, decision-making and implementation.

Cooperatively, some of these barriers can be overcome. In other cases, the U.S. and PRC must act on their own to improve crisis management. The following recommendations offer institutional and policy innovations to help the U.S. and China decrease misperceptions, improve peacetime relations and facilitate crisis management. They are organized into short-term recommendations for implementation in the next one to two years (2002-2004), medium-term recommendations for implementation in the next two to five years (2004-2007), and long-term recommendations for implementation in the next five to ten years (2007-2012).

RECOMMENDATIONS – SHORT TERM

For implementation in one to two years, 2002-2004

A. Short-Term Recommendations for U.S. Policy-Makers

1. U.S. crisis managers should increase their attention to the international ramifications of their public pronouncements, and increase White House control of crisis-time public statements. In both the EP-3 and Belgrade embassy bombing crises, the initial statements by the U.S. government exacerbated Chinese reactions, in the opinion of most Chinese analysts.²⁰⁷

In the embassy bombing case, President Clinton's statement was not seen as adequately contrite, and sparked large-scale protests that a less qualified apology might have prevented. In the EP-3 case, President Bush's initially harsh remarks decreased Chinese leaders' willingness to cooperate with the United States, according to Chinese observers.²⁰⁸ Moreover, the first U.S. government comments during this crisis were equally, if not more, critical of the Chinese government – and were made not by the White House, but by Commander in Chief of the Pacific Command Dennis Blair. Such statements, pointed out one Chinese observer, "can do a lot of damage."²⁰⁹

Because of the two-level, domestic-international, game played here, balancing the imperatives of effective domestic and effective international communications is particularly difficult. Such efforts are rendered even more challenging by the difficulties inherent in trying to anticipate foreign reaction to any statement or action. Moreover, there are few effective barometers of a "good" public statement – you know a "bad" statement when you see it, at which point, of course, it's too late.

Still, though, statements like President Clinton's on an Oklahoma tarmac could have been better planned. It is not difficult to imagine that such a solemn apology ought to be given at a more appropriate venue.

Equally problematic are statements that are not, or perhaps loosely, controlled from the center. During crises, every U.S. government statement signals the government's goals and intentions – and, therefore, every statement ought to be carefully crafted to remain consistent with the President's message. Admiral Blair's comments did not meet that criterion.

The U.S. government ought to also give more attention to the presenter of comments. As described in Chapter Four, in the EP-3 crisis, for example, President George W. Bush spoke prematurely and strongly. Perhaps a cabinet-level speaker at early stages of the crisis would have better facilitated resolution of the crisis.

The "face"-conscious Chinese government pays particular attention to the public statements of U.S. government officials. It is difficult – but important – to very carefully anticipate Chinese reaction to the U.S. government's public communications in crisis time.

2. The United States Government should conduct a China Policy Review. The Clinton Administration was often criticized for lack of strategic vision – many argued China policy, at least during the President's first term, was a "laundry list"²¹⁰ of many different objectives, some contradictory, but never articulated in terms of priorities or relative importance. The result was confusion both within the Administration and on the part of the Chinese as to what President Clinton hoped to accomplish. Similarly, the Bush Administration's early China policy has been described as divided between hardliners fearing Chinese motives and those more inclined to engage the PRC. This debate was partly resolved by the Administration's efforts to decrease tensions in the negotiations over the EP-3 crew and plane, against some hawks' wishes – but a consensus on and full articulation of U.S. foreign policy priorities on China has still not emerged.

Observers in the U.S. and China observe an uneven quality to Sino-American relations. After a successful February 2002 trip by President Bush to Beijing, tensions increased in March 2002 after Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly met with Tang Yiau-ming, the man the PRC government calls "Taiwan's so-called 'defense minister'" at a Florida conference.²¹¹ A policy review should be undertaken to create a consistent road map for American China policy, rather than on-again, off-again ambiguity.

Some observers argue that a China policy review will only strengthen the wrong policy – proponents of engagement fear that so-called “hawks” and those who call for closer relations with Taiwan may strengthen their position, while proponents of more circumscribed Sino-American relations remain apprehensive that such a policy review may ultimately strengthen the hand of those who support engagement. As a result, there are few American officials calling for a China Policy Review – and, therefore, it is unlikely to happen.²¹²

Ambiguity, though, only increases miscalculation and misperceptions of the United States’ malevolent intent. This is particularly dangerous during China’s transition from a “third generation” to a “fourth generation” of CPC leadership. Said one Chinese analyst: “The U.S. should be very cautious not to provoke a failure of the transition ... If this year, [there is an incident] like [the] 1996 cross-strait crisis or EP-3 or embassy bombing, [it] would be very influential on [the] transition’s success, and will make new leaders unhappier.”²¹³

The academic community and former defense and diplomatic officials should use their influence to urge President Bush and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice to conduct such a review – with the bureaucracy against the idea, a China Policy Review will only occur under the President’s orders.

3. The United States government should stabilize contacts with Taiwan. With or without a policy review, the U.S. government should be much more specific about what level of interaction it intends to pursue with Taiwan, as well as what the content of those interactions will be. The U.S. must also make a case for why continuing (and increasingly official) U.S. contacts with Taiwan are in keeping with the Three Communiqués that govern U.S.-China relations.²¹⁴

As Kurt Campbell and Derek Mitchell note

This policy of ambiguity has become difficult to explain and perhaps even more difficult to implement in recent years. It has hindered routine consultations with U.S. allies because even senior U.S. officials are not sure what Washington would do in the case of a true crisis. It has also severely constrained communication and planning with Taiwan’s political and military authorities – essential elements of effective crisis management. In 1995-96, for example, Pentagon planners and intelligence specialists did not know how Taiwan would respond to the PRC’s provocative missile tests across the strait ... Many observers fear that the U.S. policy of strategic ambiguity has been profoundly misinterpreted by both sides: Taiwan believes that in the end, the United States would support its independence, whereas the PRC believes that the United States would stand aside if the bullets ever started to fly. Misapprehensions of this sort can make ambiguity an ultimately dangerous strategy.²¹⁵

Bureaucratic resistance to such a clarification can also be expected – strategic ambiguity has allowed practitioners relatively wide freedom of action. However, the alternative to clarification is worse – because the status of Taiwan remains the most important issue to the PRC in Sino-American relations, a China uncertain about the United States’ intentions on Taiwan is more likely to act as if a threat exists, destabilizing East Asia.

4. The National Security Council should have a staff member on the level of Special Assistant to the President and Regional Senior Director with detailed knowledge of crisis management theory and history. Each U.S. President should have at least one adviser fully acquainted with crisis-management procedures and theory, to inform Presidents so they are better equipped to handle crises as they happen. This practitioner should also be specifically knowledgeable of the conduct of previous U.S.-PRC crisis-time negotiations.²¹⁶

Such an appointment would be of low cost, and of potentially high benefit in future crises.

5. The United States should do all it can to encourage a successful transition from the so-called “third generation” of Chinese leaders to the “fourth generation.” President Jiang’s heir apparent, Vice President Hu Jintao, is seen in some circles in China as too inexperienced in international relations to be an effective leader as soon as this year. As a result, it is expected that President Jiang may be reluctant to turn over the reigns of power if tensions with the United States increase.

Significant tensions, as noted above, could well provoke a pause in or failure of the transition. With more engagement, one Chinese observer offered that President Bush could “prevent a potential enemy from becoming a real enemy.”²¹⁷

The Chinese transition may prove beneficial to the United States. Though few Chinese observers are willing to speak about specific candidates for “fourth-generation” leadership, they offer general clues to their expectations for their country’s continued reform and foreign-policy modernization. Said one observer: “In China, we always say the new things will be better than the old ones. For the new generation, they are more knowledgeable, better educated, well-prepared ... We have entered a new era of ‘IT,’ and this new generation will react more quickly.”²¹⁸ Or, as Cheng Li writes, “the replacement of an older generation of leaders by a younger one in any society can be viewed as a ... stimulus for greater change.”²¹⁹

Particularly puzzling to Chinese observers is how little compensation the U.S. has offered the PRC for its help since September 11. “Now, Chinese officials and officers are asking – ‘what have we got in return?’,” said one Chinese observer. “We have got nothing.”²²⁰

And what do these policy-makers think appropriate “consideration” for help since September 11? According to several Chinese observers, at least American “neutrality” on Taiwan.²²¹

B. Short-Term Recommendations for PRC Policy-Makers

1. The PRC government should improve interagency coordination within the existing government structure. In times of crisis, Chinese bureaucracies responsible for implementation do not communicate with each other – rarely does the MFA know what the PLA is doing.²²²

For the success of Chinese foreign and security policy, it is important to have at least minimal policy-making and policy-implementation coordination. Therefore, the leadership should demand daily early-morning conference calls at the deputy minister level to discuss each agency’s major initiatives and actions.

Resistance to interagency coordination on security affairs is likely to come from the PLA, which currently enjoys an unmediated direct link to the top leadership. However, President Jiang has increased his control over the military over the past two years,²²³ and is therefore likely to have the power to mandate such coordination without contradiction. The success of such coordination would greatly improve his ability to ensure the effective implementation of his decisions.

The benefits of efforts at coordination are likely to be valuable, but limited – they mandate that the bureaucracies communicate, but not that they work together. As one Chinese observer points out, “institutions have been built to coordinate, but it has not made [a] big effect because [the] system structure has not changed.”²²⁴

2. The PRC government and the Chinese academic community should encourage increasingly specific crisis-management studies at Chinese institutions. Many prestigious Chinese institutions have begun studies of crisis management, including the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Central Party School, the China Foundation for International and Strategic Studies, and Peking University.²²⁵ However, many of these discussions remain politically sensitive, as they occasionally challenge the adequacy of contemporary Chinese institutions for crisis management, as well as the decisions of the most senior Chinese policy-makers.

