

RELEASE IN PART
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From: Jackie Newmyer [redacted]
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2009 6:51 PM
To: H
Subject: Re: Thanks

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Secretary Clinton,

Thank you! Will update you when I hear from her, and if there is anything else I should do, let me know. All best, Jackie

ps Saw that Foreign Minister Yeo was on your schedule today. Fyi, he is one of my favorite Singaporeans because of this 2007 speech on China, which he posted to his blog (!):

April 12, 2007

Foreign Minister George Yeo's speech at a dinner organised by the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy on 5 February 2007, which he gave off-the-cuff.

Thank you Kishore for your kind words. Dear friends, ladies and gentlemen. I was in India two weeks ago, had a good trip, spent nine days there. While in Calcutta after calling on the Chief Minister, I had a bit of time to look around so I attended a mass at Mother Theresa's house. Very interesting gathering; there was a Singapore nun there, she had been there for over ten years; Sister Maria Tony. I wondered why someone from Singapore would want to dedicate her life to picking up the dead and the dying in the back alleys of Calcutta and living that life. There were many nuns there who were in their ninth year. They take their first vow in the fifth year, renewable every year. In the tenth year they have to decide - final vows for eternity. So if you are not sure, please, there's a way out; if you are sure, then you're in the room. So the priest gave a very tough sermon and while he was talking, I could hear the din of traffic noise outside, in the streets of Calcutta. Then suddenly, I heard the call of the muezzin. Now this is a Hindu city. I told myself, I thought wow, what diversity in this country, India, and its ability to internalise this diversity and to find it unremarkable that the tiny woman from Albania should come into their midst, become one of them and then when she was beatified, was celebrated as an Indian, on the way to canonization.

China and India in that comparison- China is not India. China has a very different sense of itself; its deep internal construction is very different. Superficially there are similarities, as there is between China and the US and China and Europe. But if you look into it's deep construction, it is very different. When we talk about China's future and China in the 21st century, how China will behave in a world community, China's attitudes towards democracy, towards law, towards social justice. It is important first to look into this deep construction because that is their nature. Naturally we should not be deterministic, there is nothing inevitable in human history, but when we understand its nature, it becomes easier to anticipate its moves and you'll be less surprised by its actions.

A few years ago, the Chinese government embarked on a major project which is its dynastic duty- to write the history of the Qing dynasty, the Manchus, from 1368 to 1644. Ever since the Han dynasty, roughly contemporaneous with the Roman Empire, they developed a historiographic tradition of each dynasty writing the history of the previous period. So Sima Qian of the Later Han wrote of the earlier Han and the entire period before that; then later on they wrote about the Later Han, Jin wrote up the Three Kingdoms; Ming wrote up the Yuan. The Yuan, which was Mongol in its origins wrote up the Sung. Sung wrote up the Tang dynasty which was the Classical Period. The last dynasty, the Qing, collapsed in the Republican Revolution of 1911; this is now 2007. I think in 2003, they embarked on this project, 'The Official History of the Qing dynasty'. When the former Vice Premier Li Lanqing was in Singapore recently, I asked him about it. He said "we told the scholars not to rush this project". I asked him how long it would take to write this history. He said it would take many years, easily 10 years. I said, "have you collected the material?" He said yes. I asked, "external sources?" He

said yes, external sources too. All the countries, the Vatican, European countries, the whole lot; all assembled - 24 official histories, this would be the 26th. And Li's instruction to them was not to be too quick to draw conclusions!

Now Mao Tze Tung was a revolutionary, he was a great revolutionary. He overturned everything before but he knew his history, he read the 24 histories, and not only did he read them, he annotated them. But he wrote with a terrible, illegible scrawl, so scholars had to decipher those scrawls. Then they wrote commentaries on his commentaries and now it's all published. It is very difficult for the Chinese to depart from their own history because it's the same great plains, the same mountains more or less, the same neighbours more or less and they have seen the same patterns recur. So a long time ago during the Ming dynasty they wrote up the romantic period of the Three Kingdoms. The first line said: "Below heaven, great movements, great currents, long disunity leads to unity and long unity leads to disunity." So they accept as a part of their own deep nature that there are cycles in their civilisation; that they have ups and downs. In recent years, when you visit them, you could sense them feeling their own re-emergence, it's a bit scary. In the initial years, they were lacking in confidence, they asked many questions, but now they know that there is an organic vitality. It is like an adolescent who watches his own development, and conscious of it. I say scary because for those of us who live on the periphery of that empire, what happens there will radiate its influence on us and eventually, to a greater or lesser degree envelope us.

