US China Relations Essay, Research Paper

After rather lengthy negotiations between the United States and China, there has

been a trade agreement reached between the two countries. China has agreed to

enter into the World Trade Organization (WTO). This along with U.S. Deputy

Assistant Defense Secretary Kurt Campbell?s visit to China in an attempt to

mend relations damaged by the U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade,

marked a good series of events for U.S. and Chinese relations. The article also

shows that the relationship between these two countries still needs work which

cannot be done with ease. A century ago, the U.S. fought off rival countries in

a battle for economic influence in China. The 20th century began with U.S.

Secretary of State Jon Hay arguing that whoever understood China ?has the key

to world politics for the next five centuries.? Yet, according to the article,

foreign policy experts agree that most Americans see what they want to see.

Harvey Sicherman, President of the Foreign Policy Research Institute put it

nicely in the article, ?The pattern of our policy toward China is a series of

illusions punctuated by unpleasantries.? Professor Michael Hunt, an historian

of U.S.-China relations points out, ?We really invest a lot of hopes in China,

we do this repeatedly, and they?ve really been crushed. They are so much an

expression of our own needs and our own expectations.? Take the idea of the

China market. One Far-Eastern expert proclaimed at the end of the last century,

?No other market in the world offers such vast and varied opportunities for

the further increase of American exports.? Take that comment with this one by

the U.S. chamber of Commerce about the recent progress made, ?This is really a

landmark opportunity to open up China?s vast market to American companies.?

These expectations could be dangerous, points out the author. The market might

not even materialize into what many are predicting it to be. To achieve the

?dream? of a billion-plus consumers of American products, China will have to

raise the average income of its citizens which is no easy or short-term task.

Such changes cannot happen overnight, China?s move toward a market economy

will require ?systematic improvement? at all levels of society according to

the author. One of the grandest illusions of Western Policy has been the

reasoning that it can single-handedly change China. For more than a century

Western missionaries, businessmen, and advisers have come to China believing in

their ?superiority? over the nation. This arrogance was present because they

possessed advanced technical skills and a sense of moral rightness. These

Westerners thought they should be welcomed and listened to immediately. When the

Chinese went their own way, these same Westerners felt betrayed by the entire

nation of China. The author points out a specific example of this occurring in

1949. When the Chinese Communist forces finally took over the mainland and

established the People?s Republic, many Americans engaged in a witch-hunt over

who had ?lost China?, as if China was a thing that could be lost and also as

if the United States had any control over the destiny of such an ancient and

populous nation. A key to this historical arrogance is the American idea that

market forces can rapidly transform an authoritarian government into a model

democracy. U.S. trade negotiators still argue the current trade pact between

China and the United States will help the Chinese achieve, in their words,

?greater freedom and greater global prosperity.? Robert Dallek, a foreign

policy expert and presidential historian, says ?Americans often think the end

of such development is something that looks like the United States.? This is

an idea that goes way back to the 19th Century. According to Dallek, ?Chinese

movement toward democracy may never come about or even come near to what we

think it should be.? And if it does, ?It will be their kind of capitalism,

their kind of democracy.? The author?s points seem clear in that although

much progress has been made in recent weeks, there is still a lot of work to be

done. Yadong Liu, a former official in the Chinese Foreign Ministry, agrees with

the author and does not see China?s recent development as leading to the end

of conflict with the United States. He emphasizes China?s nationalism by

claiming that , ?Both the leadership and population in general are still

driven by desire to restore China to what it was hundreds of years ago,?

before it was dominated by a series of foreign powers, including the United

States. The author thinks of this nationalism as more of a ?self defensive?

form of nationalism. It seems as if anything happens, whether it is large or

small, it can easily irritate the Chinese if they believe it is insulting or

humiliating towards them. This helps to explain why the U.S. bombing of the

Belgrade embassy touched off a number of protests against the United States. For

Americans, says the author, ?The danger is that we become too mesmerized by

our own success.? And by doing so, ?We miss the realities that actually

shape the future.? He makes it clear that if we expect too much out of this

current trade agreement, it will only put off implementing it fully. The

author?s points can be used when looking at trade dealing with China in a

business and market situation. Although much progress has been made, it is still

up in the air as to who got the better deal. If eventually U.S. firms are able

to export or sell their products to the entire Chinese population, there are

unlimited possibilities. With a massive population, and a better economy on the

way, China would be and ideal location to sell your product. This still remains

to be in the future according to the article. It will take some mending of

issues for the Chinese to even consider the U.S. for major importing and

exporting. Time will also determine if China will ever reach their goal to have

an equal trading relationship that the U.S. has with other countries around the

world through the World Trade Organization. Article #2 The article starts out

with an image of Chan Yinmiao, a carpenter sitting by the side of the road on a

Beijing overpass, waiting in the wind for work. When the author mentioned the

breakthrough trade deal his government struck with the United States recently,

Chan brightens up. Chan?s family lives hundreds of miles away in eastern China

where they cultivate rice. He hopes the trade deal will open up lucrative export

markets especially for their crop. ?The more the market opens, the more

opportunities we?ll have to make money.? Chan claimed. Obviously this

excitement regarding the new trade deal extends beyond those who hope to measure

its benefits in dollars, cents, and improved trade figures. The deal did mark a

major milestone in China?s campaign to join the World Trade Organization(WTO).