The PRC government, from the highest levels, should encourage such dialogue, no matter how critical. Paradoxically, such discussion strengthens, rather than weakens, central government – after all, the objective of Chinese academics in such studies is to make the PRC government more capable of managing crises. Crises are, by definition, the times that most challenge stability, both at home and abroad. The Chinese government should welcome innovation that increases their ability to maintain stability in the long-term, even if such criticisms are challenging in the short-term.

C. Short-Term Recommendations for Bilateral Implementation

1. The U.S. and PRC should move toward increased high-level contact. Meetings between American and Chinese leaders are successful in reducing misperception and misunderstanding of each other's goals and motives, and understanding has a profound influence on policy. According to Lampton, "[h]aving a clear understanding of the United States was helpful to Jiang because he also was willing to assume periodic risks in order to more effectively present China's case to Americans."²²⁶ The same is likely true for President Jiang's American counterparts as they come to better understand China and its leaders.

- **The U.S. Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State should meet with their PRC counterparts at least once a year, alternating between Washington and Beijing.** Defense Consultative Talks have been frozen for more than a year, and Chinese officials are anxiously awaiting their revival.²²⁷ Chinese defense officials have been particularly upset at recent decreases in contacts between the militaries. While U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Rice attended the February 2002 Beijing summit as members of President Bush's delegation, the Department of Defense sent an Assistant Secretary. To a celebration at the Chinese Embassy in Washington to celebrate the recent 30th anniversary of the Shanghai Communiqué, the Department of Defense sent no representative.

Defense officials in the U.S. seem reticent to increase military ties at any level – according to the Department of Defense, military-to-military exchanges with the PLA will now occur “selectively and on a case-by-case basis”²²⁸ – which, to date, has effectively meant no exchanges. The reason given to date is the lack of reciprocity in U.S.-PRC military-to-military relations, arguing that the PLA gets much more value and information from these exchanges than the U.S. military.

Defense officials seem more willing to conduct Defense Consultative Talks – in fact, there were in recent months preliminary talks to conduct Defense Consultative Talks below the Secretary/Defense Minister level some time in the near future. However, talks have not moved beyond a preliminary stage, and remain dormant for now.²²⁹

- **The Presidents should meet as often as is feasible and productive,** but should at least make an effort to meet early in each successor's term.
- **A Vice-Presidential-Premier exchange structure should be created akin to the U.S.-Russia Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission,** which may help decrease tensions and facilitate crisis management when crises occur, while providing a structure for productive peacetime dialogue on the most pressing issues in Sino-American relations, including nonproliferation and the status of Taiwan.
- **The two countries should make a binding commitment to answer the hotline.** The U.S. should extract from the PRC leadership a commitment to answer the hotline, if only to listen. A bilingual desk officer should be assigned to both ends of the Washington-Beijing hotline, and be responsible for writing down whatever message the other end wishes to convey and presenting it directly to the President. A commitment to listen, without a mandate to respond, offers the flexibility necessary to effectively manage crises while strengthening the reliability of an important communications link.

2. The U.S. should reach agreement with the PRC to restart military-to-military exchanges. Because there is significant distrust between the American and Chinese military of each other's intentions in military-to-military exchanges, to minimize bureaucratic resistance, these exchanges should be recommenced on a limited scale at first. Besides the revival of Defense Consultative Talks, the militaries should endeavor to increase military educational exchanges, training PLA officers at American professional military education institutions and sending U.S. officers to be trained in China.

The U.S. should also attempt to increase contacts with the PRC's defense intelligence community. Since September 11, none of the intelligence shared with the United States by the Chinese government has been military in nature or come from the PLA. Given China's proximity to the region and the PLA's ties to the Pakistani military, such information should be valuable – and would constitute an important first step toward the increased reciprocity U.S. officials would like to see in military-to-military exchanges.

3. The U.S. and PRC should endeavor to increase the number and scope of U.S.-PRC non-military exchanges. American students, scholars, NGO staff, and Congressmen and women should be encouraged to visit the PRC as much as feasible, and the U.S. should continue to welcome PRC visitors to the United States. Exchanges from the PRC, notably, should be exempt from any freeze on student and exchange visas in response to the September 11th attacks.

D. Recommendations for Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Implementation

1. Organizations with strong ties to serving officials in the United States and China should design and prepare a Track II mechanism for crisis management. The consensus-centered nature of Chinese decision-making means that there are few, if any, officials at any level in the Chinese government willing to speak with their American counterparts until decisions are made at the center. However, crises may necessitate time-sensitive communication that consensus decision-making may not support.

As a result, communication must also be established using unofficial channels. Several U.S. and Chinese NGOs have successfully begun Track II, non-governmental, discussions on Sino-American relations in recent years. The relationships developed in these fora ought to also be helpful during crises, as pipelines for the passing of time-sensitive, crisis-related information through unofficial mechanisms that is difficult for Chinese practitioners to convey using official channels.

There are significant questions regarding the reliability and authority of information passed through Track II channels, questions which can only be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. However, it may provide American policy-makers with valuable insight into the relatively opaque Chinese system. Furthermore, as private informational conversations, they can be undertaken at no cost to policy-makers on either side of the Pacific – and, certainly, such information would add richness to both countries' analysis during times of crisis.

RECOMMENDATIONS – MEDIUM TERM

For implementation in two to five years, 2004-2007

A. Medium-Term Recommendations for U.S. Policy-Makers

1. *The U.S. government should begin in-depth China policy and contingency planning.* There are a finite number of scenarios in which a U.S.-PRC crisis could inadvertently become war. U.S. government planning for these eventualities would not only save American lives in the event of hostilities, but effectively deter the PRC from escalation, given U.S. preparedness. However, preparation may lead to overconfidence on the American side, making the U.S. more likely to act in a way that might escalate a crisis.

The U.S. might begin by examining the following scenarios:

- Accidents:
 - a.) U.S. or PRC strikes other's airplanes, sea vessels or satellite in international waters, international airspace, or space;
 - b.) U.S. or PRC strikes other's airplanes or sea vessels over the U.S., in U.S. territorial waters, over an ally's airspace, or in an ally's territorial waters;
 - c.) a.) or b.) occurs in PRC airspace or territorial waters
 - d.) Rockets or missiles intentionally or unintentionally launched, leading to unintentional a.), b.) or c.), or unintentionally land on U.S. or ally territory;
 - e.) PRC or U.S. citizens, embassies, or military personnel abroad unintentionally hit by a.), b.) c.), or d.);
 - f.) U.S. counterproliferation efforts lead to a.), b.), c.), d.) or e.); or
 - g.) Military exercises or missile tests lead to a.), b.), c.), d.) or e.)
- Accidental nuclear weapons use
- U.S. invasion of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea after North Korea attacks South Korea
- Government-sponsored manipulation of financial markets
- Preemptive strikes against National or Theater Missile Defense
- Government-sponsored cyberwarfare or cyberespionage.

2. *The U.S. Department of State should design a public diplomacy strategy for the U.S. government to better communicate directly with the Chinese people.* As became apparent during the aftermath of the Belgrade embassy bombing, the United States' message is not getting through to the Chinese people. The Department of State should come up with innovative ways for the U.S. government to reach Chinese media. For example, Hong Kong outlets, including Star Television, may be a proper venue to place explanations of American actions in crisis- and peace-time without the threat of the formal or informal censorship of Beijing news outlets.²³⁰

B. Medium-Term Recommendations for PRC Policy-Makers

1. *The PRC should create a mechanism to facilitate low-level contacts directly with the top leadership's staff in times of crisis.* In times of crisis, it takes too long for information to flow from the operational level to the top leadership.

The PRC should assemble a central crisis information office for operational-level officers to report potential crises staffed jointly by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the PLA General Staff Department and the Ministry of National Defense. Such a crisis information office would reduce the leadership's response time by hours at the beginning of crises, and improve the flow of data to decision-makers.

2. The leadership should endeavor to increase the breadth of the sources and the content of the information they consider during crises. It is inappropriate to rely on only one source of information during crises, as the PRC leadership seems to have done during the EP-3 crisis. To expand the information base, the PRC government will have to bolster the intelligence- and information-gathering capabilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and streamline their intelligence infrastructure – currently, intelligence-gathering is distributed over four or five intelligence organizations, at least three of which are directly affiliated with the military.²³¹ The system is not transparent enough to offer more specific recommendations.

3. The PRC government should increase contingency planning for accidents. PRC planners should also review the contingencies outlined in medium-term recommendation A.1.

C. Medium-Term Recommendations for Bilateral Implementation

1. The U.S. and PRC governments should agree to procedural, but not substantive, transparency. The lack of transparency in the Chinese government breeds uncertainty among American policy-makers as to what the PRC will do – which, in turn, may precipitate a crisis. In the interests of peace, during crises, the PRC and U.S. governments should explain to each other the process for – but not the content of – their discussions. If requested by the other, each party should agree to tell the other clearly within two hours:

- Which groups are meeting and when,
- Which bureaucratic actors are involved, and
- When each government expects to comment publicly or privately next.

Such an emphasis on procedure allows transparency without showing weakness, and does not force either side to betray the substantive confidence of its internal deliberations. It also does not decrease either party's freedom of action or substantive flexibility.

Such procedural transparency presents no problem for the American government – it's there nearly every day on the front page of the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. Chinese observers are also optimistic about this idea²³² – it allows the Chinese government to protect the confidentiality of its leadership's discussions, decrease the uncertainty that the time-consuming consensus-seeking process creates, and decrease the pressure on it to come to a decision so that it may announce its decision. Such an agreement would in effect buy time for both sides to tell the media and both of their bureaucracies that they are “studying the issue,” without the uncertainty of long, opaque internal debates.

