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## CHINASCOPE Analysis Series

### **A Clash of Values Part V**

**October 2013**

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Summary: Previously, this series focused on the differences between the United States and China as to their foundations and theoretical underpinnings. While America's Founding Principles grew out of a revolution war fought for freedom and the rights of the governed, the Communist Party fought a revolutionary war to establish its authoritarian rule. While the U.S. based its legitimacy on the consent of the governed, Mao Zedong proclaimed in Chapter Five of The Little Red Book, "Every Communist must grasp the truth: Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. While the U.S. adopted a Constitution designed to limit governmental power and guarantee specific individual rights, the Communist Party designed the Chinese government to assure its supremacy over China and ensure that it was firmly ensconced in power."

## **Clash of Values – Part V The U.S.-Sino Relationship**

### **Differences between the Governing Principles of the United States and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)**

Previously, this series focused on the differences between the United States and China as to their foundations and theoretical underpinnings. While America's Founding Principles grew out of a revolution war fought for freedom and the rights of the governed, the Communist Party fought a revolutionary war to establish its authoritarian rule. While the U.S. based its legitimacy on the consent of the governed, Mao Zedong proclaimed in Chapter Five of *The Little Red Book*, "Every Communist must grasp the truth: Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. While the U.S. adopted a Constitution designed to limit governmental power and guarantee specific individual rights, the Communist Party designed the Chinese government to assure its supremacy over China and ensure that it was firmly ensconced in power."

America's Founding Fathers had a deep understanding of morality and virtue. They believed that America was established on a divine foundation, with people having the freedom to follow their own beliefs. The Communist Party, on the other hand, eradicated 5,000 years of China's moral foundation and has violently attacked any group whose spiritual beliefs do not affirm the Party's supremacy, be they Tibetan monks, Uighurs, House Christians, or, more recently, Falun Gong.

We have seen the results of these different foundations. Today, when the world's people think of the United States, they see the light of freedom:

*"Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

In comparison, elite and wealthy Chinese are moving their families and their assets out of China, often to the U.S., and are sending their children to the U.S. or other Western countries to be educated. The Chinese have even created a term, "Luo Guan" (裸官, meaning, literally, "naked official"), referring to an official whose wife and children are overseas, while the official himself is the only family member in China. Of course, these officials' family members have other reasons

for going abroad. Apart from pursuing freedom, many of them have accumulated an inexplicable amount of wealth because of the positions they hold, whether through grey income or, in many cases, corruption. They want to escape to a safer place in case they are questioned about their assets. Many are also concerned about China's economy crashing.

An even more significant difference between the U.S. and China, however, is how individuals arrive at the truth. In the U.S., anyone can publish any statement (barring such exceptions as libel, slander, obscenity, sedition, copyright violations, and leaking classified information). The people are trusted with the wisdom to recognize truth after reviewing the information available themselves. In China, the state chooses what information people can access. If the state disapproves of certain information, the "Great Firewall" of China will not allow it on the Internet. The Party claims that it owns the press and that it alone decides what will be published. It likewise controls what can be taught in school. The latest forbidden teachings include "Seven Taboo Topics." In class, teachers cannot mention: universal values, freedom of the press, civil society, citizens' rights, the historical mistakes of the Party, the financial and political elite, and judicial independence. [1]

China recently published tough measures declaring that spreading "rumors" on the Internet is a crime of defamation. Offenders face up to three years in prison. [2]

In China, historical details have been selectively excised from the records and from textbooks. "Consequently, truth is buried, conscience is castrated and our language is raped by money and power. Lies, meaningless words and pretentious-sounding blather become the official language used by the government, taught by our teachers and adopted by the world of art and literature." [3]

Likewise, even when the facts are "objectively knowable," the CCP insists that the "facts" it propounds are inarguable and must be accepted at face value.

In Part IV of this series, we considered Socrates' allegory of the cave. The prisoners inside the cave see only shadows. If one escapes, he will see the light of the sun. Socrates suggests that this person, who has seen the light, then would return to the cave in an attempt to free the others from their chains and lead them into the light. "(Y)ou will see ten thousand times better than the inhabitants of the cave, and you will know what the several images are, and what they represent, because you have seen the beautiful and just and good in their truth. ... Only in

the State which offers this, will they rule who are truly rich, not in silver and gold, but in virtue and wisdom, which are the true blessings of life.” [4]

According to Socrates, the goal of education is to take man out of the darkness and into the light of the sun. According to the Communist Party, the goal of education is to keep every man in the darkness of the cave so that he will only be aware of, but have no say in, the Party’s autocratic decisions.

Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) propounded the idea of the Axial Age. According to Jaspers, the period between 800 and 200 B.C. was the “Classic Age,” when the spiritual foundations of humanity were laid simultaneously and independently in China, India, Persia, Judea, and Greece. Socrates lived in Greece from 469 B.C. to 399 B.C. [5]

America’s Founding Fathers were well-read in the historical thinking on the nature of man. They pondered at length how to insure that the governed would be protected from the excesses of government. They understood the importance of being virtuous and of maintaining high moral standards. We remember George Washington’s statement, “Human rights can only be assured among a virtuous people. The general government ... can never be in danger of degenerating into a monarchy, an oligarchy, an aristocracy, or any despotic or oppressive form so long as there is any virtue in the body of the people.” Benjamin Franklin’s statement – “Laws without morals are in vain” – became the motto of the University of Pennsylvania.

The Founding Fathers, however, did not base the government on the expectation that those who govern would be moral and virtuous. Instead, they based its formation on the expectation that they would not; that the people, in fact, need protection from their own government. After all, they had just fought a revolutionary war against the British government that taxed them without representation, charged them huge fees, seized property, and would not listen to their protests. [6]

Hobbes, one of theorists on whom the Founders relied, observed in *Leviathan*, “The cause whereof is that the object of man's desire is not to enjoy once only, and for one instant of time, but to assure forever the way of his future desire” “In the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death.” [7]

With this in mind, the Founders of the United States of America created a Constitution that made it difficult for those with a thirst for power to modify it to accommodate that thirst.

Those who gained control of the People's Republic of China (PRC) never considered placing controls on themselves for the protection of the governed. They eliminated private ownership, the market, and competition. Since the government monopolized production and distribution, every individual was completely dependent on it. Even in the area of economics, the utopia they hoped for was not what they got. "The designers of this system expected an economy organized under unified planning to result in efficiency. Instead, it brought shortage. Government monopoly blunted the basic impetus for economic function – personal enthusiasm, creativity and initiative – and eliminated the opportunity and space for free personal choice. ... An economy with 'everything being directed from a single center' requires totalitarianism as its political system. And since absolute power corrupts absolutely, the result was not the egalitarianism anticipated by the designers of this system, but an officialdom that oppressed the Chinese people." [8]

## **The Evolution of U.S.-Sino Relations**

The relationship between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China has evolved over time.

When the Communist Party took power in 1949 after it won the civil war against the Kuomintang, the Communist Party was hostile to the U.S. because the U.S. supported the Kuomintang. Hostilities escalated further during the Korean War when the Chinese army fought the United Nations' troops, which consisted mainly of U.S. soldiers. Then the Chinese supported communist North Vietnam in its takeover of South Vietnam.

During this period, China remained isolated from most of the Western countries. Gradually China got into a disagreement with the Soviet Union over ideology. Though it is a communist country, it further isolated itself from the Eastern Bloc.

Due to China's political strategy of isolating the Soviet Union, the U.S. offered China an olive branch. President Nixon visited in 1972, ending 25 years of separation between the two countries. At the time, many believed an alignment with the PRC might result in a major redistribution of power against the Soviets. Nixon thus became the initiator of the policy of "engagement" with China.

In the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping adopted the reform and opening-up policy for China's economy. However, the political system of Communist Party rule remained unchanged. In 1989 when the Tiananmen Massacre shocked the U.S. and other free world countries, China was again isolated and remained so until after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

After 1991, the Communist Party, out of an urge to secure its survivability, offered huge economic benefits to the U.S. in exchange for the U.S. acknowledging the legitimacy of the CCP regime. This offering included buying American products, using low production costs to attract U.S. companies to invest in China, and working with interest groups in the U.S. to lobby and pressure the U.S. government.