Some have hoped that entry in the trade group that makes the rules for world

trade will also spur improvements in human rights, legal reforms, and

eventually, progress towards a democratic government. The author reasons that an

economic opening will hopefully bring about a political opening in a country

desperately in need of both. Also, a free and private economy forms the base for

a democratic system, so it will make China?s government and legal system

evolve toward democracy. President Clinton and his supporters have argued that

growing trade, foreign contacts, and the World Trade Organization?s rules on

fair competition will open markets and legal processes will help bring China

closer to other international countries. A major part in the deal between China

and the U.S. involved the investment of China?s telephones and Internet

networks, not allowed under the initial deal, but will make both networks

cheaper and available to more Chinese, thus increasing the amount and flow of

information throughout the world. Other, more social changes could occur because

of the new deal are, more Western movies will bring more new ideas, more foreign

lawyers and businessmen who will expect Chinese courts to enforce contracts

could advance rule by law, rather than by bureaucrats. Also, foreign investments

will create more new jobs, offering a wider range of employment opportunities.

Wang Shan, a political commentator and author believes that the Chinese leaders

have not clearly considered the social changes that entrance into the WTO could

bring, ?They are not sufficiently prepared for the pressures on Chinese

society,? he said. ?Chinese leaders feel that entering the WTO will promote

Chinese exports, open up world markets, and attract investments. But Americans

feel that once China enters this system great changes will occur in Chinese

society, including political and social changes.? The author goes on to

express other concerns that the Chinese have about this new entrance into the

WTO. Specifically that trickle-down civil rights improvements through increased

trade will come too slowly and that foreign governments will have to pressure

China over its human rights record to bring about deeper change. Lin Mu, a

one-time aide to former Communist Party leader Hu Yaobang, elaborates on the

subject of social change, ?It?s an idle dream for the American government to

think it can improve the human rights situation with economic cooperation.?

The article again shifts to other possible drawbacks that China?s new

membership to the WTO could hold within it. Initially jobs could become scarcer

as ailing state firms and inefficient family farms give in to the new foreign

competition. China?s state-run media has been selling the WTO deal to the

public all along, but does officially admit that millions of people could be

thrown out of work, including more than nine million people associated with

agriculture. And even though China has negotiated for WTO entry for 13 years,

its social security system remains very unsophisticated. With these factors

combined, surely there will be a rise in the already common worker?s protests

that have prompted a police crack down on such incidents. A major point the

author displays in the article is the issue regarding the exploitation of

workers in China. Long-term labor activists fear that because the communist

government bans independent trade unions, jobs generated by increased foreign

investment could lead to this greater exploitation of the workers. Already tough

and unsafe factories prevail in provinces all over China. In the province of

Guangdong which is the southern economic powerhouse that handles forty percent

of China?s foreign trade, the rights of the worker has extra significance

because the province stands to benefit quite nicely through the WTO entry. Han

Dongfang a veteran Chinese labor campaigner who lives in forced exile in Hong

Kong because China won?t let him return to the mainland sums up the issue on

worker exploitation, ?You can say they provide job opportunities. But the

people who work there are not ?people?, they?re ?labor.? They have no

rights to speak out about their conditions, wages, or benefits.? It?s clear

that the author wants to emphasize that working conditions in China will not get

better, but possibly even get worse. He clarifies that without the right for

workers to set up unions, job opportunities brought by the WTO could turn

workers into slaves. Under those conditions, there is no way that anyone can

claim that the WTO will in any way benefit human rights in China. In terms of a

business standpoint, this article shows how the deal between the United States

and China could end up producing more bad press for human rights in China.

