

The National Conversation:
China's New Leadership: Opportunity for the United States?
October 3, 2012

Jane Harman:

Good afternoon. I'm Jane Harman, president and CEO of the Wilson Center. Welcome to those in the audience as well as those tuning in via CSPAN and live webcast. It's great to see, I'm looking for him, Ambassador Jim Sasser, is he here? No? Our former ambassador to China under President Clinton, he was to be here with his daughter, Elizabeth. I know we have daughters here. Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger, who was our ambassador, the German ambassador to the United States during a very, tough, important period in our relationship is here in the front row. He is also currently chair of the Munich Security Forum, something I have attended for 11 years and Henry Kissinger has attended for many, many years and gave a wonderful speech here at the Wilson Center on the EU-U.S. partnership just a couple days ago.

Earlier this year the Wilson Center joined forces with National Public Radio to create this public event series we call The National Conversation. Our hope is that this series will provide the public with new opportunities to engage in much needed civil discourse free from spin. Let me try that one on you again, civil discourse free from spin. Imagine that in this election season, especially on the day before the first debate in the safe political space that the Wilson Center provides. It is an honor to introduce my friend, Dr. Henry Kissinger, who will be giving a brief keynote on China's upcoming, once-in-a-decade leadership transition and the potential opportunities for the United States.

After his speech NPR's Melissa Block will introduce the other panelists and moderate a discussion. Melissa, who won't introduce herself so I'm going to say something about her, is a 26-year veteran of NPR and has been hosting "All Things Considered" since 2003, after nearly a decade as an NPR correspondent. I said at Monday's National Conversation that NPR's Steve Inskeep is the first male voice I hear in the morning, and he is, while Melissa is a very competent and informed female voice, which I hear in the afternoon on my way home. She was in Chengdu, China preparing for a weeklong broadcast with NPR when a massive

earthquake struck the region in May 2008 and major news organizations around the world relied on her extensive reporting on the destruction and relief efforts. So now, I have many Henry Kissinger stories. I won't spend the full 15 minutes he demanded, but I will tell you a few of them.

[laughter]

Let's try this. This past Valentine's Day he was my date. Well, what really happened is that Henry and I contacted our dear friends Andrea Mitchell and Alan Greenspan. We did this separately about spending the evening with them and then we all ended up in a downtown Washington hotel room full of hearts and flowers. Henry and I also sit next to each other at defense policy board meetings and we just spent a day and a half doing that and discussing the very complicated issue of Iran. At one of those meetings, Henry told me, this is very personal, that I was his Jewish mother.

[laughter]

My response was, "Henry, I'm sure you had one earlier in your life and you certainly need one, so I accept."

[laughter]

Not an issue comes up from the end of World War II until today, and maybe even before that, that Henry can't put into a brilliant contextual frame. For his world-acclaimed book on China, he used the Wilson Center's Cold War Archives Project for much of his research. Don't worry, he gave us full credit. As Max Frankel of the New York Times said in reviewing that book, quote, "Henry Kissinger was not only the first American emissary to Communist China, he persisted in his brokerage with more than 50 trips over four decades spanning the careers of seven leaders on both sides. Diplomatically speaking, he owns the franchise." Henry Kissinger's name is on the door of the Wilson Center's Kissinger Institute on China and the United States, which is dedicated to his vision of the importance of improving the bilateral relationship between our two nations. That institute is headed by the legendary Ambassador Stape Roy, who's also on today's panel. And the Kissinger Institute provides a neutral platform for constructive policy discussions on U.S.-China issues.

The Institute's signature project is a series of symposia on comparative governance, the latest of which was held at the Wilson Center in June on science and technology innovation. These symposia, which the Institute co-shares with China's state council, not only promote dialogue among global stakeholders, but also allow participants to develop personal connections. The Institute also recently released an initial report on U.S.-China security perceptions, another big project we're working on with leading research institutions in the U.S. and Beijing. And just last week we published "Sustaining U.S. China Cooperation in Clean Energy," an overview of the difficulties both countries face in developing solar, wind, and other alternative energy industries and the potential room for cooperation.

Last November, finally, Henry participated in another one of our National Conversations entitled, "Afghanistan, Is There a Regional End Game?" The back story on this is interesting. He resisted when he learned that we had organized a brilliant panel of scholars and reporters to comment on his remarks. We hadn't cleared the names with him, he didn't know all the people, and he was not happy. But he gave brief remarks, just as he will today, and then he was warmly greeted by our own distinguished scholar, Robin Wright and the rest is obvious. Some days later I heard from him as follows, in his gravelly voice, "Sometimes I know I can be a pain in the ..." So this time it was much easier to convince Henry to show up and we did let him know who the panelists were in advance. He approves of you all.

[laughter]

So, please join me in welcoming a legendary statesman, my defense policy seat mate, and my Valentine's Day date, Dr. Henry Kissinger.

[applause]

Dr. Henry Kissinger:

You know one of the aspects of being a Jewish mother is you can never please a Jewish mother completely --

[laughter]

-- but they also look after you with infinite attention, and Jane has been a friend for a long time and it's a great

privilege for me to be here. You leave me in a position -- I once was at a reception and a lady came up to me and said, "I understand you're a fascinating man," she'd said, "Fascinate me."

[laughter]

Turned into one of the less successful conversations --

[laughter]

-- that I've had. In this case, today, I may regret the choice of the panel. These are all friends and teachers of mine. I don't pretend to be a scholar of China. I have dealt with China for over 40 years now. I've thought a lot about it, I have read about it, but they are the scholars that have really spent their lives going into the details. My experience in China is the personal experience of somebody who by accident was assigned to conduct the first mission to China, largely because President Nixon felt that if he went through regular channels, he'd be overwhelmed with a lot of technical details on subjects he considered were not central to the immediate challenge and he could be sure I couldn't overwhelm him with details on that subject.

So, when I first came to China, I had an experience, which is perhaps unique in a sense. Every visitor to China would've killed for the privilege of meeting Chairman Mao. I was terrified of having to do it for the reason that I knew that President Nixon wanted to be the first policymaker who met Mao and I knew my life wouldn't be worth living if I came back having done the first photograph of an American with Chairman Mao. Chairman Mao had given instructions that if I requested a meeting with him, I should be taken to him immediately. I went to enormous contortions not to request a meeting.

[laughter]

And so, I achieved that goal of my visit. I've met, of course, each generation of Chinese leader and each of them reflected the mission and the conditions of his period. Mao was a revolutionary, a prophet who was consumed by the objectives he had set and who recognized no obstacles in terms of feasibility. The standard ritualistic language of American diplomacy didn't interest him. He -- what brought me to China, in his mind, was that China was threatened,

that he had to find a possibility of having the distant barbarians, the more distant barbarian, deal with a more close in barbarian. In other words have the United States balance the Soviet Union. That was his strategic objective, which he pursued with great strategic skill. I had the good fortune that my opposite number was Zhou Enlai, who was prime minister, had served as prime minister for decades, and was to serve for the first -- really, until he was forced out of office four years after the opening. He was also, of course, of the revolutionary generation, but in his -- but where Mao was elemental and went directly to the subject; and who, for example, when President Ford said to him, "I always believe that you can disagree -- I always say when you disagree you don't have to be disagreeable," which of course makes no sense in Chinese.