How do we see China? I think to begin with, it's important not to try and, from an intellectual viewpoint, transpose our own experiences on to China, because I believe it will develop according to its own logic, according to its own DNA. It is growing now, it will continue to grow, it will develop its own contradictions and one day those contradictions, many years from now, will lead to its own decline. So they say at the beginning of a dynasty the taxes are light but the treasury is full, and at the end of a dynasty, the taxes are crushing but the treasury is empty. The important thing to realise about China is that some things are deeply resistant to change. Take Confucius. Every time they had to overturn a dynasty, they had to overturn Confucius, because Confucius justified the status quo. So throughout the 19th century, whether it was the Taiping Revolution, the Communist movement or Sun Yat Sen; they spent their lives debunking Confucius. It reached its final moment when they criticised Zhou Enlai together with Confucius- no- Lin Biao together with Confucius. That was the last paroxysm. Today, Hu Jintao said [in Mandarin He Xie She Hui], "harmonious society". Suddenly you hear the resonance of Confucius coming back. And everywhere in the world on the pattern of Alliance Francaise, the Goethe Institute, the USIA, they establish Confucius Institutes and the learning of the Confucianist classics are coming back with remarkable force in China, not yet in the state curriculum but just parents wanting to teach their children the Confucianist ditties. Now why is this important? From Mao to Deng to Jiang Zemin, at every stage, they re-interpreted Marx. They are comfortable with the young Marx, the idea of the superstructure on the economic base, the idea that politics is concentrated economics- that they like. But the class struggle, they downplay. They talk about the Three Represents, the progressive forces, the progressive elements, they nurture those. Now Hu Jintao says "harmonious society", "peaceful re-emergence". This mindset has a certain attitude towards law, has a certain attitude towards religion, towards democracy and towards foreign policy and I would like to deal with each in turn.

Joseph Needham many years ago, I think in the 60's, the man who wrote The Science and Civilisation of China, that great encyclopedic work; he said its not that the Chinese have no legal tradition. In fact, by his estimation, the Chinese had a greater corpus of legal codification than the West. A greater corpus of legal codification than the West! Surprise, surprise. But the idea that the Emperor is below the law, that is completely alien to their thinking. Where did that idea come from? Well in the West, you may trace it back to Hammurabi, you may trace it back to Moses, to Greece, to Rome. But if you trace the evolution of that DNA, it goes back, way back, into its early beginnings. The Chinese had a very different evolutionary starting point. It was not in law, it was in an idea they call 'li' which is proper conduct among human beings. They believe, deep in their instincts, that law is only a means towards justice, and that when the outcome of law is perverse, then that law must be overridden, because justice, proper conduct, the proper relationship among human beings must take precedence. And to suddenly say that all that had happened in the previous dynasties, all that the earlier histories have summarised, are all wrong and that they should instead adopt something with its origins in Western Europe, which had as its crowning moment the crowning of Charlemagne by the Pope in the year 800;

to them, what are you talking about? For the Chinese, laws are more like regulations, means towards a larger end. Their attitude towards democracy follows a parallel pattern.

Democracy is not an end in itself, democracy is a means and they are quite happy to consider democracy as a useful means towards government and that at appropriate places and appropriate levels, democracy is good. So at the village and the township level they have democracy, it is a universal franchise. They approve a slate of candidates, and they have fierce elections, fierce campaigning, and those who are incompetent or arrogant or despotic, they get chucked out. But once you reach the level of the cities and the provinces, they say no. No direct democracy. Why not? Because they do not believe, with their view of the universe, that that is the way to produce good government. Any more than the Catholic Church believes that the way to elect the Pope is through universal franchise. That the parishioners should decide who should be the parish priest. The Parish Council, maybe, that's ok. But the parish priest? Bishops? Universal franchise? That's against God's laws. They have that kind of instinct embedded in them, it is not Communist, it is just Chinese. And they know that too much democracy, invariably leads to 'localitis'; of favouritism towards friends, relatives, people who are from the same villages whom we have a relationship with.

We have the same problem in Singapore, in fact this problem exists throughout East Asia. Till today, apart from Singapore, among Chinese communities and among many East Asian communities, the idea that ultimate control of the business should go outside the family is unpersuasive. You talk to Li Ka-shing, you talk to Robert Kwok, you talk to Lim Soe Liong, you talk to any of them; they will go back to the family. Why? Because they believe that in the end, what matters at the deepest level, is trust. And the family guarantees you that trust.