According to this article, the cons certainly outweigh the pros regarding

China?s new membership into the WTO. American companies thinking about trading

with China should definitely give notice to the production facility as well as

the establishment of employees in order to make sure they are not being

exploited. The exploitation of workers does not sit well with anyone in the

United States, and any correlation between your company and a company that

offers no rights to its workers could mean withdrawal of investors, workers, and

most importantly consumers. Article #3 This article focuses on China?s current

president, Jiang Zemin, and the role he played in China?s recent agreement

with the United States to join the World Trade Organization. The agreement made

with the U.S. will open China to free international trade for the first time in

history. Along the way, the 73 year-old Jiang had to practically ?move

mountains? of conservative opposition in China where he is trying to change

the relationship between Beijing and Washington DC. The deal was unprecedented

for China, but had equal importance to Jiang himself. Jiang dealt with the

United States in a profound way, waiting for United States President Bill

Clinton to call him twice before backing the deal himself. When American

negotiators arrived in Beijing, Jiang kept his distance from the discussions,

instead he sent Premier Zhu Rongji to work out the details. Once the deal was

signed however, Jiang kept with his emperor mentality and assumed direct contact

with the negotiators. An advocate of technology, Jiang seems to be the right man

for China going into the 21st century. Yet he doesn?t quite have the imperial

status in the eyes of the Chinese. In Beijing, the WTO celebration was poorly

choreographed and lacked a certain greatness to it, and Jiang?s speech

didn?t hold the people?s attention for long at all. Despite these flaws,

Jiang clearly strives to be as imperial as he can possibly be, perhaps join the

ranks of suck emperors as Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. But in China?s long

history, an Emperor needs to inspire awe, with a little bit of fear mixed into

his subjects. Jiang isn?t quite there but tackling such a large subject as

world trade is a good place to start. Jiang is not one to start breaking up the

entire system however which he leaves to Premier Zhu. It was Zhu who traveled to

the United States in April in an attempt to strike up talks concerning WTO. He

failed only because the White House at the time thought it would be

?politically unwise? to sign such an agreement at that point in time. Jiang

simply sat back, gained concessus back in China, and then awaited for President

Clinton to approach him. It was through this consensus that Jiang had

established that the negotiations were a success. The author?s main points

concern Jiang and his dilemma. The dilemma that he is a prisoner of the Chinese

Communist Party that he is leading fifty years after its revolution. The

communist party is one that is empty of vision, worried about unrest, out of

touch with the younger generation that concerns itself more with money than

ideology. It seems that the harder Jiang tries to impress the citizens of China,

the less interested they become. He certainly acknowledges the fact that

economic development is need in China, but being open politically is just simply

not an option he has. Even immediately after the WTO deal was signed, members of

Falun Gong, a banned meditation cult were being arrested. It is clear that Jiang

wants to help China prosper, it might just take a little longer than he had

hoped. The World Trade Organization or WTO has its headquarters in Geneva,

Switzerland. It currently has 135 countries with membership. The WTO is the

successor of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade formed in 1947. Once

limited to goods, the WTO?s aim has been extended to include intellectual

property and trade in services. The organization?s task is to administer and

enforce the trade agreements made by member nations, ensuring the flow of goods

and services. Its rulings are law among all of its members. In terms of a

business/market situation, here is a breakdown on who got the better deal

between China and the United States. In Telecommunications, China will let

telecom firms, including U.S. giants such as AT&T, have new, though still

limited access to its domestic market. The winner in this case are the U.S.

telecom firms by a long shot. They will be able to sell their voice and data

services to the Chinese which is a huge market. In farming, China said it would

cut tariffs on farming goods to less than 15% by the year 2005. That should give

many Chinese access to new foods from all over the world. Farmers in the U.S.

will be the winners in this respect because they can expect to sell much more to

China. In the steel industry, China agrees its state-owned and subsidized steel

industry will not dump tons of cheap products onto crucial U.S. markets. There

really in no clear winner in this agreement, China will sell more cheap steel

overseas while U.S. firms will still have to compete world wide. Finally, in the

textile industry the Chinese textile plants will be able to sell their products

anywhere around the world. China is clearly the winner here, in this respect the

WTO is like a dream come true. For the U.S. plants, the cheap Chinese exports

will be a nightmare. Conclusion The World Trade Organization is going to produce

many opportunities for the entire nation of China. For the first time in its

history, China will be able to share its resources and receive resources from

all around the world. The only mistake we can make regarding this situation is

to push our (the U.S.) democratic views upon them while we trade with them. The

politics in China will not change overnight and they probably will not change in

the next ten years. It is extremely important that we respect that China will do

what is best for itself throughout the course of trading, which I believe it

will do. Another major concern involving China and the WTO is the issue of

worker?s rights. Attention has to be kept in regards to this touchy subject,

but again, the world must realize that it can?t impose moral laws as well as

trade laws in a different country. I hope that China does focus on the bettering

of working conditions and I also hope that the majority of jobs, especially

agricultural, can be saved in some fashion. I believe that China will succeed in

this new trade agreement, and hopefully the rest of the world can benefit as

well. It might be rough going at first, but only because it will be new to such

a historic and old nation as China. I realize that old habits are particularly

hard to break, but I am confident that under President Jiang Zemin, that China

will prosper economically and socially under this new agreement.

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