[laughter]

So Mao said, "Why would you always say that?"

[laughter]

The -- Zhou Enlai was the most skillful diplomat that I encountered, a man of extraordinary ability to intuit the intangibles of a situation. And, of course, he was involved in many of the actions that Mao ordered that involved enormous human suffering. So, the judgment I express here are those that I experienced personally.

When we first started talking to the Chinese, we had one great advantage. There were only important subjects to talk about. There were no trivial subjects on the table. There was nothing that needed to be settled, there was no trade. Even five years after the opening, the trade with China was less than the trade with Honduras, about \$300 million, \$400 million. And one of the reasons was that while Mao was alive, that even though he wanted us as a strategic partner, he did not want China to be dependent on the rest of the world, and he insisted on maintaining the purity of communist doctrine. The conversation with Zhou Enlai, the first conversation has been published and it reads like two professors of political science speculating in the abstract about the nature of international politics.

And you may wonder why this was because in fact, the only thing worth talking about was, at that point, whether we

could establish enough confidence between the two of us to risk the adventure that opening to China represented for both sides; for the Chinese, from the ideological point of view, for us, from a domestic, political point of view. And even though the subject of the visit of President Nixon to China was the reason why I came, it did not -- neither side mentioned it until about 12 hours before we had to leave. I mentioned it only to say that, a rule of foreign policy that or diplomacy that I like to follow and that I believe should be followed is, "Get your objectives straight before you start haggling about details." Now, we had no choice.

Now every generation since then, Deng was a great reformer and I cannot think of any other country where you could so definitely say that the evolution that we have seen in the last 30 years depended on the vision of one man, as in the case of Deng. I certainly met no other Chinese who had the vision and the courage to move China into the international system and to engage in reform, and in instituting a market system. And the next leader, Jiang Zemin, came into office in the aftermaths of Tiananmen. And he'd spend the better part of his 12 years in office restoring China to the international system and making China part of a genuinely globalized system. Hu Jintao is the first leader that actually had to operate a China as part of a globalized system.

With each generation the style of leadership has become less personal, that is -- Mao was treated reverentially, almost as a deity. Appointments with Mao were never scheduled, probably because of his health. But you were suddenly called out of a meeting and taken to Mao without advanced warning, without it being told ahead of time that you were going to see him at all. And this was true of presidents. After missing the first meeting, I had the opportunity to meet him five more times -- five times more. Then -- so Hu Jintao and his generation had the mission of calming the system, operating China within the international system, working in a globalized structure, and now we have a new generation of leaders. And they have their own challenges. But one thing many of them, several of them, including the vice president, who will soon be president. On this sense of victims of the Cultural Revolution, their fathers were the victims, and victims meant that they were close to Mao, were purged, disgraced, and sent to the countryside.

One of the attributes of Mao was, however, that some of the victims were pulled out of the countryside when Mao needed them. And this sense of nationalism of the Chinese is so great that when Mao became concerned about a Soviet threat, he pulled four [unintelligible] whom he had disgraced out of the countryside, brought them to Beijing and said, "Write me a paper on what the challenges are that we are facing." So these are -- some of them are the sons, and therefore -- and they are governing together with some people who may have been in the Red Guards, who were the instruments of the revolution. But both Red Guards and victims, when Mao was through with the Red Guards, he sent them to the countryside too. So that many have had the common experience of this, which creates one perspective on the period, but also gives them a sense of having been hardened and of having experienced all the trials that one can imagine, and who are therefore as types different because they have seen both the challenges of the rule, some of the suffering, and have come out of it now in leadership positions.

They're facing a set of huge problems. The transformation over the next 10 years, they have to move 400 million people from the countryside into the cities, which, of course is a huge technical problem of infrastructure and economy, but even more than that they know, as one must know, that they will lose some of the values of the countryside and that new values will be formed.

Now, what is the role of the party? What is the role of Confucianism in forming these values? I think that's an unsettled issue that will occupy China for the next 10 years. And the younger generation is a generation that has two attributes. One, they are increasingly one-child families, from one-child families so there it's already a strong Chinese obligation to one family to do well. It's magnified when all the hopes of a family concentrate on one person, but it also makes that prevents the -- or it obliterates some of the smoother edges that have made Chinese society so attractive. And also the younger generation is one, the first one in hundreds of years, that has never experienced disaster. So, that is -- I must say some of these observations I learned from Chinese leaders, I didn't just bring from my -- I mention all of this to indicate that to deal with China, it's in many respects the fundamental problem of American foreign policy right now.

And the difficulty is that our history and Chinese history is so totally different. We have been secure through most of our history. We were not conscience of the impact of foreign societies on us. China has always -- the Chinese state has always been surrounded by a multiplicity of states. So the management of barbarians has been a principle necessity of Chinese foreign policy. We have dealt with problems on a short-term, pragmatic basis because that's how foreign policy impinged on us. The Chinese have always, or at least have learned, to take a long, strategic view because one cannot decide the outcome of any one issue unless you look in it in a longer term. But these two societies with all their different approaches now have to deal with each other and have to deal with each other in an evolving situation.

Now, historians say China is now a rising country and we are a status quo country. So it's similar to Germany and England, and that led to war. And therefore the likelihood is that something like that might occur again. But the first thing -- remember, China is not a rising country. China is a country that is returning to what it believes it has always been, namely, the center of Asian affairs. But it's inevitable that a rising China will impinge on the United States. And -- but there are a number of things we need to keep in mind with respect to that.

One: even the conflict between Germany and England was not inevitable. And you can trace many misjudgments that were made that produced a conflict that was not inherent in the situation. But, be that as it may have been with respect to Germany and England, we know that none of the leaders who started World War I would have done so had they known what the world would look like four years later when the war was concluded. They let themselves be driven into conflict on the basis of considerations that were trivial in terms of the tragedy that they brought about.

So therefore I think the conflict, a conflict between China and the United States, would be a disaster for both countries. And it would be impossible to describe what a victory would look like. And it requires, on both sides, patience and understanding, above all, of the goal that they are trying to reach. In each country, there are domestic pressures that emphasize disagreements that might -- that arise. We see that in our political campaign in

which both candidates are using language about China which I think is extremely deplorable. And you see it in the Chinese literature from their strategic centers, in which their strategic analysts are pushing a very nationalistic - - very nationalistic line.

And, indeed, as traditional communist ideology diminishes, there is the prospect that nationalism becomes a substitute for it. Many of the issues that arise are vestiges of a past that is overcome -- that we need to overcome. The so-called dotted line in the South China Sea was done by some Chinese emperor who had never heard of law of the seas because that concept didn't exist about 300 years ago. So the issue of the islands, when there are hundreds of islands, requires in my view, first of all, separating the notion of freedom of the seas from the issue of sovereignty over the island. My colleagues here will be able to give a much fuller explanation of the -- of the issue. What I want to stress is that both sides have to make up their mind that they are trying to do something that is historically unprecedented. That two, in a way, competing countries recognize that the international system requires a degree of cooperation between them if they are not going to drift into a confrontation which will then split every other country that will be forced to participate in it.