In the 1990s, Deng Xiaoping set the tone for China's foreign diplomacy strategy in dealing with the U.S. – to “maintain a low profile and never take the lead” (韬光养晦). This enabled the U.S. to “feel comfortable” – the CCP did not challenge its world leadership, nor did it challenge its ideology. At that time, the few remaining Communist countries were too busy focusing on their own survival to confront the West as the Soviet Union had.

In anticipation of potentially huge economic gains from doing business with China, the U.S. bent over backwards to help the CCP. The business community influenced the U.S. government to “engage” China. President Clinton, who promised in his 1992 Presidential campaign “not to embrace dictators” (which included the CCP), called on Congress to decouple the Most Favored Nation (MFN) status from the CCP's human rights record and to give China permanent MFN status. Reluctantly, Congress succumbed. In December 2001, after 15 years of negotiations with the U.S., China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO).

After the tragedy of September 11, 2001, the U.S. shifted its attention to fighting terrorists in the Middle East. It stopped urging China to improve. Instead, it needed the CCP's “cooperation” in its anti-terrorist operations. This provided a golden opportunity for the CCP to focus on its economic development and “rise.” The U.S., assured of CCP support, remained silent on China's human rights abuses.

From the mid-1990s until the recent global financial crisis, Beijing enjoyed rapid economic growth and a relatively good relationship with Western businesses. The Communist regime catered to foreign business, kept labor costs low, and ignored environmental hazards in order to attract Western investments. The regime

established a good diplomatic relationship with Western countries by placing huge orders for goods during their leader's visits. It also gave territorial concessions to Russia and avoided territorial disputes with other neighboring countries.

After the global financial crisis in 2007, the CCP felt that China had become strong enough that it could say "No" to the West and changed its approach in dealing with the U.S. and other Western countries. It frequently talked about "international discourse power" and wanted more say on the international stage. It started the "Going Abroad" strategy to expand its economic and cultural influence overseas. In an earlier part of this series, we examined the regime's harmful influence on the moral standards of the business community, society, and the government of the U.S.

China also switched from challenging the U.S. behind the scenes to doing it more openly on the international stage. China embarrassed President Obama terribly in Copenhagen at the Global Warming discussions and vetoed the United Nation's resolution on Syria.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) organized hackers to attack and conduct cyber espionage against the businesses and governments of the U.S. and Western nations, with no restraint. China's military spending has been rising year after year. Its DF-21D (dubbed by many as the "carrier-killer") anti-ship ballistic missile presents a serious threat to U.S. aircraft carriers, if they come too close to China's coasts. It secretly built the stealth fighter jet J-20, which looks like the U.S. F-22 and is suspected of using the U.S. F-117 Nighthawk technology. [9]

China's buildup of its space muscles is quite impressive. The Baidu navigation satellite system now has 16 satellites and will have 35 by 2020; it has sent astronauts into space several times and sent the Chang'e lunar probe to the moon; it has launched the Tiangong-1 and Tiangong-2 space workstations and the Tiangong-3 is scheduled for a 2015 debut. It also used ground-based missiles to shoot down a few satellites in space.

China has decisively expanded its influence over its neighboring countries. It has fought with its neighbors on territorial disputes over the South China Sea and sent ships and planes to the South China Sea to affirm its ownership. It keeps sending ships and planes to the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands, and a small Chinese troupe crossed the Line of Actual Control, went into India's controlled territory, and camped there for a period of time.

## **The Effectiveness of the Engagement Policy**

The engagement policy brought an economic boom to China, enabling it to grow into the world's second largest economic power. Many predict that, in the future, it will overtake the U.S. for the number one position.

The engagement policy also began a new era in Western thinking. Forgetting the spiritual heritage from the Axial Age, the wisdom of ancient philosophers, the founding principles for human society, universal values, and the protections the Founding Fathers built into the Constitution, many world leaders viewed with envy the efficiency of China's ability to make decisions by fiat. Businesses saw one billion consumers and salivated. Manufacturing companies saw cheap labor unencumbered by such irritants as environmental protection, minimum wages, and powerful unions. Thus, the Western countries "engaged" China more and more and strayed further and further away from human rights and moral standards.