This is also the Indian wisdom. So you have the Marwaris controlling the economy of Calcutta, you have the Parsees, you have Sindhis, of which Kishore is a member, you have the Chettiars. They operate on the basis of deep trust and at a completely different level from that of contract law. And because they distrust local affiliations, in two dynasties, Ming and Qing, no senior official could serve within 400 miles of where he was born. No local official to serve within 400 miles, so in other words, in Singapore, no Singaporean can govern Singapore. They go beyond that, today there's almost no province in China where the provincial leader is from that province. Now you consider this, you transpose this onto Europe, it's as if routinely, the President of France is not French. And if you are a German, you are disqualified as a Chancellor of the Republic. And an Italian cannot be trusted to serve in Rome. Ancient wisdom! What is remarkable is this is accepted as legitimate. If you are Cantonese and you have a Northerner squatting over you, you do not consider it perverse or an abomination. This is part of life and in fact, you are more likely to have impartial governor than if a local boy were to be there, because he is more likely to favour those who are related to him or those who are his friends.

So when you talk democracy to the Chinese, it is against this cultural backdrop. So what applied to the Qing dynasty, the Ming dynasty, they have taken a step further recently in China. They introduced even more rules, governing the circumstances under which you are disqualified from serving in the area near where you were born. You can't stay in a ministry for too long, you can't stay in a department for too long because if you stay too long, you develop affiliations and those affiliations will result in siddoors and guanxi and corruption. Of course, many of these rules will still be breached, and there will be scandals from time to time and they will act on those scandals. For as long as the central leadership is pristine, the system can be maintained. But one day they will become corrupt, as in so many previous dynasties, and a downward spiral begins. And it is very difficult in that situation to reverse it.

So I mentioned at the table that for India, it's not a country that can sustain a revolution, because its deep structure would not allow for it. I think China is a country which can only be renewed through periodic revolutions. Kishore asked me when- I said well maybe in 200 years time because these are long cycles and they expect as a matter of course that the history of the People's Republic would not be written by the People's Republic. It will be written by the next dynasty. Except that right now they say we shouldn't call it a dynasty, we are now democrats, we are a republic, there is no Emperor... Well, whatever term you call it, it will be done much later.

Let me now talk about their attitude towards religion. Being a Roman Catholic I follow quite closely the ups and downs in their relationship with the Vatican and I find it quite fascinating. The Jesuits, when they went to China in the Ming dynasty, hoped that they could convert the Emperor, and all of China would become Catholic and a great mission would have been achieved. They never succeeded. Some of the brightest minds from

Europe went there. Matteo Ricci, he corrected the Chinese calendar, he repaired the clocks in the palace, he saw the throne, but he never got to meet the Emperor and he died in China. And his tomb, it's in the compound of the Beijing Party School today. And the church which he founded is still there today. 'Li Matou', that's what he called himself, he applied for permission to be buried in China and he was given that permission. Then when the Manchus swept southwards, in 1644, the missionaries thought now they had a chance, "the Manchus will be a bit more accomodating towards us, we will yet Christianise China". So if you read the despatches of the missionaries during that period, the Tartar Wars they described it, they were full of hope. But not a chance. They appealed to the Second Emperor, Kangxi.

"Can we send more missionaries?" "No problem". "Can we have them all report to a papal legate in Beijing" "No such thing". The Emperor imposed one condition: "you can send as many priests as you want to China but they must die in China, they cannot leave after that". You see, instinctively, the Chinese, when they see the Catholic Church, they see someone like themselves, someone whose claim to its members is total. And for whom that loyalty is a jealous one.

Mind you they do not try to control everything; they just control the big things, dogma, doctrine. After that you are left on your own and you are financially independent, but on the big issue of who appoints ministers and provincial secretaries, it's the same as the Pope appointing Bishops and Bishops ordaining Priests and governing this vast empire, whether we're talking about the Chinese empire or the Catholic empire. They have about the same number of members in the world which is why their interaction is a complex and difficult one. And over the appointment of Bishops, both seek ultimate authority. In the end they have got to find a way to resolve it. I can anticipate the Vatican's argument that "we are not of this realm, we are of the other realm, so please we are not in conflict". As for the Chinese leaders, their attitude towards religion from the earliest days is to keep religion at arm's length. Those who govern the empire, they are areligious, they can have private religions, but in matters of their public conduct, they are Confucianist. In public, you are not a Catholic, you are not a Muslim, you are not a Buddhist. When the Jesuits went to China, they were very impressed by this - that it was possible to create a moral order based not on religion but on ethics. So impressed, that they wrote about it, and influenced people like Voltaire and the other Encyclopedists. It helped inspire the Frence revolution- that you could get rid of the Church, and still maintain a moral order in society.

I've talked about China and law, China and democracy, China and religion, now let me talk about China and foreign policy which is perhaps your greatest interest; about which I can only talk about generally because you are the experts in this field. I think it's very difficult for the Chinese to break from their old mindset that they are [Zhong Guo], the Middle Kingdom, they are at the center of the Universe, then there are the other 'chopsticks peoples' who are semi-Sinic. I think they consider Singapore to be semi-Sinic. Then there are those who are beyond that realm, who are what the Greeks would have called Barbarians. The Mongols, the Manchus, the Europeans, the Americans, the Indians and so on.