Each side will be able to list mistakes that the other side has made. And of course they exist. But the one favorable thing you can say about this challenge is the most non-partisan foreign policy in America today is Chinese policy. Eight American administrations since 1971 have pursued essentially the same course. Now, on two occasions, new presidents tried to reinvent the policy. And the maximum period of time it lasted was two years, and then they reversed it because they recognized from experience the necessities of our future.

So, I am very hopeful that this will be continued, and after all, relations with China now are good. There are many grievances on both sides, but the basic objective is recognized by both sides. What we need to do now is to find something on which we can genuinely cooperate. Not just mitigating problems that arise, something that is done on both sides of the Atlantic that engages the best minds of both sides on some common project so that we don't have to read about each other in terms of the literature that we

now see on both sides which describes the other one as failing or threatening. That's our fundamental challenge.

But I think Jane is looking at me from the front seat. I've -- thought I would begin by saying that I was asked to speak for 15 minutes, to enable you all to be able to say that you were present at a historic occasion.

[laughter]

But you have not been present at a historic occasion. But I do want you to leave with the feeling that it's tough. There are going to be -- the assessment of the various situations can clash. We Americans have always had the view that we did not want any country to have hegemony in Asia. It remains our view, including the view of those of us who are great advocates of the relationship. The Chinese have the view that they can understand that objective, but they would not want it to be pursued in a primarily military framework.

So our art is for both sides to recognize that there are some portions of Asia and the world in which we may not have the same interpretations, but in which we cannot only coexist but cooperate on important projects. And I think the peace and stability of the world depends on that. Thank you very much.

[applause]

Melissa Block:

Well, thanks to everyone for coming. And thanks to all the panelists, too. David Lampton, and Cheng Li, and J. Stapleton Roy, and to Doctor Kissinger -- it's an honor to be here. Thank you to Jane, as well. I'm Melissa Block, I host "All Things Considered" on NPR and have a deep and abiding interest in China and lots of things that Dr. Kissinger raised that I'd like to follow up on with the panelists. So, we'll talk for a while and then there will be time for questions from the audience. So, I encourage you to think of things you'd like to ask all of these gentlemen with me here.

I want to start, though, with the odd fact of Xi Jinping and the heir apparent in China's disappearance about a month ago. He was missing for two weeks. He missed appointments with the secretary of state, with other

foreign leaders -- no one knew where he was. Maybe he had a heart attack, maybe he had a swimming accident, a bad back, no one knew. I can tell you that our meetings at "All Things Considered," there were discussions that were worthy of Abbot and Costello that went something like, "Where is Xi?" "Who?" "Hu? No, not Hu, Xi. Xi is missing." "When?" "No, not Wen, either. It's Xi. Xi is missing."

[laughter]

So, where was Xi and how do we interpret the fact that the next apparent leader of China, one of the global superpowers, was missing and no one seemed to be able to tell us where he was? Ambassador Roy, you want to take that one on?

J. Stapleton Roy:

Cheng Li can probably address it better than I can --

Cheng Li:

[laughs]

J. Stapleton Roy:

But my experience in China is this --

Melissa Block:

Yes?

J. Stapleton Roy:

Traditionally, Chinese media did not talk about the personal lives of their leaders. And so, if a leader got ill, nothing was reported about it. I remember when Li Peng disappeared in 1995. I think it was the spring of '95 or the fall of 1994. And he simply was not there. And there were no reports in the media about what had happened to him. It later turned out that he probably had a heart attack or a stroke. And in a meeting I'd had with him a short time before he disappeared, he didn't seem to be behaving quite normally. But this is not unprecedented, for a leader to drop out of sight, but in those days, people didn't report on leaders. And so therefore they were either there or they weren't.

Now, the problem now is you not only have a mass media in China with instant access to information, but China's part of a world in which leaders are accountable for where they

are. And I think that the people who handled Xi's absence simply botched it. They needed to be saying something, and they weren't in a position to say something. And that produced a lot of unhelpful speculation, including bizarre stories about coups and things of that sort that no government would want to be suspected of harboring. But, Cheng, you may have some inside -- he may have been with Cheng Li, for all I know.

[laughter]

Melissa Block:

Well, the other -- I mean, the thing now, also, is of course with the rise of social media there are different expectations.

Cheng Li:

Before -- I'm sorry, before I answer that question, I want to say something personal, just like Jane. And I have a few -- I want to say some -- a few words to Dr. Kissinger, not only as a Chinese-American, but as someone who grew up during the Cultural Revolution. As you emphasize in your remarks that the generation of leaders will take over power in a month belong to the Cultural Revolution generation. For this extraordinary generation, that I'm part of that, the very name of Henry Kissinger embodies wisdom, diplomacy, respect for different culture, but most importantly hope. Hope for an open China that integrate with outside world. Hope for better U.S.-China relationship. So, your remark reinforced that, you know, the sentiment that you express, you -- what you did. Now, the opening China that you and President Nixon made in early 1970s was not only a turning point in history, but also event has changed our lives. The millions of people, millions of Chinese, Chinese-Americans, and Americans. Thank you very much, Dr. Kissinger.

[applause]

Now, one of the things you have taught us is to better understand Chinese politics or Sino-U.S. relations, who have develop a broader vision, strategic vision, about the U.S.-China relation. You should -- we have to have a deep understanding of Chinese politics, society, behaviors, political system, and also its continuing transformation. Now, this is a -- let me come to the question you raise -- it's a valid question. But I really disappointed, not

disappoint with the Chinese leadership, but rather disappointed with the foreign China study communities, and also disappointed with the social media, constantly obsessed with these kind of rumors.

It's fair to say that the Chinese government's spokesperson said several times in press conference and also said to the foreign delegates that they canceled a meeting including [unintelligible] people that Vice President Xi got injury in his back. So, I think that's enough. Because more importantly -- you know, I was interviewed many, many times by medias and also by business group. They really offer some, you know, kind of things asking me to comment. I said, "I don't want to comment, there's nothing happening." If something happens, you will see two things. One, all the leaders will cancel their foreign trips. And they also will cancel their domestic trip if there's some assassination, political purge, or fatal, you know, health problem. You also will see the signs -- the police and other -- you know, the security, the military will act unusually. There's no sign whatsoever.

But most importantly -- and it seems like, you know, quite -- very odd that, you know, something Chinese government is now famous for transparency. They sometimes want to cover up things. But also ironically, because of vulnerability that Dr. Kissinger mentioned earlier, they face a lot of crisis challenges. For this kind of, you know, problem, a successor is really in trouble, they will immediately announce to the public. You cannot cover because itself is a huge liability would cause further damage for the political system. No leaders would dare to do that. So, usually they will reveal to the public in 12 hours or so. So this is my take.