2. The U.S. and PRC governments should further expand military-to-military contacts. Beyond the high-level dialogues and educational exchanges outlined in the short-term recommendations, there is room for great improvement in U.S.-PRC military-to-military contacts. Today, there is virtually no contact. The U.S. and PRC may significantly reduce misunderstandings and misperceptions of their military motives and goals by:

- **Continuing and expanding dialogues like the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA).** The MMCA “has the goal of establishing a forum to discuss issues of maritime safety and operations between the People's Republic of China and the United States” and creates a process for “conducting military exchanges to strengthen maritime safety between the two countries” by discussing issues starting from existing international agreements.²³³ A new MMCA working group has been set up to respond to questions stemming from the EP-3 crisis. The possibility of creating working groups on other possible future areas of unintentional conflict should be investigated – for

example, a procedure for action in the case of an accidental attack during a Chinese missile test, or other possible accidental conflicts in East Asia.

- **Exploring confidence-building measures**, like prior notification for military exercises, large troop movements, or nuclear accidents.
- **Begin mid-level functional exchanges** on issues of military technique where interaction would benefit both countries. Some ideas may include exchanges on military justice or environmental security.
- **Conduct familiarization briefings**, so the U.S. and PRC are more familiar and comfortable with each other's plans, motives and goals.²³⁴

The objections to these exchanges by the U.S. Department of Defense will be similar to those outlined in the short-term recommendations. However, while Chinese military officials may gain more than U.S., engagement is of significant value to the United States as well – and benefits would grow as the number and content of military-to-military exchanges grows.

U.S. officials were particularly upset with military-to-military contacts when they realized they were of little value during crises. During the EP-3 crisis, when Pentagon officials called their Chinese counterparts from past exchanges, no one answered.²³⁵ The rule that most Chinese officials will not be willing to speak before the leadership makes a decision applies to officers involved in exchanges with the U.S. as well.

Exchanges, however, continue to offer an excellent opportunity to counter the misperception problem outlined in the introduction. The further exchanges proceed, the less the potential for misperception by either party.

3. The U.S. and PRC governments should increase dialogue on crisis prevention. While U.S. officials are particularly interested in speaking about crisis management, the PRC also demands talks on crisis prevention. As it believes the root cause of increased tensions in each of the three crises outlined in Chapter One is American forward deployment, it seeks mechanisms to regulate that forward deployment. However, talks on crisis prevention would also benefit U.S. policy-makers by decreasing the likelihood of accidents, given what is nearly certain to be a long-term U.S. presence in East Asia.

One good idea would be to replicate the 1972 Soviet-American Incidents at Sea (INCSEA) agreement. According to one analysis,

... the agreement provided steps to prevent collisions, reaffirmed the use of international signaling and maneuvering procedures, and precluded simulated attacks. It also provided for advanced notice of any operations that might “represent a danger to navigation or to aircraft in flight,” specified communication channels in the case of an incident, and created annual meetings to review its implementation. The INCSEA agreement is a confidence building measure (CBM) and so does not affect the size, weaponry, or force structure of either party.²³⁶ It was also intended to help “enhance mutual knowledge, and understanding of military activities; to reduce the possibility of conflict by accident, miscalculation, or the failure of communication; and to increase stability in times of both calm and crisis.”²³⁷

Such an agreement would provide significant benefits to both countries, including increased security and decreased uncertainty when incidents do occur. However, the PRC may balk at an INCSEA-like document as it allows the U.S. easier forward deployment by decreasing the likelihood, and, therefore, the costs of potential accidents along China's coast.

D. Medium-Term Recommendations for NGO Implementation

1. Chinese NGOs should hold closed-door discussions on the future of the international system, the effects of American power and the future of Sino-American relations. Many Chinese observers comment that China has not yet fully resolved debates over fundamental issues of concern to Sino-American relations in general. Said one observer: “at quite [a] bottom level, we still lack enough consensus on these fundamental foreign-policy issues.”²³⁸

These questions include:

- What China can accomplish internationally in the current strategic environment;
- Whether a unipolar or multipolar world is more favorable to China;
- What the nature of American hegemony is and what its effects are; and
- How much attention China should pay to international relations relative to its domestic agenda.

To begin answering these questions, Chinese NGOs should facilitate closed-door discussions on each of these issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS – LONG TERM

For implementation in five to ten years, 2007-2012

A. Long-Term Recommendations for U.S. Policy-Makers

1. Reorganize the State Department's China programs under the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. China policy currently falls under a diffusion of functional bureaus at the State Department, including the bureau responsible for democracy, human rights and labor, and the bureau responsible for nonproliferation, among others. To speak with a consistent diplomatic voice, all of these functions should be concentrated under the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

B. Long-Term Recommendations for PRC Policy-Makers

1. Create a National Security Council-like body in the PRC. The PRC should have a crisis decision-making body that allows all of the relevant bureaucratic players to express their positions and views – leaving the leadership less dependent on the military for information and analysis.

The heed paid to the different PRC bureaucracies varies substantially from issue to issue. On some issues, the MFA carries considerable power – on others, like the EP-3 confrontation, it has virtually no input. As Andrew Nathan and Robert Ross note,

The Foreign Affairs Leading Group, usually chaired by the premier, is the coordinating institution (or “mouth”) for the whole foreign affairs bureaucratic “system.” Its other members include the foreign minister, the minister of foreign trade and economic cooperation, the minister of defense, the senior military officer on the Central Military Commission, and selected deputy ministers. In some ways the Foreign Affairs Leading Group resembles the National Security Council in the United States. But unlike the NSC, it is only one of many organs at the central level with interests in foreign policy. Its influence depends on the personal power of its head and the use to which he wants to put it.²³⁹

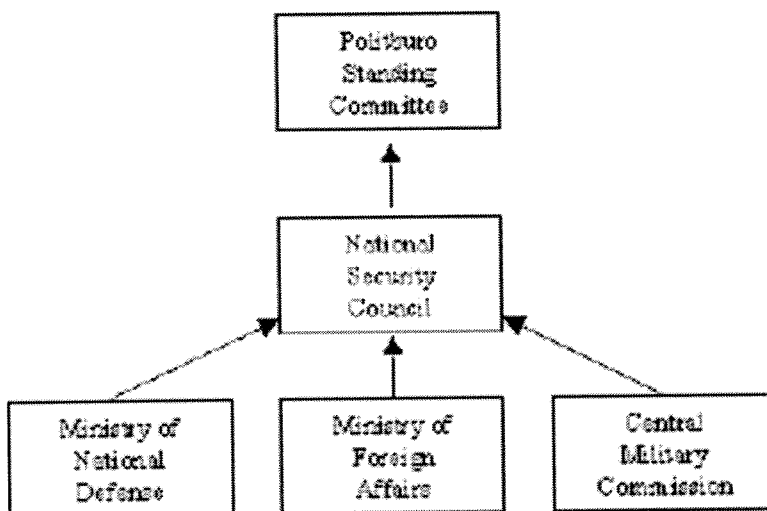
Similarly, a National Security Leading Small Group has been proposed, and is well on its way to realization.²⁴⁰ However, such a body presents the same unresolved issue as the FALSG – it is infinitely malleable, and does not provide better civilian control over the military by interposing itself between the military and its direct link with the Politburo Standing Committee. The central problem with the idea of a Chinese National Security Council remains an organizational one – “where does it go and what does it do?”²⁴¹

To be effective, a Chinese National Security Council-like body must:

- Allow all of the relevant actors to be heard in crisis-time;
- Stand between the military and the top leadership, so that the PLA is not the only important input, but one of many, in the leadership's decision-making;
- Include all of the relevant decision-makers; and
- Be mandated to meet at the outset of every crisis.

Therefore, the PRC government should create a Standing Committee for Politico-Military Affairs directly under the Politburo Standing Committee. This organization would be positioned as follows:

Figure 2. Proposed Chinese National Security Council-like Organization



The membership of this group, at a minimum, must include the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Central Military Commission, the head of the General Staff Department, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of National Defense, as well as top aides on the substantive issue to be discussed, and the remaining members of the Politburo Standing Committee.

The largest resistance to this reorganization will come from the PLA, who will not want their direct link to the top leadership cut. However, this crisis-management body is necessary to the “mature” foreign-policy organization most Chinese observers say their country seeks. The PLA will find its power greatly enhanced by this process, as it greatly strengthens China’s ability to respond quickly and effectively to international-security crises. Moreover, collective discussion and collective decision-making also means shared responsibility – the PLA will decrease its vulnerability in international-security debates.

The power of the leadership, though, would also be threatened by a National Security Council-like structure. By allowing more organizations to add their input decreases the leadership’s freedom of action. However, like the PLA, the leadership will find its vulnerability to bureaucratic malcontents limited.

At the same time, though, the Chinese leadership will find it much easier to apply a wide range of instruments of national power at appropriate times and in an appropriate manner. While, as one Chinese observer pointed out, certainly a Chinese National Security Council “won’t operate like what you have in the U.S.,”²⁴² it would provide many of the same benefits of the American National Security Council — a forum for deliberation, as well as an opportunity for policy coordination between the cabinet departments with implementation responsibilities. As such, the power of the Chinese government as a whole, and China as a country, would grow irrevocably.

C. Long-Term Recommendations for Bilateral Implementation

1. The U.S. and China should begin negotiating an Agreement on the Basic Principles of Sino-American Relations. The U.S. and PRC both have an interest in committing each other to foreign policy norms that further both countries’ interests – and negotiating such an agreement will also serve to facilitate the management of crises through increased cooperation and decreased misperception.²⁴³ Some principles to be included in such an agreement may include:

- A restatement of the U.S.-PRC communiqués of the 1970s and 1980s,
- Commitments to increasing military transparency,
- Commitments to nonproliferation, and

- Commitments to “no first act of war,” with both the PRC and U.S. defining what they consider an act of war. While the U.S. cannot commit to no first use of nuclear weapons, this may be a middle-ground solution that effectively presents boundaries to U.S.-PRC antagonism.