Now all that jargon of course is not in use today. They are very civilised, they will welcome you with great hospitality - lavish dinners, very courteous words, offering you the best of everything in the house. It reminded me of the way my mother used to teach us at home, we were a big family and the stranger has got to be treated well, the visitor has to be treated well, because you are afraid of the visitor. So you always treat visitors better than your own family members because the visitor is capricious, he can harm you so make sure you fit him in. Those who are within your authority, you can always maintain order anyway. This is the way, in their minds, the universe is ordered. So I can understand why the Koreans, the Japanese, the Vietnamese, to some extent, the Singaporeans, they feel uncomfortable about what they see as a repetition of a pattern they have seen many times before in the past. Will the Chinese change this principle of foreign policy, I think they have, because, never in their history have they met, have they existed in close contact with competing centers of power, with the US, with Europe, India, and you are no longer separated by oceans which cannot be crossed, mountains which cannot be crossed, now they are connected. So they are making adjustments.

It will be interesting to watch how they handle their Olympics; if the Olympics become an exercise of pure Chinese nationalism, I think the international reaction against China will be very severe. But I think the Chinese will be sophisticated. I expect they will organise cheer teams for the Americans, for the Japanese, so that there is an appearance of courtesy and common humanity. They are very careful to ensure that their words fit conditions today.

But let me say in their defence that many of these methods they use arise out of fear, not out of a desire to

dominate. If you analyse the old tributary system, those who sent tributes got more than they gave in return. It became a racket. So the Japanese merchants competed to get tokens from [Ryukyu] in order to be able to do the China trade because it meant a lot of money. The Chinese are fearful of foreigners. They are fearful of the Russians to the north, the Muslims to the West, the Indians across the Himalayas, but mostly the Americans across the Pacific. Their strategy is to keep the temperature low, low profile, hide the shine of your armour, the shine of your sword, just play the game and concentrate on economic development. Internally will they make preparations? I have no doubt, because they have a deep fear. Is their intention to dominate, to conquer, the way the European powers did in the past? I don't think so. I don't think there is a great desire to turn non-Chinese into Chinese. Maybe Korea, maybe Vietnam, maybe Mongolia, who at various points in time were part of their greater empire, they might consider worth civilising. But beyond that, Sinicising Indians, Russians? No, I don't think they will want to do that. So as they now become stronger and more powerful, I believe that while their old nature will re-assert itself, they will also be reacting to us. If they find the world a threatening place, they will develop their own responses to those threats.

Quite early in the day, they wanted to neutralise Southeast Asia, Asean. It had never been an area which threatened them, historically. So they didn't worry about Southeast Asia as a threat. But resources, sea lanes, they go through Southeast Asia. And they made a dramatic move a few years ago. Zhu Rongji was here for the ASEAN-China summit. He said, "free trade agreement". At that time when he announced it, the leaders of ASEAN almost fell off their chairs. We thought of China an economic threat to us. Not as a partner. Took us almost a year to digest the implications and to say yes, let's negotiate. Step by step. And all the time China was assuring us that we would benefit more than they would benefit. When the Framework Agreement was signed by Zhu Rongji in 2002 in Phnom Penh, he made two remarkable statements. He said if after 10 years, the agreement benefits China more than it benefits Southeast Asia, let us renegotiate it. I can never imagine the American USTR, or the European Trade Commissioner, talking like that. I mean in a contract, a deal is a deal, it's settled for eternity. Then he said: "China does not seek for itself an exclusive position in Southeast Asia", so he acknowledged that we were not just going to date one girl, we intended to be promiscuous from the beginning. Towards Northeast Asia, I think it is very complicated, because there is so much history and legacy. Towards Central Asia, towards Russia, they have deep fears. Towards America, it has become a relationship bound together at so many points, a rupture would become more and more unthinkable. But it is going to be a very difficult relationship, it will be the most important and most difficult relationship to manage in this century. If it's badly managed there will be war, if it's properly managed there will be another generation of peace and hundreds of millions of people in the world would be raised out of the depths of poverty. In this area, you are the experts, but whenever I see China and watch its moves, I go back to its deep nature because it's not easy for a country so vast, with such a sense of itself, to depart too much from its deep nature. Thank you.
George Yeo

On Mon, Apr 27, 2009 at 5:57 PM, H <HDR22@clintonemail.com> wrote:
Michele,

I look forward to getting together to discuss a number of issues. Thanks for following up w Jackie Newmyer.
Her email:

All the best, Hillary

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