So I think this should be a lesson for us. I'm not defending Chinese government, per se. As China become major power, they need to follow international norms, you know, to be more responsive. But on the other hand, they did say in the press conference that he got back injury. Then people said he died, he is transferring his liver in Hong Kong.

[laughter]

And also he already paralyzed half a face, you know, could not come out. I just wonder, these kind of experts or really well-informed people, they should be embarrassed.

[laughter]

Melissa Block:

It does -- David Lampton.

David Lampton:

Well, I do think there's a serious lesson here, however. Aside from the management, it raised the question of, if something were to happen to the designated successor who's been designated for a number of years at this point, what is the Plan B? What is the constitutional process? What can people have confidence in, in terms of continuity of leadership? And so, as inaccurate as all these proved, now, I tend to believe there was just a minor health incident, his back, and that was the explanation. But the mere fact that this can have such ramifications tells you something more about the institutionalization of the system. And there, I think, a lot of thoughts deserved both by China itself and by those who do business with it.

Melissa Block:

Let's talk a bit more about these -- this new generation of leaders coming in. It's called the fifth generation of Chinese leaders in the modern age. What do we know about the two men who are presumed to take over as Premier and as President of China? Xi Jinping -- they're a decade younger than Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, about 10 years' difference. Xi Jinping has a daughter who goes to Harvard, I read this morning, under a pseudonym. Dr. Kissinger mentioned the experience during the Cultural Revolution, and I think Xi Jinping has talked about that he "ate more bitterness than most" during that time. What can you tell us, Cheng Li? I know you've written about the -- sort of the different wings of the new generation of leadership that these two men represent. Do you want to start?

Cheng Li:

Well, I think the defining moment, as Vice President Xi repeatedly said in the Chinese media, was the Cultural Revolution experience. That he was a teenager, along with Mr. Li Keqiang, who is soon to be Premier. Both of them were sent to the countryside where they work as a farmer for, like, six years. The hardship, these kind of really

extraordinary difficulties, you know, move from major cities or small cities to the countryside, the very difficult life experience taught them several important traits which define their, you know, world views, behaviors. I can have a few words refer to that: endurance, adaptability, confidence, sometimes over-confidence. I think it's important to know these kind of generational characteristics.

In many ways -- and also, they -- later, they studied in college, you know, around the end of Cultural Revolution or after Cultural Revolution, most of them, particularly Mr. Li. This early 1980 was the most liberal period in China's educational system. They were really exposed to Western ideas. And, you know, Mr. Li Keqiang actually translate the constitutional development in foreign countries, into the U.K. and elsewhere, into Chinese. He does not speak English, but he reads English very well. He translate that along with his classmate. Now, that's really a wonderful opportunity. And -- but this also could be a problem because if we fail to understand the generation characteristic. This is a generation, because their personal experience, they don't want to be lectured. They actually will be more, you know, conducive, you have soft approach, to give reasoning, to talk, to emphasize cooperation. But if you just use force to intimidate them, they will react very, very strongly.

I hope that what I said here is important, that if we use force, use just a single-minded lecture without solid knowledge of China and the difficulty China experienced, will not resonate very well. They will react very strongly than Jiang Zemin generation, Hu Jintao's generation. Now, I don't know whether you have -- you watch the interview -- this is really maybe 15 years ago, by Mike Wallace -- interviewed Jiang Zemin in the "60 Minutes." It's really quite a remarkable show. It's still available online. Mike Wallace just point finger to Mr. Jiang Zemin. "You are dictator. You are dictator," said several times. Then Jiang Zemin laugh. He said, "Oh well," you know. But Chinese actually say --

[laughter]

"Oh, that's a shame. How could you not react?" But now, at -- you know, after many years, people saw his approach actually was very smart, actually make Mike Wallace

embarrass. But if you do the same thing with Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, I think it would be disaster. They will immediately leave. They will really react very strongly. So we do need to know this kind of mindset, this kind of experience. So that's what -- why, Henry Kissinger, you said early on it's so important to look at the defining moment, look at their previous experience, really shape their world views, shape their behaviors. There's tremendous room for cooperation, but also there's danger if we misread it.

Melissa Block:

Dr. Kissinger, I think you said that the experience during the Cultural Revolution hardened this generation of leaders. How does that bear out in how they view both domestic policies in China and their relationship to the world? Or is that not really the key factor between how they see their role?

Henry Kissinger:

We cannot really know yet how they will conduct themselves in foreign policy, because they are not yet in office. But there have been instances where people -- where Xi felt he was being -- or China was being criticized, and he made a very sharp response. I've had several conversations with Xi and I found him an extraordinarily thoughtful person who raised a number of philosophical questions, and the same of Li Keqiang. The problem they face is, if you look at their own reform agenda, the things they have stated that they want to achieve in the next 10 years, you know that China will undergo enormous changes. I think that it's unlikely that in 10 years the next generation will come into office with exactly the same institutions that exist today, and precisely because everybody knows that in China there is a kind of political evolution being discussed every day.

This is one reason why I do not believe that great foreign adventures or confrontations with the United States can be on their agenda. They know that domestic changes -- simply in the sense of moving part of the population, overcoming a country in which the coast is highly developed, and the interior quite undeveloped, but you cannot keep a society operating like this indefinitely. So, those stats alone -- and in my experience, these leaders are very conscious of that. But I agree with Cheng Li, they -- Jiang Zemin felt he had to make China acceptable to foreign critics. Xi would not accept that as a necessity. He will defend his -

- himself much more assertively. But, on the other hand, he has a long history now to look back on. And I -- in the meetings I've had with him, I found him to be reflective and quite philosophical.

Melissa Block:

Ambassador Roy, let's talk about your time as ambassador in China. It was, I believe, right -- soon after Tiananmen.

J. Stapleton Roy:

Yes, two years after.

Melissa Block:

The dynamic then compared with now in terms of how they're heading into the Party Congress and the changeover in leadership, how would you describe what's different now compared with then, under Jiang Zemin?

J. Stapleton Roy:

It's very different. I arrived back in China in 1991 and it was very clear that there was a two-line struggle underway within the leadership. You could detect it in the types of terminology that was used by different leaders in talking about particular issues. And it was symbolized by the fact that when Deng Xiaoping made his famous trip to the southern part of China in the spring of 1972, the central press carried no coverage of the trip, and we had to learn about it from the Hong Kong press and some of the South China newspapers.

So, China, after the Tiananmen events, had had a conservative group of leaders gain a stronghold on the leadership. And it wasn't until Deng's trip gradually unraveled this conspiracy of silence around what he was doing, and all of a sudden there was a sharp shift six months before the Party Congress to reform and openness advocates. And then at the 14th Party Congress, the conservative group that had consolidated their position after 1989 was basically ousted from the party, and China went onto a strong reform and openness resumption of those policies.

Now, I think we should learn some things from watching this. The first thing is -- we were in the middle of an election campaign at this time. And candidate Bill Clinton was comparing Beijing to Baghdad, and this was right at the time when China was moving from Baghdad to Paris.