2. The U.S. and PRC militaries should extend their military-to-military contacts. In the long term, to fully realize the benefits of military-to-military activity, U.S.-PRC military-to-military contacts must aspire to reciprocity and joint activity.

As outlined in the short- and medium-term recommendations, the lack of reciprocity in U.S.-PRC military-to-military activity gives American policy-makers great pause when assessing the benefits of that activity. One Chinese observer counters that the PLA has been working as hard as possible at responding to U.S. requests to see a wide range of military facilities and equipment – in fact, that the PLA has opened more facilities to the U.S. than to any other foreign delegation. In this observer’s opinion, China’s reluctance has to do not with an unwillingness to be transparent, but rather that Chinese military facilities are unprepared for Western visitors.

“China is very backwards in some areas,” said the observer. “It is very awkward to show facilities sometimes ... To receive guests, you must first clean your home.”²⁴⁴ Such justifications can only go so far – eventually, in the interests of maintaining military-to-military contacts and continuing to reap their benefits, the PLA is going to have to acquiesce to “reciprocity” as a fundamental principle of U.S.-PRC military-to-military contacts.

Military-to-military contacts – and the insights they offer into the U.S. military’s capabilities and posture – are extremely valuable to the PLA. If presented the choice between reciprocal contacts or fewer contacts once the military-to-military relationship recommences in earnest and the benefits of exchanges and other activity become clearer to the PRC than today, the PLA will find it in its interest to cooperate.

The PLA and U.S. military should also engage in joint activity. It is only after such joint activity that efforts to counter misperceptions and mistrust will extend through the ranks of both militaries. Currently, both governments oppose such joint activity – the U.S. Department of Defense as part of its more general distaste for military-to-military contacts, and the PLA because it fears that such activities will make more apparent to the outside its weaknesses. However, the civilian leadership has a compelling interest in such exchanges, as they tend to decrease the likelihood of inadvertent conflict.

It may be easiest to collaborate first in non-combat exercises – including, for example, training for military humanitarian-assistance and disaster-relief efforts.²⁴⁵ Joint humanitarian aid to Afghanistan may be a good venue for such exercises.

3. Both governments should build toward the creation of crisis control centers. Should military-to-military contacts improve to both militaries’ satisfaction, in the future, the PRC and U.S. may want to create joint crisis control centers in Beijing and Washington, where joint staffs of U.S. Department of State and Defense, and Chinese MFA and PLA officials, would provide each other real-time information in time of crisis, and build ties between their organizations in peacetime. However, given the difficulty of military-to-military contacts today, both governments have far to go before this idea is feasible.

D. Long-Term Recommendations for Trilateral (U.S.-PRC-Taiwan) Implementation

1. The U.S. should encourage PRC crisis-management and confidence-building discussions with Taiwan. Though this may be difficult politically for the PRC – as they could be interpreted by either hard-liners or the Chinese public as *de facto* recognitions of Taiwan’s sovereignty or increase the *de facto* independence of Taiwanese institutions – the U.S. should encourage such discussions between the PRC and Taiwan, to minimize the chance of U.S. military involvement in an avoidable PRC-Taiwan crisis that spirals out of control.

In recent years, the U.S. has tried to encourage some Taiwanese-Chinese interaction. According to Kurt Campbell and Derek Mitchell, “a number of Cold War models have been suggested, including a hot line, exercise notification, and a joint air-traffic-control-center.”²⁴⁶

Such ideas are invaluable as they would serve to decrease the likelihood of the outbreak of hostilities, and could be implemented by non-governmental working groups in both countries – for example, the staff for the joint air-traffic control center could be provided by air-traffic controllers’ unions on Taiwan and the Mainland, increasing ties between the island and the Mainland without necessitating government-to-government contact. Also, increased attention to political dialogue could occur at fora that serve as third-party negotiating venues for the Chinese and Taiwanese, like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ Regional Forum.

The PRC, however, continues to dismiss security ties with Taiwan – after all, point out American analysts, “the Chinese goal is to erode confidence and security in Taiwan, not enhance it.”²⁴⁷ Taiwan also dismisses such ties to China “for fear that the United States might step back from its defense commitments as a result.”²⁴⁸

However, the progress of reunification talks – the ultimate goal of the Chinese government – will proceed faster given a Taiwan that feels secure from Chinese pressure. Moreover, the greatest threat to Chinese designs for the island’s future would be war – for after war, Taiwan is unlikely to again trust the PRC to negotiate in good faith. Taiwanese concerns may be addressed with continued American commitment to a peaceful resolution of Taiwan’s status.

APPENDIX A. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Short-Term Recommendations	
U.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase attention to the international ramifications of public pronouncements • Increase White House control of crisis-time public statements • Conduct a China Policy Review • Stabilize contacts with Taiwan • Retain NSC staff with detailed knowledge of crisis management theory and history • Encourage a successful transition from the “third generation” of Chinese leadership to the “fourth generation”
PRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve interagency coordination within the existing government structure • Encourage increasingly specific crisis-management studies at Chinese institutions
U.S.-PRC Bilateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase high-level contact through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Annual meetings between the U.S. Secretary of State and U.S. Secretary of Defense with their PRC counterparts -- Regular presidential meetings -- A Vice Presidential-Premier exchange structure similar to the U.S.-Russia Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission -- A binding commitment to answer the Washington-Beijing hotline • Restart military-to-military exchanges • Increase the number and scope of non-military exchanges
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and prepare a Track II mechanism for crisis management

Medium-Term Recommendations	
U.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin in-depth China policy and contingency planning • Design a public diplomacy strategy for the U.S. Government to better communicate directly with the Chinese people
PRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate low-level contact directly with top leadership's staff in times of crisis • Expand the breadth of the sources and the content of the information the leadership considers during crises • Begin in-depth U.S. policy and contingency planning
U.S.-PRC Bilateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate a procedural, but not substantive, transparency agreement • Further expand military-to-military contacts by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- continuing and expanding the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement -- exploring confidence-building measures -- beginning mid-level functional exchanges -- conducting familiarization briefings • Increase dialogue on crisis prevention
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese NGOs should hold closed-door discussions on the future of the international system, the effects of American power and the future of Sino-American relations

Long-Term Recommendations	
U.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reorganize the State Department's China programs under the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
PRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a National Security Council-like body in the PRC
U.S.-PRC Bilateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin negotiating an Agreement on the Basic Principles of Sino-American Relations • Extend military-to-military contacts along the principles of reciprocity and joint activity • Work toward the establishment of crisis control centers
U.S.-PRC-Taiwan Trilateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work toward PRC-Taiwan crisis-management and confidence-building discussions

APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF FACTORS ENCOURAGING & DISCOURAGING RESOLUTION OF THE THREE CRISES

I. The Taiwan Straits Crisis

Encouraging swift and peaceful resolution of the crisis	Discouraging swift and peaceful resolution of the crisis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was not the intention of China, the U.S. or Taiwan to escalate the crisis • Luck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of Taiwan to the PRC • The lack of familiarity of the U.S. and PRC leadership • The lack of clarity by the PRC leadership on the dynamics of U.S. politics • Trilateral communications problems

II. The Belgrade Embassy Bombing Crisis

Encouraging swift and peaceful resolution of the crisis	Discouraging swift and peaceful resolution of the crisis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese public reaction pushed the U.S. and PRC governments to seek expedient resolution of the crisis • Though belatedly, the U.S. was willing to explain what had happened and pay compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial statements by the President were not adequately contrite • Crisis management communications mechanisms did not function • The American explanation did not seem credible to the PRC leadership • The Chinese leadership was eager to all the Chinese people to “let off steam” • Chinese public opinion was fueled by a PRC media campaign that sparked emotional anti-American sentiment, and systematically underreported U.S. efforts to mitigate the crisis

III. The EP-3 Crisis

Encouraging swift and peaceful resolution of the crisis	Discouraging swift and peaceful resolution of the crisis
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The U.S. government's successful public communications• The limited circle of U.S. "players"• A time of greater complementary interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inaccurate reports from the People's Liberation Army (PLA)• A risk-averse PRC leadership insisting on a unified front• The PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs' bureaucratic weakness relative to the PLA• U.S. didn't know who to talk to• Initial U.S. comments• Lack of learning on the part of U.S. leaders from the Belgrade embassy bombing crisis

APPENDIX C. TAIWAN STRAITS CRISIS TIMELINE

Excerpted from a Federation of American Scientists Military Analysis Network Report, available at http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/taiwan_strait.htm