One author, James Mann, called the Western expectations *The China Fantasy*, and wrote a book about how our leaders explain away China's repression, how money in Western big businesses is more important than human rights and democracy, and how academic considerations are more important for Western intellectuals than the promotion of freedom of expression or a free press in China.

For their own different reasons, the U.S. government and American (or multinational) corporations have been eager to conduct as much business as possible with China. In order to do this, they have sought to minimize the core issues of repression of dissent and China's one-party political system. An elaborate idiom has therefore developed for talking about the world's most populous country while avoiding these inconvenient issues. The elitists' construct of China carries its own terminology, its own internal code, its own pet phrases ("integration," "engagement") and epithets ("provocative," "anti-China").

In spite of the intention to bring about gradual change in China and to move it in the direction of greater freedom and improved moral values, China is still not free, still not democratic, still deprives its people of their human rights, still vilifies Western values, and still places the Communist Party's interests above all else, including the law.

The U.S. had previously used the annual renewal of the MFN status to force the Chinese government to make improvements in its human rights. Before each year's

renewal, the CCP would release a few political dissidents as a gesture. However, after China obtained permanent MFN status and, especially after it joined the WTO, the CCP stopped even pretending.

In fact, in March 2011 when foreign journalists went to Beijing to report on a Jasmine gathering and were beaten, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu advised them, “Don’t use the law as a shield to protect yourselves.” [10]

The results of the “engagement” policy have been the opposite of what people expected.

The reason is not hard to understand. Let’s ask ourselves a few questions: What force in China does the engagement policy assume will effect political and social improvement in China? Is it the CCP, a different party, or the Chinese people? Are any of them ready to bring about change or will they be ready in the future?

Is the CCP the force? Most likely, it is not. Would the CCP, which holds the view that its legitimacy comes from its members’ “bleeding and death” during its war against the Kuomintang, who dares to use tanks and guns to muzzle its people’s request for democracy, and whose officials enjoy huge bribes and unencumbered powers, be willing to make political changes to pave the road for people to elect it out of office?

The new CCP leader, Xi Jinping, tries to appear more open-minded and has even talked about some level of direct election. However, as Gordon Chang argued, “The fundamental problem for China’s Communists is that, from all we can tell, most Chinese do not believe a one-party system is appropriate for their country’s modernizing society. Simply stated, they want much more say in their lives and demand institutional restraints on their rulers.” According to one observer he quotes, “Xi Jinping and this administration provide the last chance for China to implement a social transformation that comes from within the party and within the system.” Yet that is precisely the problem. Change would still be within the one-party system. [11]

Is a different political party the force? Maybe, but at this point in time, there is no such party in China. If there were a party that had even a remote possibility of rivaling the CCP, the CCP would have already obliterated it and disappeared its leaders.

Could the Chinese people be the force? This might be a better candidate. At present, however the Chinese people, who still have memories of the horror of their government firing at students in Tiananmen Square, who are inundated with news of the state's propaganda machine repeatedly attacking the "U.S.-led Western hostile forces," who are "trained" by the Party never to be against it, who have watched the Party fiercely crush, as an example to others, people who have independent ideas (a Chinese idiom that comes to mind is "killing the chicken to scare the monkey"), and who can read only what Internet information the state's "Great Wall" firewall system allows, is nowhere near ready. Only a handful dare to verbalize, let alone demand, such a change.

In a recent *Epoch Times* article, Dr. Shizhong Chen, Director of the Conscience Foundation, made some interesting observations about the relationship between U.S. companies that move their manufacturing to China and the working conditions in China. The "advantages include more than the Chinese government's suppressed labor costs; they also include: unsafe working conditions, no or low benefits, no or low retirement security, no environmental protection, no personal life, and no thought for their wellbeing." "A symbiotic relationship thus formed. China's slavery, or the 'advantages of low human rights,' guarantees that U.S. companies derive handsome profits while, at the same time, protecting their good names. U.S. companies ensure that China's advantages of low human rights can continue while they stay clear of being overly exposed or criticized." [12]

In addition to the damage done to the moral standards of U.S. businesses, there is a heavy toll on the American people's lives as well. In their book and movie *Death by China*, Peter Navarro and Greg Autry interviewed a large number of people. They discovered that many have lost their jobs because whole business sectors have moved to China. "Since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001 and gained full access to American markets, the AFL-CIO claims that over 50,000 factories in America have disappeared, along with more than 6 million manufacturing jobs." [13] [14]

These problems are a result of the engagement policy. Will the engagement policy fix them? If such a policy would really work, then Abraham Lincoln could have "engaged" the Confederate South to engineer a gradual change and the slaves could have been freed without a Civil War.