[laughter]

Maybe I'm overstating the case a little bit, but that's essentially what was happening. I mean, this was a dramatic shift in China, and the U.S. government paid absolutely no attention to it. It had no impact on the policies of the Clinton administration when it took office. And, of course, since I was the American ambassador in China, this confronted me with the problem of an American government that had one view of China, but China was already moving in a different direction, and that created some contradictions in trying to carry out my instructions faithfully.

But I think we -- this time, you have some echoes of that. Clearly, the Bo Xilai affair has exposed that China's political system is not different from others. Leaders struggle for power. They have their own ambitions. Some succeed, some come crashing down, as in the case of Bo Xilai. So we shouldn't assume that just because China has an authoritarian system of government that the normal jockeying that takes place in a political system is not taking place in China. And this could partly explain why the announcement of the Party Congress was delayed. No longer do you have an all-powerful leader behind the scenes who can resolve disputes, who can sort of put things in place. Now the powerful, ambitious, competing leaders have to work out their own modus vivendi, and that takes time and isn't always successful. But my guess is that they've established a reasonable unity within the leadership going into the Party Congress. And we're likely to see -- not confront any major surprises.

Melissa Block:

Let me turn -- Cheng Li --

Henry Kissinger:

One has to remember, Mao could give orders. The current leaders have to operate by consensus, at least of the standing -- of the Standing Committee.

J. Stapleton Roy:

Yeah.

Melissa Block:

I want to get to Cheng Li in just a second. But, David

Lampton, we just heard from Ambassador Roy don't expect surprises from the Party Congress. Should there be anything that we would look forward to? For one thing, it's November 8th, two days after the election here. Coincidence? Deliberate timing? Part A. Part B: Should there be anything surprising that emerges from there? For example, might the Standing Committee be smaller, and what would that say about China's leadership?

David Lampton:

Well, there -- we were talking about rumors earlier in the context of Xi's health. Certainly a basket of rumors floating around our -- the composition. Did it have anything to do with our election? I think China's a big place that has many competing forces. And when they hold a meeting, probably the U.S. is on the side. A minor concern there that may have effected it by a day or two so they could get some idea of what the outcome and the most important relationship in the world was, but fundamentally I think this got decided out of an internal logic and trying to not look at particularly the United States.

My own personal guess is that if you look at the pool of people that are really eligible to be the next Standing Committee of the Politburo, we may have some difficulty deciding which fish are going to get pulled out that pond. But I think it's revealing to look at the fish in the pond, the totality of what they're choosing among. And what we're looking at is a more diverse group of people in terms of their education, a business, law, even humanities to some extent, so we're looking at a much broader generation, we're looking at people that -- we were talking about Xi.

He has an enormous experience along China's coast, most cosmopolitan communities, knows leaders from all over the world visiting his city and so on. So I think we're looking at people quite experienced in the world. So I expect when we look back in history, we're going to say there was a surge of reform done in 1992 after Tiananmen. Then Jiang Zemin pushed China in the world, WTO, explosive growth in China's presence in the world. I think we're going to look at Hu Jintao as a period of consolidation in many respects. And I look to the next group to really push and tackle for the first time in an early sense the mid-1980s, the political question. Because China's society has fundamentally changed, it has less dominant leaders, it has a more pluralized society, and it has resources scattered

now among social organizations, corporations, that have their own independent power. And so I think we're going to see a new push, I don't know how vigorous, but in the political direction, and I think we're going to have more cosmopolitan leaders compared to the past.

Melissa Block:

Let me ask you this though, Cheng Li, for someone to rise to the top of the Chinese hierarchy, what would give the confidence as David Lampton is indicating, that they would be pushing maybe in a new direction as opposed to maintaining the status quo, just having got ahead?

Cheng Li:

Look at China's recent history, new generation needs new policies because they want to provide a new vision, new set of, you know, economic political policy. They wanted to have their own legacy. Now I agree with my distinguished colleagues that we are not going to see, kind of, a spirit of the party because the insane people united party together, united under Xi Jinping overwhelming. Even some people have the reservation with him were united with him. But also as ambassador mentioned Bo Xilai case, I think it's a very, very important crisis. And people are really competitive with the 1989 Tiananmen. Some of my friends in China think that this is the biggest crisis ever in the party history because it's still unfolding. Now I just read online a couple days ago, there's a quiz. You know, I mentioned that in the lunch, and Dr. Kissinger immediately know the answer. The quiz is "Who is that leader whose deputy defect, whose wife is on suspended death penalty, who is a womanizer?". Now Dr. Kissinger said it's not just Bo Xilai.

[laughter]

It's Mao. Chairman Mao had the same things. Now this is important because this is reveal a serious crisis because Bo Xilai crisis revealed fundamental flaws. How that political system allow this kind of ruthless leader, since Liaoning, and minister of commerce and Soon Ching [spelled phonetically], pursue this kind of awful power abuse. Now the interesting thing is comparing in 1989 Tiananmen and also that Bo Xilai crisis. Relative speaking, Chinese society, Chinese economy have not been disrupted in way like 20-some years ago. Why? This exact reason that my colleague mention, I want to highlight some of the force is

now very, very important in China such as a middle class, such as a legal profession. In 1989, the legal country only had several thousand lawyers. But now each year, China is 620 law school, law department produced 100,000 law students. The speed is faster than the United States for better or worse. Now --

[laughter]

Now commercialize the media, very, very dynamic. And the interest group policies, all kind of interest group, none of them existed in 1989 in China. So this provided stabilizing force for peaceful transition, but a party needs to transform itself before too late. There's a serious, you know, discussion among intellectuals, among social groups talk about the legitimacy of Chinese Communist Party, how this kind of things happen, how could it be possible this is a rising star, you know, without Wang Lijung interview, could end up with eight, nine members of the Steering Committee, could probably be higher because his ambition will never stop.

So that's the very important lesson, this is critical moment that China experience at this conjunction of history. So in a way, to answer your question, you know, the leadership and the confidence, I mean, in many ways, they also sense that the movement that they are vulnerability domestically. But it's unclear, you know, whether they will really transform the party because it's very, you know, complicated process. You need to change the verdict of the 1989 Tiananmen, you should have dealt with the ethnic issues, the Xinjiang, Tibet, in a different light. You should also -- you know, again, all these kind of issues are researched. And plus China's economy we haven't talked about, slow down. That was a result of the political bottleneck. But also a further review the fundamental problem of the Chinese political system, state monopoly, corruption, and et cetera.

So it's a really big challenge. So from international committee -- community like us, we need to be very sensitive. You should have deep understanding the difficulties China is going to go through. But I'm optimistic like Dr. Kissinger. I think that the country went through, you know, all these difficulties and I [unintelligible]. Not so much our leaders, but the society, including, you know, some of the rising stars,

maybe they're still in the provincial levels, they understand what they should do to really change the political system to make it more transparent and more accountable, more democratic.

Melissa Block:

Does anybody on this stage envision the kind of transformation of the party that Cheng Li is talking about in the foreseeable future or might it be, as your saying, at the provincial level, not at the level of the central government? Dr. Kissinger, can you imagine what Cheng Li is talking about?