Chronology

- **Jan. 21, 1993** — The ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes public the White Paper on ROC Foreign Policy. It stipulates that the ROC's foreign policy is one-China, two entities, and equality at the interim. The policy paper says that the government will pursue an international space, with a long-term goal of returning to the United Nations and the eventual goal of China's unification.
- **April 8, 1993** — The first preparatory meeting for the Koo-Wang Talks is held in Beijing, and the two sides agree on the establishment of institutionalized communication channels. Some progress was made on cross-strait exchanges and dialogue.
- **April 8, 1995** — President Lee Teng-hui issues a statement at the National Unification Council, "Foster Normal Cross-strait Relations, Create a Favorable Climate for Unification." He introduces a six-point proposal for normalizing cross-strait relations.
- **May 27-28, 1995** — The first preparatory meeting for the Second Koo-Wang Talks is concluded with an agreement that the second preparatory meeting will be held in June, and the Second Koo-Wang Talks is slated for July in Beijing.
- **June 7, 1995** — President Lee departs for the United States for a private visit and returns to Taiwan on June 12. In between, Beijing publishes five articles to criticize Lee during his U.S. trip.
- **June 16, 1995** — Mainland China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) sends a letter to Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation [SEF] to postpone the second Koo-Wang Talks, saying it will contact us at an appropriate time.
- **June 17, 1995** — Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council [MAC] makes public a statement, expressing its hope that institutionalized negotiation channels will remain open, and that the second preparatory meeting of the Second Koo-Wang Talks will take place as scheduled.
- **June 22, 1995** — PRC Minister of Foreign Affairs Qian Qichen introduces a seven-point principle to handle the post-1997 relations with Hong Kong and Taiwan.
- **June 30, 1995** — ARATS telephones SEF saying that the institutionalized negotiation channels be postponed. Beijing's reason was that President Lee Teng-hui had accepted the invitation of his alma mater, Cornell University, to deliver a speech on "Taiwan's Democratization Experience."
- **July 7, 1995** — MAC issues a news release, stating that the ROC government always promotes a pragmatic foreign policy and mainland policy without conflicting with each other. The government will promote one policy not at the sacrifice of the other.
- **July 7, 1995** — Xinhua News Agency announces that the PRC military will launch missile tests and fire ground-to-ground missiles from July 21 to 28 on the high seas of the East China Sea. MAC immediately issues a news release to point out that the missile test will endanger the peace and safety of the Asia-Pacific area, hurt the feelings of the Taiwan people, and run against the common interests of the two sides.
- **July 21-26, 1995** — The PRC proceeds with the first missile shooting near Taiwan waters, launching a direct military threat against the ROC.
- **July 23, 1995** — People's Daily, quoting Xinhua News Agency, publishes the first commentary to accuse Taiwan leaders.
- **July 24, 1995** — People's Daily, quoting Xinhua News Agency, publishes the second commentary to accuse Taiwan leaders.
- **July 25, 1995** — People's Daily, quoting Xinhua News Agency, publishes third commentary to accuse Taiwan leaders.
- **July 26, 1995** — People's Daily, quoting Xinhua News Agency, publishes the fourth commentary to accuse Taiwan leaders.
- **July 31, 1995** — On the 68th anniversary of the establishment of the PLA, PRC Minister of National Defense Chi Haotian states that the PLA will never renounce the use of force regarding the issue of

reunification. He says that if Taiwan authorities act without discretion to create a split, the PLA will never sit by and watch.

- **Aug. 2, 1995** — Quoting Xinhua News Agency, the People's Daily publish a criticism of ROC President Lee Teng-hui.
- **Aug. 4, 1995** — Quoting Xinhua News Agency, the People's Daily publish a criticism of ROC President Lee Teng-hui.
- **Aug. 6, 1995** — Quoting Xinhua News Agency, the People's Daily publish a criticism of ROC President Lee Teng-hui.
- **Aug. 10, 1995** — Xinhua News Agency announces that the PRC military will carry out a live ammunition exercise with guided missiles and cannons in the area of the East China Sea from August 15 to 25. MAC says this is an "unfriendly and irresponsible" move.
- **Aug. 11, 1995** — When interviewed by the China Times, MAC Chairman Vincent Siew states that the ROC government has a firm position against Taiwan independence, which has remained unchanged for many decades. However, mainland authorities always distort the ROC's position.
- **Aug. 15~25, 1995** — The PRC proceeds with the second wave of missile tests, threatening the ROC with military force.
- **Sept. 9, 1995** — On an inspection tour in Quemoy, ROC President Lee states that the ROC now stands on Taiwan, Penghu, Quemoy, and Matzu, a reality not to be denied by any one. The ROC government insists on adhering to the principles and stages established under the Guidelines of National Unification to pursue unification under the systems of democracy, liberty, and equal prosperity, and not under "one country, two systems."
- **Oct. 21, 1995** — In an interview with the U.S. News & World Report, Zhang Wannian, vice-chairman of the CPC Central Military Commission, says that if Taiwan declares independence, the PRC will certainly resort to force.
- **Oct. 24, 1995** — Representatives of the two sides reach agreement in the negotiation for Taiwan-Hong Kong aviation rights and sign into effect the minutes of the meeting. The document becomes effective Dec. 30, 1995.
- **Oct. 24, 1995** — U.S. President Bill Clinton and PRC President Jiang Zemin have a summit meeting, and reach an understanding that the Taiwan Strait issue will be dealt with in accordance with the three U.S.-PRC communiques.
- **Nov. 24, 1995** — Xinhua News Agency prints an article "China's sovereignty belongs to the entire Chinese people." It says that no matter what changes happen in the way the Taiwan leader is selected, nothing can change the fact that Taiwan is a part of China.
- **Nov. 25, 1995** — Xinhua News Agency announces that a joint landing maneuver staged in late November near Dongshan Island, Fujian Province, by the army, navy, and air force of the Nanjing Military Area Command, is concluded.
- **Jan. 24, 1996** — Premier Lien Chan reiterates that the ROC government does not wish to see cross-strait relation strained at issuing statements and creating publicity. The two sides should sit down and meet each other across the table to negotiate various issues. If the disrupted cross-strait negotiation channels could be resumed, issues of mutual concern will be able to be discussed.
- **Jan. 30, 1996** — The PRC celebrates the anniversary of Jiang's eight-point proposal. Li Peng makes a statement that only when Taiwan authorities abandon creating "two Chinas," or "one China, one Taiwan" both in rhetoric and in practice can cross-strait relation normalize.
- **March 1996** — When the ROC held the first Chinese direct presidential election in March 1996, the PRC conducted three rounds of military exercises, launching missiles against Taiwan, with the objective of affecting the election.
- **March 5, 1996** — The PRC makes a statement in the early morning that it will launch a military exercise during March 8-15, firing ground-to-ground guided missiles into waters 20 to 40 nautical miles due east of Keelung, and 30 to 50 nautical miles due west of Kaohsiung.
- **March 8, 1995** — The PLA begins to stage missile tests near the waters north and south of Taiwan.
- **March 12, 1996** — The PRC begins to stage live ammunition firing in a sea and air maneuver off the coastal areas stretching from Xiamen, Fujian Province, to Shantou, Guangdong Province.
- **March 13, 1996** — The PRC fires the fourth guided missile into the waters off Kaohsiung harbor.
- **March 18, 1996** — The PRC launches a joint force maneuver in the sea near Pingtan, Fujian Province.

- **March 19, 1996** — The PRC stages a landing exercise on a small islet.
- **March 21, 1996** — The PRC stages an air strike exercise.
- **April 23, 1996** — In Kampuchea, Liu Huaqing, vice chairman of the PRC Central Military Commission, reiterates that “Taiwan is an inseparable part of China.” He insists on “reunification by peaceful means, one country, two systems” and that PRC will resort to the use of force should Taiwan declare independence or face foreign intervention.
- **April 29, 1996** — SEF writes to ARATS to suggest the resumption of the Koo-Wang Talks and institutionalized negotiation channels.
- **April 30, 1996** — ARATS responds negatively to the resumption of Koo-Wang talks and institutionalized negotiations.
- **May 5, 1996** — Chang King-yuh, chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council, says it is the PRC which erects barriers against the resumption of cross-strait negotiations. Since ARATS has replied negatively regarding the resumption of negotiations, the government will not seek other ways to express its willingness again.
- **May 20, 1996** — In his inaugural speech, President Lee notes the developments related to cross-strait relations. First, the two sides should face how to end the hostile status. Second, both should note the reality that the two belong to separate jurisdictions and accept the common goal of national unification. Both should open up a new situation in which “Chinese help Chinese.”
- **May 29, 1996** — Xinhua News Agency publishes an article titled “The one-China principle is inevitable,” with a byline of “Jin Xi,” criticizing ROC President Lee’s failure to mention “one China” in his inaugural speech.
- **June 23, 1996** — The spokesman of the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council reiterates the “One China” principle.
- **June 26, 1996** — Giving an interview to the media while visiting in Spain, PRC President Jiang Zemin says that the two sides can enter into cross-strait negotiations for peaceful reunification and follow the principle of “One China” to terminate the hostility between the two sides. Asked to comment on a meeting between leaders of the two sides, Jiang says he welcomes the Taiwan leader to visit the mainland in an appropriate capacity.

APPENDIX D. STATE DEPARTMENT REPORT ON THE BELGRADE EMBASSY BOMBING

ORAL PRESENTATION BY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE THOMAS PICKERING ON JUNE 17 TO THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE ACCIDENTAL BOMBING OF THE PRC EMBASSY IN BELGRADE

RELEASED JULY 6, 1999

— I am here at the instruction of President Clinton as his personal envoy. He has asked me to deliver a letter from him to President Jiang; to present the official report of our investigation into the accidental bombing of your embassy in Belgrade; and to answer any questions you may have about the report. My remarks and comments will constitute a full report to you.

— The attack was a mistake. Our examination explains how a series of errors and omissions led to that mistake. Let me emphasize: no one targeted the Chinese Embassy. No one, at any stage in the process, realized that our bombs were aimed at the Chinese Embassy.

— It is entirely appropriate that we provide you with an explanation of how this awful tragedy occurred. The U.S. government recognizes our responsibility to provide a full explanation. We have undertaken our own internal investigation into this matter and want to share our results with you.

— I have brought with me a high-level delegation of representatives from the White House, Department of State, Department of Defense, and the Intelligence Community.

— The delegation includes officials who have been directly involved in the investigation and the preparation of the report. Let me introduce them.

— With me here today are Ambassador James Sasser; Mr. James Simon, the Assistant Director of Central Intelligence for Administration; Mr. Franklin Kramer, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs; Mr. Jeremy Clark, Deputy Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency; Dr. Susan Shirk, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs; and Mr. James Keith, Director for Asian Affairs at the National Security Council.