### **Policy Options to Consider**

So what are some policy options that the U.S. can consider adopting in order to deal with China?

1. The engagement policy. It is the current policy that the U.S. applies and it is not working. Will it work if given more time? It is hard to say because it faces two obstacles.

First, China's high rate of growth means that it is rapidly closing the gap with the U.S., from the economy to the military and from cultural products to global influence. The U.S. is becoming more and more dependent on China's goods and services. Twenty years from now, what people will talk about may no longer be "How can the U.S. change China" but "How China has changed and gained control of the U.S."

Second, the engagement policy may not be based on the best understanding of the CCP's viewpoint toward accommodation. In the course of diplomatic give and take, one party may offer a concession with the expectation of a quid pro quo from the other party. The CCP, on the other hand, views a concession as a sign of weakness and strengthens its oppositional stance. Rather, it takes it as a win when the U.S. makes a concession, so it makes no sense for it to give in when "victory" is at hand.

2. The confrontational approach. This might result in a military standoff similar to the Cold War era when the U.S. and the Soviet Union went head to head. However, since the U.S. economy is heavily dependent on the products that China manufactures, the foreign reserve that China has, and the profit generated in China, can the U.S. really afford to have a hostile relationship with China?

Because China is closing the military gap with the U.S., the confrontational approach will become more and more unrealistic.

Also, if it became really confrontational, some elements within the CCP, which puts little value on the lives of its people and has such questionable moral standards, could easily stun the U.S. with drastic, inhumane action. Remember the statement that Chinese Major General Zhu Chenghu made in 2005 that caught the world by surprise? He threatened to sacrifice the entire coastal region of China in a nuclear war against the U.S. "We [...] will prepare ourselves for the destruction of all of the cities east of Xi'an. Of course the Americans will have to be prepared that hundreds ... of cities will

be destroyed by the Chinese." Would the U.S. ever consider such a sacrifice?  
[15]

3. The "Connect to the People" approach. To consider this option, let's first look at the strengths the U.S. has over China. Unfortunately, in many areas in which the U.S. used to be superior to China, the U.S. is losing its lead, and its reliance on China's products has now offset its economic advantage. The military gap is shrinking. The U.S. no longer enjoys a huge technological advantage as China also has money to invest in new technologies such as solar energy and 3D printing. Solyndra LLC, a California-based solar company, was forced to file for bankruptcy despite the fact that it received a \$535 million loan guarantee from the U.S. government. It was a casualty of China's state-supported companies. [16] Culture in the U.S. is now full of sex and violence, and the rest of the world no longer sees it as a beacon guiding the world in a positive direction.

What is left for the U.S. is its founding principles, the American ideals, and the declaration that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." (*The Declaration of Independence*)

The freedom to pursue spirituality and to believe in one's faith, universal values, and the protection of freedom for each and every individual person all represent the greatest superiority that the U.S. has over China. The U.S. system of democracy, rule of law, and separation of powers is by far the best form of governance in the world.

If the people of the U.S. would reconnect with their roots, take a stand for, and value their own political system and their own founding principles, that, in itself would influence China in a positive way. Then it could connect to the Chinese people in addition to the Chinese government. Then the U.S. could promote American Ideals to the Chinese people. The American values are easy for Chinese to appreciate because they represent a better form of civilization and higher moral standards. They also stem from the same foundation as the values of traditional Chinese culture, the values from the Axial Age. In return, the Chinese people would be inspired. More and more

of them would push for an open, democratic government, better human rights, an end to corruption, and higher moral standards.

To do that, it is important to help the Chinese people get out of the “cave” and into the light of the sun to see the real world. Helping the Chinese people get uncensored information from the Internet is a critical step.

Sun Tzu said, in his *Art of War*, “Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.” This could be a supreme, excellent strategy for the U.S.

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