Henry Kissinger:

Do I know what --

Melissa Block:

Can you imagine --

[laughter]

-- the information that he is talking about if the Communist Party is really to transform itself in the overreaching way.

Henry Kissinger:

First of all, all of us have seen enormous transformations in China in the last 40 years. And especially since the reform movement in the middle '80s. And we shouldn't think of China as a dictatorial government that it's run. It's a one-party state, it's an authoritarian government. It's more similar to Mexico was before its final transformation. I think it will be more transparent. Its legal system will be more predictable. But it has huge adjustments to make. All our economists say China should export less and consume more, that's partly an economic question. It's also huge transformation of the society. And it also has foreign policy implications because they will be less dependent on globalization, more of the Southeast Asian countries.

All I'm saying is that yes, I can imagine a transformation, I think that is certain. And the next 10 years will be extremely complicated. What we must not demand or expect, it's that they will follow the mechanisms with which we are more familiar. It will be a Chinese version, but it will be, I believe, more transparent. And it will not be achieved without some domestic difficulties. We have to be

sensitive to what is emerging. But it would certainly be different than what it is now.

Melissa Block:

Ambassador, is there an opportunity there --

Henry Kissinger:

[unintelligible]

J. Stapleton Roy:

I just, I want to comment on that.

Melissa Block:

Yeah.

J. Stapleton Roy:

I completely agree with Dr. Kissinger. Stop and think about it. The Communist Party after the 14th Party Congress said up through the 16th Party Congress, it threw out the window the class nature of the Communist Party. It threw out the window a fundamental principle of Marxism which is class struggle. All of this was done. And most Americans didn't even notice it happening. People still talked about China ruled by a Communist Party. Yes, it's a Leninist party, but it's not a communist party as we understand communism in the old sense. China now is facing what Wen Jiabao, the premier of China, says is an urgent need for fundamental structural political reform, fundamental structural economic reform, in order to be able to deal with the social problems generated by China's rapid growth.

Why is the premier saying this if he doesn't recognize that China's current system, if it doesn't change, is not going to be able to deal successfully with the problems generated by a country that is still remarkably open to the outside world, is growing at a destabilizing rate of growth even with the declining growth rates at the moment, and which is changing socially and in terms of income levels in a dramatic fashion. So what Dr. Kissinger was saying as I understand it is, we should anticipate change, not anticipate no change. But saying exactly when it's going to happen and exactly what its nature will be, then you have to be able to see the future and I think, with the exception perhaps of Dr. Kissinger, the rest of us are challenged in that area.

[laughter]

Melissa Block:

Well, David Lampton, if the goal is to anticipate that change, what is the role for the United States? And what opportunities might there be there as China continues on this path of some sort of transformation? If indeed, it does.

David Lampton:

Well first, just on the last topic, just two words. We have the example of Taiwan that had the Kuomintang Party in charge for many years, had martial law, was a Leninist party which the Soviet Union helped organize. And it essentially moved from the bottom of society to the top, gradually incorporating more elements of society, and it moved from inside the party to enlarging the party to the society we now see as quite democratic. And I think the Chinese have looked -- on the mainland -- have looked at that model, and I expect to see the party change from within. Its procedures and its composition have already changed enormously, gone from 60 million in the last decade to 80-plus million. Much more diverse party, you even have some people, limited number to be sure, at the minister level that aren't even members of the party. So I think you're going to get change.

Now your question is, what can the U.S. do to facilitate it? First of all, we have to recognize that China's own dynamic and its own internal momentum is so enormous. But China's natural resting place I think is to try to deal with its own problems, and therefore, I don't think we should make the -- divert attention from the -- dealing with its own internal problems to trying to confront a more hostile external environment. So continuing to engage, having a -- finding areas of cooperation in areas like energy, the development of, for instance, a massive nuclear civil energy program underway. We're already cooperating with the Chinese in these areas. Find these areas, keep our markets open, but don't create a more hostile external environment than is absolutely essential. Very important we keep balance in the region, but there's a fine line between balance and provocation, and we want to stay well on the side of balance and a constructive environment.

Melissa Block:

Dr. Kissinger, I was surprised to hear you say that the comments made by both candidates, I think you used the term "extremely deplorable," language about China. I know you've endorsed Mitt Romney. Have you had that conversation with him? Have you said, "I find your comments extremely deplorable?"

[laughter]

Henry Kissinger:

I've seen these advertisements with the two candidates, are competing with each other on how to deal with a cheating China. And both used the word "cheat" as applied to China.

Melissa Block:

In trade.

Henry Kissinger:

In trade. And it may be that in China they do not understand all the nuances, and I am bothered by the fact that appealing to suspicions of China has become a part, in my view on China policy is not, it's not a secret. It doesn't affect my basic endorsement of the candidate.

Melissa Block:

Mitt Romney has also talked about labeling China a currency manipulator. Would that be at all productive?

Henry Kissinger:

[unintelligible] The Romney campaign does not check it, you know.

Melissa Block:

I'll take that for a no.

Henry Kissinger:

With me. I have stated my general view. I remember the Reagan campaign making statements which I didn't think were adequate with the overall relationship, and Clinton did the same thing. I have confidence that the men in office, a president looking at the realities will come to the conclusion that I have outlined, and that all my three colleagues here agree with, and about which there's really amazingly little dissent among the community of people who actually deal with China. There are theoreticians who have other views and want to end the whole thing and do a

crusade. But they haven't actually studied China or dealt with China.

Melissa Block:

I'm going to do one last lightning round question before we turn this over to questions from the audience, and I'm just going to go big and go long. How long -- give me a time frame before we see open national elections and the end of a one-party state in China?

[laughter]

David Lampton.

David Lampton:

[laughs] I don't expect to live to see that day.

Cheng Li:

No, I disagree. I think that the future generation in China will have difficulty to understand the preceding generations went through. I do believe that China will be very rapid pace for political transformation in the next 10 years.

Melissa Block:

Ten years?

Cheng Li:

Ten years.

Melissa Block:

Ambassador Roy?

Cheng Li:

People in China say I'm too pessimistic.

[laughter]

J. Stapleton Roy:

I'm confident that Dr. Lampton actually will live --

[laughter]

-- to see it, and this is reflecting Dr. Kissinger's optimism about the future. I'm a little more cautious than Cheng Li in terms of whether it's 10 years or 15 years. But the pattern in Asia has been that countries that

countries that have been able to sustain rapid economic growth for 40 years have moved from authoritarian systems to representative forms of government without exception in east Asia. Without exception. We have South Korea, we have Taiwan, we have Thailand, we have Indonesia. Thailand shows that you can sometimes revert backwards.