— My intention is to provide information and explanation as we proceed. We will also show you some charts and photos to help illustrate some of the basic results of our investigation. After that, we will turn to providing answers to your questions.

Introduction:

— First let me express the heartfelt condolences of the American people and government to the families of the three Chinese journalists who died in the bombing of your Embassy in Belgrade on May 7th. Let me convey also our sympathy for the 20 Embassy staff members who were injured. We realize that no amount of explanation will make up for the personal tragedy suffered by these individuals and their loved ones.

— I am here, as you know, to provide the explanation and the investigation report in fulfillment of President Clinton's comments in his telephone conversation and letters to President Jiang.

— I want to underline that this report has been prepared by senior U.S. Government officials from our intelligence and military organizations.

— The report shows that multiple factors and errors in several parts of the U.S. Government were responsible for the mistaken bombing. Beginning as early as 1997, mistakes in different parts of our government contributed to this tragic set of errors; and our operational procedures failed to catch these errors.

— The CIA and Defense Department are continuing to interview individuals in the field who were involved in various aspects of the decisions that led to the bombing. Because the NATO air campaign has only just concluded, it has not been possible to debrief fully every person involved and to reach conclusions regarding responsibility for mistakes that led to the bombing. The Director of Central Intelligence, who is also Chief of the Intelligence Community, has directed the conduct of an accountability review which will go into the issue of responsibility, the appropriate results of which will be made available.

— The bombing resulted from three basic failures. First, the technique used to locate the intended target - the headquarters of the Yugoslav Federal Directorate for Supply and Procurement (FDSP) - was severely flawed.

Second, none of the military or intelligence databases used to verify target information contained the correct location of the Chinese Embassy. Third, nowhere in the target review process was either of the first two mistakes detected. No one who might have known that the targeted building was not the FDSP headquarters — but was in fact the Chinese Embassy — was ever consulted.

— To help better understand the circumstances which led to the mistaken bombing, let me offer a chronology of events.

Mistargeting:

— The first major error stemmed from mislocating the intended target.

— In March of this year, officers at the Central Intelligence Agency began considering the Federal Directorate for Supply and Procurement (FDSP) as a potential target for NATO Allied Force strike operations. The FDSP, because of its role in military procurement, was a legitimate target.

— We had a street address of the FDSP headquarters: “Bulevar Umetnosti 2” in New Belgrade. But military forces require precise geographic coordinates to conduct an attack with precision munitions. During a mid-April selection and designation of the target, three maps were used in an attempt to locate physically the address of the FDSP headquarters: two local commercial maps from 1996 and 1989, and the then most recent U.S. government map produced in 1997.

— None of these maps had any reference to the FDSP building. And none accurately identified the current location of the Chinese Embassy.

— As you can see, the 1997 U.S. Government city map shows the Embassy in Old Belgrade and depicts an unidentified building at the actual Embassy site in New Belgrade. The 1996 commercial map made no reference to the Embassy at either location. The 1989 map predated the Embassy’s move.

— Please keep in mind that the location of the Chinese Embassy was not a question that anyone would have asked when assembling this particular target package since it was not connected in any way to our intent to strike the FDSP headquarters.

— In an effort to locate the FDSP building at Bulevar Umetnosti 2, an intelligence officer in Washington used land navigation techniques taught by the U.S. military to locate distant or inaccessible points and objects. These techniques - which involve the comparison of addresses from one street to another - can be used for general geographic location, but are totally inappropriate for precision targeting, and were used uniquely in this case. Using this process, the individual mistakenly determined that the building which we now know to be the Chinese Embassy was the FDSP headquarters. To use these techniques for targeting purposes was a serious mistake. The true location of the FDSP headquarters was some 300 meters away from the Chinese Embassy. This flaw in the address location process went undetected by all the others who evaluated the FDSP as a military target.

— Because this first error was so fundamental, let me walk you through it.

— The method for determining the location of the intended target — the FDSP — was seriously flawed. It was not based on certain knowledge of the numbering sequence for addresses on the Bulevar Umetnosti. Rather, our attempts to determine the location of the building employed a method that is used in the field by the Army, but is not normally used for aerial targeting purposes. The system will provide an approximation of location, but cannot guarantee an accurate geographic fix.

— A 1997 National Imaging and Mapping Agency (NIMA) map was first used to display the grid pattern of the streets in New Belgrade. Next, in order to identify locations to use as reference points, they identified and drew on the NIMA map to locate the Hyatt Hotel, the Intercontinental Hotel, and the Serbian Socialist Party Headquarters. Each of these buildings — which were clearly labeled on the maps being used — were approximately one mile east of Bulevar Umetnosti. Using these locations and their street addresses as reference points, parallel lines were drawn that intersected both the known addresses and Bulevar Umetnosti. In what proved to be a fundamental error, those same numbers were then applied to locations on Bulevar Umetnosti, assuming that streets were numbered in the same fashion along parallel streets. The effectiveness of this method depends on the numbering system being the same on parallel streets, that the numbers are odd and even on the same sides of the street and that the street numbers are used in the same parallel sequence even if the street names change. Unfortunately, a number of these assumptions were wrong.

— Using this approximation method, your embassy building was designated as the target when in fact the Embassy was located on a small side street at some distance on Bulevar Umetnosti from where the intended target was actually located at number 2 Bulevar Umetnosti. Let me show you a satellite photograph and some maps to illustrate the method and the error it produced.

— The identification of the building that actually was the Chinese Embassy as the FDSP building subsequently and in error took on the mantle of fact. It was not questioned nor reviewed up the chain of command. This was in part

because everyone involved had, as a result of so many previously correct locations, assumed generally high confidence in our procedures to locate, check and verify such analytical facts. In this particular, and singular, case, our system clearly failed. In part it failed also because every established procedure in the review of this target was not followed.

— Maps and satellite imagery were also analyzed to look for any possible collateral damage issues near the target. There was no indication that the targeted building was an embassy — no flags, no seals, no clear markings showed up. There were no collateral damage issues in the vicinity.

Flawed Databases:

— The second major error stemmed from flawed databases.

— The incorrect location of the FDSP building was then fed into several U.S. databases to determine whether any diplomatic or other facilities off-limits to targeting were nearby. We do our best to avoid damage to sensitive facilities such as embassies, hospitals, schools and places of worship. Viewed from space, there was no indication that the office building being targeted was an embassy. On the satellite imagery available to U.S., there were no flags, seals, or other markings to indicate that the building was an embassy. And unfortunately, in this instance none of the database sources that were checked correctly identified the targeted building as the Chinese Embassy.

— Multiple databases within the Intelligence Community and the Department of Defense all reflected the Embassy in its pre-1996 location in Old Belgrade. Despite the fact that U.S. officials had visited the Embassy on a number of occasions in recent years the new location was never entered into intelligence or military targeting databases. If the databases had accurately reflected the current location of the Embassy, the mistaken identification of the FDSP building would have been recognized and corrected.

— Why was the Chinese Embassy not correctly located? It is important to understand that our ability to verify the location of fixed targets depends heavily on the accuracy of the databases, and the databases in this case were wrong. Further, it is difficult to keep current databases for cities around the globe. In general, diplomatic facilities have been given relatively little attention in our efforts to update our databases because such facilities are not targets. Military targets are the top priority in these databases because of the danger they pose to our own forces. Unfortunately, locations where strikes should be avoided had lower priority and our databases contained errors, notably in the failure to include the new location of the Embassy of China.

— Now, this is an important point, so let me expand upon it.

— The databases which contained information about the physical location of organizations in Belgrade — including the so-called “no hit list” of buildings that should not be targeted — were faulty.

— Although database maintenance is one the basic elements of our intelligence efforts, it has been routinely accorded low priority.

— The target and “no-hit” databases were not independently constructed. Outdated information that placed the Chinese Embassy in its former location in Old Belgrade was not updated when the Embassy moved. Because various databases were not independently constructed, this wrong information was duplicated. So when target information was checked against the no-hit list, the error was not detected.

— Many U.S. and other NATO diplomats must have visited the new building. The address was in the phone book, the diplomatic list and perhaps other sources, including Yugoslav maps. Certainly, many citizens and officials of the United States were aware of the correct location of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. However, in error, their knowledge was not recorded in any of the military or intelligence databases used in the targeting process.

— In addition, the correct location of the Chinese Embassy was not known to targeteers or NATO commanders because we were not, in fact, looking for it. Since your Embassy was not a target, and because we were unaware of any diplomatic or civilian facilities in the immediate vicinity of the presumed FDSP building, no effort was made to verify or precisely locate the whereabouts of your Embassy.

— We have subsequently found some maps which show the correct current location of the Chinese Embassy, although there are others, including some produced in recent years by the Yugoslav government, which do not.

— Since the incident, the United States has updated its databases to show the best known location of diplomatic facilities. The databases will be updated as new information becomes available. Maps are out of date almost as soon as they are printed. Databases can and should be maintained to be effective.

Faulty Checks:

— The third problem was faulty checks.

— Once the target was proposed, the focus of the review was on the military value of the target, how best to attack it, and the issue of collateral damage. No one in any of the succeeding reviews questioned the accuracy of the location. The formal recommendation of the FDSP target was forwarded in late April to military staffs both in the

U.S. and Europe, who were responsible for reviewing and identifying targets for Operation Allied Force. Maps and satellite imagery were analyzed to look for any possible collateral damage concerns near the target. We conducted a target review in Europe, and again, no significant risks to civilian or diplomatic facilities were uncovered.