I'd date China's period of rapid growth beginning after the 14th Party Congress, not in 1979, but beginning in 1992. We're only about 20 years through that process, so I think we've already seen the forces that want change for more representative forms of government operating in China. It's operating within the Communist Party itself at the moment, but sooner or later it's going to have to spill out in a broader way. And this is independent of the will of China's leaders. They are generating social forces that they will either have to suppress at enormous cost, or they're going to have to accommodate. And the question is can they accommodate them under conditions of stability so they can continue growth, and we don't know the answer to that question, but I would -- my sense is that China's fifth generation leaders realize that this is the big challenge they will be facing. Now whether it's they who actually carry China into the promised land, if you will, or the sixth generation leaders, I'm not quite sure about that. I would bet more on the sixth generation leaders, but it could happen earlier. And you can't exclude there is a possibility it won't happen the way we're foreseeing it. Leaders can screw up. But China's record has been pretty good at keeping the country on a positive track.

Henry Kissinger:

Let me make a point here. I agree with what has been said. I think China is moving in that direction, but as implied in some of these questions, an attitude that we know the answers to all the questions and that it is our mission to make the world exactly over in the American image. China has conducted itself for 4,000 years as the most continuous state. They managed to stagger through 3,800 years of this without assistance from the United States.

[laughter]

We should not assume that we know what the answer is. I think the direction is toward more openness. But we also have democratic problems. We also have a problem of how you reconcile various conflicting interests. And I think

we should be open and for the possibility that China will develop forms that are not exactly the ones that are similar to us. As a country we have to learn that when you conduct foreign policy, you have to deal with interests as well as values, and you have to reconcile the concerns of other countries with your own concerns. Otherwise it will not be possible, to build a general, global system. That is a national challenge for the United States, no matter which party is in office.

Melissa Block:

I want to turn this over to questions, I think that we have someone with a microphone in the audience. One on either side. Just, if you would, introduce yourself: tell us who you are and what organization or school you're with and ask the question. If you want to direct it to someone in particular, go ahead and do that.

Why don't we start on the left near the microphone, with the green shirt.

Eric Lowe:

Hello my name is Eric Lowe and I'm with the Fair Observer. My question is that, you know, like, you talk about, like, Xi Jinping as the fifth generation. But talking about all the fifth -- five generations all -- most of the people are appointed by Deng Xiaoping so do you talk about the transfer of power has been anointed. Are you talking about the anointment [sic] basically has been finished. So are you going to have, like, new rules on how the situation -- to the sixth generation, the seventh generation -- so are you expect there'll be new rules within the party and how the succession is going to can continued? Thank you.

Melissa Block:

Who would like to take that? Talking about internal dynamics within the Politburo of the party itself. Cheng Li?

Cheng Li:

Excellent question. I think the game will change. Game is changing. And the Bo Xilai incident actually, really, is motivated by Bo Xilai's own vision, own assessment that the previous model this kind of a, you know, black box manipulation by retired leaders that's coming to an end. Therefore he reach out to the public for support with this kind of a culture [unintelligible], and half western

campaign-style mixed campaign. Maybe you can argue it's too premature, but of course some other leaders like Guangdong's party chief Wang Yang doing similar things from different ideological and policy agenda. And maybe Bo Xilai is taking a right approach but he is the wrong person because he's loosest behaviors, and really alienated the country and divided nation and et cetera. But I think he sensed rightly that, you know, difficult to select the leaders, eventually Chinese political system should open up to find new sources of legitimacy.

Now, of course, not immediately one person, one vote. This is not feasible, but rather the so-called intraparty democracy. They're still considering whether they will use the thing in this Party Congress. Not only led the 2,270 delegates who select the four members in the alternate office but 370 central community members. But also let us send 370 members central committee to vote with -- for example if you want select a Politburo, 25 people, it will give 28 people on the ballots they eliminate three. Now this kind of vote can also eliminate the designated Standing Committee members. Because Standing Committee should be the Politburo.

So when you start through that, you really, on one hand, you change the source of legitimacy. You legitimize the future, the lobbies and the factional politics like LDP Japan or Dr. Kissinger's mention about [unintelligible]. But if you fail, then also will be a -- you know, really cause some serious problem for undermine even further the political system. Now that's why there are so hesitant to adopt that. But they are seriously considering that. This is part of a reason of the delay. Not just about the candidates of the Standing Committee. In my view, the older versions are not reliable because if you use the elections method no one knows. Jiang Zemin did not know. Hu Jintao did not know. But that's the issue, and so I think you're absolutely right. Game will change. And of the sources for the future leaders will be really quite different.

Melissa Block:

I see a lot of hands up. Let's go to this side of the room in the back on the right.

Yes.

Joe Bosco:

Hi, Joe Bosco [spelled phonetically], former student of Dr. Kissinger. I wanted to ask my old professor whether he's disappointed at all that after 40 years of generous engagement from the West, we still see the hostility and suspicion on the part of the communist leaders toward the U.S.?

Henry Kissinger:

I don't find hostility on the part of Chinese leaders. I read a lot of writings of Chinese think tanks that express a -- it seems suspicion of the United States. I'm not -- I'm not disappointed. I think it is inevitable when two great societies interact with each other from such different premises that the path will not be smooth. And I'm sure that if they've heard Chinese meeting, the same question could be asked with respect to American leaders by the Chinese, perhaps even more so.

So I think this is a gradual process which can be overcome only by some joint efforts with respect to the project and also with finding project in which we can engage jointly. Mike mentioned energy, it -- it's environment, proliferation of nuclear weapons. Those are issues that can only be solved on a global basis in which cooperation between China and the United States is essential. Have we found a complete consensus? No. But I have participated and others have participated in many conversations that indicate that it is possible to have such a dialog and that -- and also that the alternative is really going to lead to results, in my view, very similar to the drama of World War I in Europe.

Melissa Block:

Let's go to the middle, the man with the hat. Can we get the microphone to the middle?

Vishnip Odell:

My name is Vishnip Odell [spelled phonetically], National Advisory Council, South Asian Affairs. I'm reading Dr. Kissinger's book on China and on the phasing out of Zhou Enlai, I sense that one of the reasons might have been his very close relations with you and his 100-percent agreement on proceeding with everything that you wanted to accomplish on behalf of the total policy that China and U.S. were

following at that time. In other words, taking care of the Soviet Union's belligerency towards China.

Henry Kissinger:
What is the question?

Melissa Block:
Dr. Kissinger, the question again is did --

Male Speaker:
Zhou Enlai's meetings with you was a factor in his political fall from grace.

Melissa Block:
His ouster.

Henry Kissinger:
He was accused of -- especially in conversations that occurred after 1973 -- of having been agreeable, too agreeable to the United States. It was actually based on a complete misunderstanding of what -- of what his question was. As I understand it from published sources, on leaving China I offered China the same sort of direct communication with the White House that the Soviet Union already had. That is to establish a hotline to the White House. We had established that with the Soviet Union in order to prevent accidental wars and simply for the sake of symmetry. I proposed the same thing to Zhou Enlai. It was not a big deal from our point of view, it was a sort of thing you do at the end of a meeting.

[laughter]

But Mao, reading it, saw that there was a direct line being established to the prime minister and that the prime minister had indicated -- we didn't care we meant the top leadership. We didn't have in mind a separate line. And Mao, anyway, wanted to have nothing to do with any nuclear discussions with the United States. And every time it was raised by other people he -- he misunderstood it from our point of view. So -- but otherwise Zhou Enlai -- it -- we now know that Mao read the transcripts of every conversation with Zhou Enlai at the end of every day. And we know that the next day we would get an answer from Zhou Enlai, but sometimes directly drafted by Mao.