— Following submission by the European Command for approval, the target package mistakenly received no additional examination outside of the Defense Department. It did go through additional review at the Pentagon, but this review found nothing different from the review that took place in Europe. There were no known collateral damage concerns. From that point on the building incorrectly identified as an FDSP facility was included on a list of potential Allied Force strike targets.

— Some of our employees knew the location of the new Chinese Embassy. But keep in mind that we were not looking for it, since the database with the old location was assumed to be correct. None of these individuals was consulted as the target was reviewed and, as a result, we lost any opportunity to learn that the building targeted was the new Chinese Embassy. We have also found one report from 1997 which gave the correct address of the Chinese Embassy, but unfortunately the correct address was not entered into the database.

— To further explain:

— Once the wrong target was selected, the system of checks that NATO and U.S. command forces had in place to catch target errors did not reveal the mistake. The database reviews conducted by the European Command (EUCOM) were limited to validating the target data sheet coordinates with the information put into the database by NIMA analysts. Such a circular process could not uncover the original error and exposes our susceptibility to a single point of database failure.

— There has been much press coverage of the fact that the U.S. and NATO relied on out-of-date maps to check targets. In fact, since any physical map can quickly become out of date, the key question is one of accurate databases. These were not properly maintained and did not catch the error. Furthermore, persons familiar with the layout of the city of Belgrade were not consulted in the construction of the target and no-hit databases. They were also not involved in a review of this target. This points up a flaw in our procedures.

— The only question about the target information was raised by an intelligence officer who had doubts as to whether the building targeted was in fact the FDSP headquarters or might be some other unidentified building. At no time was there any suspicion that the building might be an embassy. This question was not raised to senior levels and the strike went ahead.

— Let me explain further this attempt by an intelligence officer to question the reliability of the target information related to the FDSP. There was information that suggested a discrepancy between the selected target and the actual location of the FDSP. There was no information that the target location was the Chinese Embassy, only that it was perhaps the wrong building. However, there was a series of frustrating miscommunications — missed phone calls and lack of follow-up — which led to these doubts not being aired at a command level in time to stop the attack. (The officer had doubts early on in the process because of his own knowledge about the location of the FDSP building; attempted to check with working-level contacts; was continuing to check when the bombing happened; and was not able to communicate his suspicions to senior officers.)

The Bombing:

— The air strike then proceeded as planned on May 7 without any of the mistakes having been detected or doubts about the reliability of the target information having been addressed.

— At 2146 Zulu (about midnight local time in Belgrade) on 7 May 1999 one of the fleet of B-2 bombers from Whiteman Air Force Base (AFB) in Missouri dropped 5 Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) 2000 lb. GPS-guided bombs on the target designated as the FDSP building but which was, in fact, the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. All B-2 strikes on Yugoslavia were flown from Whiteman AFB. The bombs were Global Positioning System (GPS) guided weapons and operate in all weather and at night using a satellite-based navigation system of a high order of accuracy.

— The air crews carried out their mission as planned. They had no idea they were in fact bombing the Chinese Embassy. As a result, it is obvious that they bear no responsibility for this failure; the problem, as I have outlined, occurred earlier.

— They had no way of seeing any identifying markers that would show the building was an embassy. A flag in front of the building or any such features would not be discernible at night and at the speeds and altitudes at which our planes fly.

— No other buildings in the immediate vicinity were hit. Our weapons hit the target they were aimed at. Unfortunately, we did not realize the true nature of the target.

To Review:

- In summary, there were several crucial errors which led to the Chinese Embassy being struck.
- There was an error in locating the target. The approach used to attempt to locate the FDSP building was severely flawed.
- All sources of information used to prevent precisely this type of accident were either inaccurate or incomplete.
- The review process did not catch the locational error and did not consult any material or any person which could have provided correct information.
- The United States is, as I speak, continuing to conduct an in-depth review of this tragic accident. Based on our initial findings, it is clear that this terrible mistake occurred not because of just one organization, or because of any one individual.
- There was in the immediate aftermath of the bombing some confusion as to what had happened and some of our early public statements were confused and contradictory. To summarize clearly and precisely: the attack on the PRC Embassy was the result of a series of errors that led to the destruction of the PRC Embassy instead of the Serb military target that was intended. The use of a map containing an error — the inaccurate location of the Chinese Embassy — contributed to the tragic mistake — but this was not due solely to a “map error.”
- What went wrong was, first and foremost, that the approach used to locate the Bulevar Umetnosti 2, the address of the FDSP, was severely flawed.
- Second, the databases used to check and prevent this type of targeting error were also inaccurate, incomplete, and not fully independent.
- And third, the target review process did not detect the first two mistakes, nor did it involve people and information that could have provided additional data to correct or detect these errors.
- As the President has already expressed, we are deeply sorry that we made these tragic errors.
- Following the accident, the President of the United States and the Secretary General of NATO separately expressed to China’s leaders their sincere apologies for the mistaken attack on the embassy and their sympathy to the families of those who died and to the injured.
- Our government has also undertaken corrective actions to prevent mistakes like this from happening in the future.
- New updated city maps have been published detailing locations of diplomatic sites and other “no-strike” facilities in and around Belgrade. Additionally, databases are being updated as changes occur. We rely on these databases for our most current information, because maps themselves are inevitably out of date the day or the week they are published.
- Intelligence and Defense organizations have strengthened their internal mechanisms and procedures for selecting and verifying targets, and have placed new priority on keeping our databases current.
- All U.S. Government sources will be required to report whenever foreign embassies move or are established. This information will then be forwarded and incorporated into our intelligence and military databases.
- The U.S. Government will seek direct contact with other governments and interested organizations and persons to obtain their assistance in identifying and locating facilities and places of interest or concern.
- And as I noted earlier, we are continuing our internal reviews of the causes of the accident, and when these reviews are completed, we will determine whether any disciplinary action is called for.

U.S. Intentions:

- I would like now to address various speculative theories that appear to be held by some people in China.
- We have heard that many people believe that our attack on your Embassy was intentional.
- Clearly the United States had absolutely no reason to want to attack your protected embassy facility. Any such decision to bomb an Embassy would have been contrary to U.S. doctrine and practice and against international standards of behavior and established international accords. No such decision was ever proposed or indeed made.
- Bombing the Chinese Embassy also would have been completely antithetical to President Clinton’s strong personal commitment to strengthening the relationship between the United States and China; he has defended this relationship and our engagement policy in the face of vociferous domestic criticism. It is not imaginable that President Clinton would make such a decision.
- Moreover, bombing the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade would have made absolutely no sense in terms of our policy objectives in Kosovo. The objective of the NATO bombing campaign was to diminish and degrade the capacity of the Yugoslav government and military for repression in Kosovo. The Embassy of China played no role in that set of activities. It had always been the intention of the U.S. and NATO to bring the Kosovo effort to conclusion through diplomatic efforts, including of the G-8 and in the UN Security Council.

— The accidental bombing of your Embassy not only intensified international criticism of the NATO bombing campaign, it also had negative effects on our diplomatic efforts, and affected in a deeply negative fashion China's attitude and policies toward our effort in Yugoslavia.

— In particular, as Secretary Albright told Premier Zhu in April, we always expected that China, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, would need to be a part of the resolution of the Kosovo crisis. We knew we would need China's support in this matter. Bombing your Embassy was hardly the way to persuade you to help.

— Thus, the bombing was contrary to two critically important U.S. foreign policy goals: the further development of U.S.-China relations and the resolution of the Kosovo situation.

— I also have heard that some people in China subscribe to the theory that the bombing was caused by one or several individuals working in our government who conspired to subvert U.S.-China relations or who may have concluded that China was too friendly to Belgrade or that the Embassy was playing some role in assisting Belgrade.

— We have found no evidence of an unauthorized conspiracy to attack the Chinese Embassy, for any reason whatsoever, or of any "rogue element" within the U.S. Government. The errors we have identified as producing the accident took place in three separate and independent areas. There was a series of three separate sets of events, some of which affecting the databases occurred as far back as 1997, when no one could have predicted this present set of circumstances. It is just not conceivable, given the circumstances and errors committed, that the attack could have been brought about by a conspiracy or by "rogue elements."

— Science has taught us that a direct explanation, backed up by full knowledge of facts obtained through a careful investigation, is always preferable to speculation and far fetched, convoluted or contrived theories with little or no factual backing.

— In this tragic case, the facts show a series of errors: that the target was mislocated; the databases designed to catch mistakes were inaccurate and incomplete; and none of the reviews uncovered either of the first two errors.

Compensation:

— The bombing of the embassy in Belgrade was a tragic accident occurring during a time of ongoing hostilities in Yugoslavia. While the action was completely unintended, the United States and NATO nevertheless recognize that it was the result of a set of errors which led to the embassy being mistakenly targeted.

— In view of these circumstances, and recognizing the special status of the diplomatic personnel who were affected, the United States wishes to offer immediate ex gratia payments to those individuals who were injured in the bombing and to the families of those killed, based on current experience internationally for the scale of such payments.

— I have asked Ambassador Sasser to discuss the particulars of this offer on our part with you in the next few days.

— As for the damage to the embassy property in Belgrade, this is clearly a more complicated question. There is also the question of damage suffered by U.S. diplomatic and consular facilities in China in early May due to attacks by demonstrators.

— Because of their complexity, these latter issues will need to be examined with some care. We believe they too can be discussed through diplomatic channels and are ready to do so at a mutually suitable time.