For example, I took a trip to China before Nixon's trip, between my secret trip and before Nixon's trip because I thought it was too dangerous to leave the communiqué open when only to two heads -- well so, I came with a draft communiqué and Zhou at least accepted it as a basis of discussion and the next day he came back with a scorching reply from Mao which I happened to think was correct, which was if we simply publish a communiqué of the usual type in which everyone seemed to agree with everybody, it didn't mean anything. And he came up with a proposal that we should list all our disagreements, and then list five agreements. And then those agreements then would mean something. So that was -- I mention that only to show that Zhou was so closely instructed that it never could have happened that he agreed to something vis-à-vis me, and I think the fall of Zhou Enlai had -- was due to more complicated factors, including the fact that Mao at that moment was confronting the Gang of Four, the expectation -- the recognition of his own imminent mortality and that he wanted to ensure the continuity of his style of revolutionary leadership. And I think those were the principal reasons of Zhou Enlai's demise.

But what do you people think? You're all --

David Lampton:

You're the master on the subject narrowly there, but I was thinking as you were speaking Zhou Enlai survived under Mao for a very long time, since the late '20s and '30s and he ran afoul of Mao early in his career and he lost. And I think Zhou Enlai had the basic operational code: don't get out ahead of the chairman. And so everything you said resonates with that background.

Henry Kissinger:

I never saw the slightest disagreement on substance. Zhou was a more Mandarin type and a different personality.

J. Stapleton Roy:

But there is evidence, for whatever reasons including the ones, that you mentioned that Zhou was not in Mao's favor in his last few years

Henry Kissinger:

Absolutely.

J. Stapleton Roy:

Yeah.

Melissa block:
Next question. In the red jacket.

Female Speaker:
My name is Hwei, a reporter with CCTV, China Central Television. And first I want to say I'm very glad to take part in the event and it's a privilege to meet all these famous experts on the stage and to raise my question in person. And here I have a question for Dr. Kissinger. As we know, both the U.S. and the China are facing transitions. So I'm wondering the current Asia rebalancing policy. After the -- the America's presidential election, how likely the current Asia rebalancing policy will be carried out? And how will that affect the U.S.-China relationship? Thank you.

Henry Kissinger:
Well, of course I'm not privy to all the actions that -- the pivoting of American policy, in part reflects a re-assessment of American priorities and is not directed against any particular country. With a withdrawal from Iraq and a withdrawal from Afghanistan, it was inevitable that a re-assessment of some American deployment take place. I have -- I would regret it if the relations with China were put into largely military terms. And I don't believe that that is the intention of the administration. The pivot has been expressed very much in military terms. But the fundamental objective should be to achieve a balance in which America operates in Asia on -- importantly on economic, social, and political objectives where China recognizes that it -- that it is not a -- that Asia should not be hegemonially [sic] dealt with and I believe that this is achievable. And I would not make the pivot. I view it primarily in military terms.

Female Speaker:
Just -- sorry, just a follow-up question. So I'm wondering: In the future, how should China, Japan, and the U.S. to manage their relationship in this region given the possible impact of the Asia rebalancing policy? Thank you.

Melissa Block:
Dr. Kissinger, you want to follow up on that?

Henry Kissinger:

The ideal outcome, which will take a long time to evolve, would be if the countries do not look at their relationship primarily as balancing each other and that a development and a relationship develops across the Pacific which is somewhat comparable to the development that has occurred across the Atlantic. This will be more difficult to do in Asia because the Asian countries still think of each other as rivals and even as strategic rivals to a degree that does not exist in Europe any longer.

So they -- there is of course -- when great countries deal with each other there is a balancing element involved, but the balance should be sought in non-military terms to the greatest extent possible, and should be superseded to the greatest extent possible by cooperative efforts, and this has to be a gradual process. This is why there have to be intense consultations and not only about grievances, but consultations about objectives. And several of the recent American administrations, Democrat and Republicans have attempted to do it. And I believe this administration has attempted to do this. And I'm confident that whoever wins in November will attempt to do it. We may make mistakes, but that should be the objective.

Melissa Block:

I know we've run out of time. I'd like to make room for one more question if that's okay.

On the right, on the aisle.

Dong Qui Yoo:

Me? Thank you. Dong Qui Yoo [spelled phonetically] with China Review Agency. My question is for Dr. Kissinger. The United States transferred the administration of Diaoyu islands to Japan in 1970s and took no position on the sovereignty issue. As the secretary -- state secretary of that time, could you please tell us the rationale of that policy? And secondly, how did you evaluate the so-called Chongqing model after you visited Chongqing last year did you change any mind right now?

Melissa Block:

That's a lot in one question.

[laughter]

That's a two-part question right there. Do you want to talk about the islands first or about Chongqing?

Henry Kissinger:

When I visited Chongqing, first of all, I periodically go to China. And I attempt to educate myself on significant developments in China. And I always consult State and I even -- I often consult the other two. I was invited to go, and I visit whenever I can, a province outside of Beijing. I hadn't been in Chongqing for six or seven years and so I decided to go to Chongqing. I did not approach it from the point of view that this was an alternative model to the existing model. I had known -- I'd met Bo Xilai when he was minister of commerce. And so it seemed reasonable for me to see what was going on in -- and it was absolutely not an aspect of the power struggle --

[laughter]

-- that may have taken place in China. I tried to educate myself. I'm not part -- I didn't even know there was a power struggle.

[laughter]

I mean, any observer could see that there was a dramatic -- that Bo Xilai was a more dramatic personality than the ordinary provincial chief. So that was the purpose of the one-day visit in Chongqing, the only one I've taken there in the better part of a decade. What was the other question?

J. Stapleton Roy:

You were -- you were actually national security advisor when the Okinawa version took place. And the Senkakus were included in part of that, as part of the Ryukyus, and he was asking what lay behind our decision at that time.

Henry Kissinger:

Well when I -- what I focused on with the Senkakus was the agreement that was made by Deng Xiaoping and the Japanese with respect to administrative control and to leave matters, let's say, undisturbed. That's the aspect I focused on. There was no active American involvement that I remember in formulating a conclusion that was reached between Japan and China, and my dearest wishes would be

that China and Japan retain the monopoly of control with that issue.

[laughter]

It is not one in which the United States should take a position on sovereignty or any other aspect. I also wanted to say one thing: A lot of the questions are directed to me because I've had the dramatic experiences, but it's people -- the people on my left here who keep the thinking on China alive and to provide the reservoir from which the occasional policy maker can draw and the -- those of us who've engaged in policy could not have done whatever was done if it weren't for a group of really dedicated people who've kept the subject alive when it was tough and who keep studying it when it gets more and more complicated.

Melissa Block:

And I think we'll have to leave it there. Thank you so much Dr. Kissinger, Ambassador Roy, Cheng Li, and David Lampton. Thank you so much.

[applause]

[end of transcript]