APPENDIX E. EP-3 CRISIS TIMELINE

Sunday, April 1, 2001		
EDT	Beijing	
20:07 [3/31]	9:07	U.S. Navy EP-3 surveillance plane with 24 aboard collides with one of two pursuing Chinese F-8 fighters, 104 kilometers (??? miles) southeast of Hainan Island. F-8 pilot Wang Wei killed.
20:23 [3/31]	9:23	Second Chinese F-8 lands safely.
20:33 [3/31]	9:33	EP-3 lands at Lingsui Airport in Hainan, surrounded by PRC troops. Communicates with U.S. that it has landed safely, then cuts power.
c. 23:00 [3/31]	c. 12:00	Crew taken to a Chinese military base; sit on bus waiting, as troops seem unsure about what to do with captured crew.
8:30	21:30	Assistant Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhong protests in meeting with U.S. Ambassador to China Joseph Prueher.
9:00	22:00	Amb. Prueher says "it appears also the Chinese have lost an aircraft, and we're sorry that occurred."
		<i>NYT</i> reports Administration "uncertain whether Chinese authorities had decided to confine the crew for an indefinite period or were, alternatively, holding them incommunicado while the often fractious military and political leaders argued among themselves about what to do next."
Monday, April 2, 2001		
		Asst. FM Zhou and Amb. Prueher meet again
		Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao says U.S. plane veered into the PRC aircraft.
11:38	0:38 [4/3]	POTUS says he is "troubled by the lack of a timely Chinese response to our request" for access to the crew. "Our priorities are the prompt and safe return of the crew, and the return of the aircraft without further damaging or tampering."
		According to <i>ABC News</i> , DoD official says three warships are remaining in the area to monitor; they "soon" leave.

Tuesday, April 3, 2001

		First response from PRC to U.S. requests for information.
		President Jiang Zemin says U.S. should “bear full responsibilities” for the collision. “It is the U.S. plane that violated flight rules by displaying dangerous moves, bumped into and destroyed our plane, and as a result the pilot is missing ... the U.S. plane bumped into our plane, invaded the Chinese territorial airspace and landed at our airport in violation of international laws and practices.”
Morning	Late evening	Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao gives full Chinese account of EP-3 incident. Says EP-3 veered into F-8, and then entered China illegally, landing without approval at Hainan. Says PRC has the right to investigate the plane “which caused all this trouble.” In later interviews, Lt. Shane Osborn, the pilot of the EP-3 said, Wang Wei’s F-8 approached the EP-3 three times. The third time, the F-8 was a bit out of control, and “pitched up” into the EP-3, which was flying straight and level on autopilot. Says EP-3 crew “kept making calls” to the ground in Hainan.
10:00	23:00	Two U.S. diplomats, including General Neal Sealock, visit crew, find them in good health.
		Secretary of State Powell says U.S. has “nothing to apologize for,” says crew is “detained.”
16:03	5:00 [4/4]	POTUS: “We have allowed the Chinese government time to do the right thing. But now it is time for our servicemen and women to return home. And it is time for the Chinese government to return our plane. The accident has the potential of undermining our hopes for a fruitful and productive relationship between our two countries.”
		Eighty members of Congress (2/3 Republican) write to the President to offer strong support for a Taiwanese request for the sale of advanced weapons including the Aegis system; letter has been circulating for some time, doesn’t mention EP-3 incident.

Wednesday, April 4, 2001		
		PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan bemoans U.S. "arrogance" and "repeated errors;" summons Amb. Prueher to his office, <i>NYT</i> reports he says the U.S. "has displayed an arrogant air, used lame arguments, confounded right and wrong and made groundless accusations against China."
		President Jiang leaves Beijing to visit six South American countries, calls for a U.S. apology.
		Powell letter to Deputy Prime Minister Qian Qichen expresses regret for missing pilot and his family.
		POTUS orders Administration to tone down anti-PRC rhetoric, says "the message to the Chinese is, we should not let this incident destabilize relations. Our relationship with China is very important. But they need to realize that it's time for our people to be home." Also tells advisers time to start "looking for a way out of this."
Thursday, April 5, 2001		
		Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman says Powell letter "step in the right direction," repeats demand for a full apology.
		<i>NYT</i> reports that Chinese university officials gathered in meetings to hear a directive from the PRC Education Ministry instructing faculty and students to "stand fast at their posts to work and study and not take to the street," though groups from more than 50 universities and colleges had requested permission to demonstrate against the U.S.
		Other F-8 pilot Zhao Yu, and Wang Wei's wife, appear in PRC media to criticize U.S., state concern.
		POTUS adds his "regret" on lost pilot.
Friday, April 6, 2001		
3:00	16:00	U.S. defense attaché at Beijing embassy General Neal Sealock visits the crew at Hainan.
Saturday, April 7, 2001		
		Chinese request stronger wording than "sorry" to describe U.S. feelings about death of F-8 pilot.
		The weekend edition of the PLA newspaper says that the 24 Americans could be put on trial.
		PRC Vice Premier Qian Qichen send Powell letter; says U.S. refusal to apologize unacceptable.

Sunday, April 8, 2001		
	1:00	U.S. officials meet with 8 of 24 crew members.
		<i>NYT</i> reports that "two meetings between Admiral Prueher and the Foreign Ministry today were 'productive' and had brought the situation 'closer to resolution,' according to a senior State Department official."
1:00		Bush aides decide to try "very sorry" in apology.
Morning	Night	On Sunday morning Fox News talk show, Powell says U.S. is "sorry" about loss of Chinese pilots. On CBS' <i>Face the Nation</i> he adds that "we do acknowledge that we violated their airspace [when the plane landed], but look at the emergency circumstances that that pilot was facing. And we regret that. We've expressed sorrow for it, and we're sorry that that happened. But it can't be seen as an apology -- accepting responsibility."
Morning	Night	VPOTUS tells <i>Meet the Press</i> that "I think we're clearly in a situation, and I hope the Chinese understand this as well, too, that every day that goes by without having it resolved raises the risk to the long-term relationship. There are clearly significant interests on the part of both nations of getting this resolved and not have a lasting impact, and we're working hard to try to achieve that."
Monday, April 9, 2001		
		U.S. officials visit crew.
		Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi restates his government's position – "the U.S. side should assume full responsibility and apologize."
		According to later <i>NYT</i> reports, U.S. asks leaders of United Kingdom, France, Brazil and Canada to quietly press PRC leaders.
Tuesday, April 10, 2001		
		U.S. officials visit crew.
		No meetings – Amb. Prueher doesn't meet with anyone in Beijing; no high-level meeting in Washington; PRC apparently trying to decide how to respond.
		White House rejects recommendation of Adm. Dennis C. Blair to dispatch <i>Kitty Hawk</i> (scheduled to leave Thailand) up PRC coast, to send message of resolve.

Wednesday, April 11, 2001

5:40	18:40	NSA Rice calls POTUS; PRC has requested "final copy" of U.S. letter, plans to release crew later that day.
	Afternoon	Prueher letter to Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan; letter negotiated and delivered in English only, to allow PRC its own translation.
8:25	21:25	POTUS announces pilots' return; on tour of South American, President Jiang has no comment
		PRC calls U.S. letter "a form of apology."
18:30	7:30 [4/12]	Crew leaves Hainan Island
Night	Morning [4/12]	After crew is released, Pentagon spokesman Read Adm. Craig Quigley strong on return of plane. "That is U.S. property, and we want it back."
Night	Morning [4/12]	PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi says EP-3 would not be returned quickly, and reiterates that China has a legal right to conduct a full investigation of the plane and collision.

Wednesday, April 18, 2001

		U.S.-PRC meeting for 90 minutes in Beijing. The parties discuss U.S. request for "prompt return" of the EP-3 aircraft. Meeting starts with both delegations describing their understanding of how the collision occurred; U.S. proposes plan for return of EP-3, discusses how parties could discuss how to preclude or minimize opportunities for similar collisions.
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Wednesday, June 13, 2001 – Tuesday, July 3, 2001

		Contractors disassemble EP-3, transport back to the U.S. in crates.
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Friday, August 10, 2001

		U.S. officials announce they will pay China \$34,567 (rather than meet the PRC's \$1 million demand) for housing the crew members for a "couple of days" and some work on the plane. <i>NYT</i> quotes Pentagon officials as saying the sum is "nonnegotiable."
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Saturday, August 11, 2001

		Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue says "the so-called decision is unacceptable to China both in its content and its form. We urge the U.S. side to correct its erroneous decision."
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APPENDIX F. ACRONYMS

APEC – Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum
CINCPAC – U.S. Commander in Chief, Pacific Command
CMC – Central Military Commission
COSTIND – PLA Commission on Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense
CPC – Communist Party of China (also seen as CCP)
DPP – Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan
FALSG – Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group
FDSP – Yugoslav Federal Directorate for Supply and Procurement
INCSEA – Incidents at Sea Agreement of 1972
JDAM – Joint Direct Attack Munitions
MFA – PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFN – Most Favored Nation
MMCA – Military Marine Consultative Agreement
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO – non-governmental organization
NPC – National People’s Congress
OFA – State Council Office of Foreign Affairs
PLA – People’s Liberation Army
PRC – People’s Republic of China
PSC – Politburo Standing Committee
SRBM – Short-Range Ballistic Missile
U.S. – United States of America
USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
TALSG – Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group
WTO – World Trade Organization

ENDNOTES

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1. The principle of one China was the basis and premise for peaceful reunification.
2. China would not challenge the development of non-government ties between Taiwan and other countries (intended to address Taiwan's demand for more international living space).
3. China was ready to hold negotiations with Taiwan on peaceful reunification.
4. China and Taiwan should strive for peaceful reunification since Chinese should not fight fellow Chinese.
5. Efforts should be made to expand economic exchanges and cooperation between the two sides in the interests of common prosperity.
6. China's cultural tradition of 5,000 years was an important basis for peaceful reunification.
7. China would fully respect the lifestyle of the Taiwanese Chinese and protect all their legitimate rights, interests and investments.
8. Leaders from Taiwan were welcome to visit China in appropriate capacities and Chinese leaders would accept invitations to visit Taiwan.

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