

# European Journal of International Relations

<http://ejt.sagepub.com>

---

## Why Engage? China and the Logic of Communicative Engagement

MARC LYNCH

*European Journal of International Relations* 2002; 8; 187

DOI: 10.1177/1354066102008002002

The online version of this article can be found at:  
<http://ejt.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/8/2/187>

---

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:

Standing Group on International Relations of the ECPR

Additional services and information for *European Journal of International Relations* can be found at:

**Email Alerts:** <http://ejt.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

**Subscriptions:** <http://ejt.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

**Reprints:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

**Permissions:** <http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav>

**Citations** <http://ejt.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/8/2/187>

# Why Engage? China and the Logic of Communicative Engagement

MARC LYNCH

*Williams College, Williamstown, USA*

---

With the breakdown of American relations with China after 1989 and the rapid growth of Chinese power in the 1990s, the American policy of engagement attempted to encourage China to become a moderate participant in the international status quo through the building of economic interdependence, participation in international institutions and strategic dialogues. The widespread belief in the failure of this policy has helped to drive the spiraling conflict between the two states. Drawing on Habermas's distinction between strategic and communicative action, this article argues that the unacknowledged rationalist theoretical foundations of the policy of engagement explain its empirical experience. Engagement rested on a strategic mode of action, in which the building of interdependencies and dialogues were instrumental policies to change the target state. Rationalist signaling models demonstrate effectively why engagement is likely to fail within such a strategic mode of action. The policy of engagement carries within it the potential for a communicative mode of action, however, in which states enter into public dialogues in order to more effectively communicate, discover and shape preferences, and arrive at mutually acceptable institutions. Communicative engagement, designed to allow for the free exchange of reasoned argument under conditions which minimize the direct application of power, provides a superior means to achieve the avowed goals of engagement. Through an analysis of an important potentially conflictual strategic relationship, this article advances the emerging dialogue between rationalist and critical theories by focusing on communication, uncertainty and the transformative potential of public discourse. It draws on a theory of communicative action rooted in Habermas to evaluate the empirical record of engagement in the 1990s, and to articulate theoretical foundations for a communicative engagement which more effectively communicates and shapes state preferences.

KEY WORDS ♦ audience costs ♦ China ♦ communicative action ♦ engagement ♦ Habermas ♦ public sphere ♦ signaling ♦ uncertainty

---

---

*European Journal of International Relations* Copyright © 2002  
SAGE Publications and ECPR, Vol. 8(2): 187–230  
(1354–0661 [200206] 8:2; 187–230; 023827)

Through the 1990s, determined efforts to craft a productive relationship between the United States and a rising China were repeatedly undermined by mutual suspicions, crises and confrontation. There are few more graphic — or important — examples of the destabilizing consequences of uncertainty in a strategic relationship. Uncertain about Chinese intentions and rising material power, the Clinton Administration crafted the policy of ‘engagement’ aimed at incorporating a rising China peacefully into the existing international order while encouraging trade and democratization. China, uncertain of American intentions, took up some aspects of engagement while remaining suspicious of others. Despite generating important benefits for each state, engagement aroused significant criticism. American critics described the policy as the appeasement and empowerment of a dangerous revisionist power. Many Chinese observers considered engagement to be little more than ‘soft containment’ at best, and at worst a strategy to overthrow the Chinese regime. Most American analysts now consider engagement a failure, citing China’s ongoing conflict with Taiwan, military modernization program and alleged nuclear spying, and continuing human rights abuses. This verdict seems premature, however. The presumption of failure rests upon a distinctively strategic mode of action, in which engagement aims solely at manipulating a target state. This dominant conception misunderstands the logic, the potential, and ultimately the empirical record of engagement. The emphasis on achieving direct behavioral change has slighted precisely the communication benefits for which engagement is best suited. It also has meant a pronounced tendency to underestimate the value of what engagement did in fact achieve. Within key security issue areas such as arms control, engagement has accomplished considerably more towards revealing and shaping China’s — and America’s — preferences than is widely realized. Chinese behavior in the security realm has shifted dramatically in line with many of the avowed goals of engagement, such that ‘since the early 1990s, Chinese nonproliferation and arms control policy has shifted remarkably, drawing closer to widely accepted norms and practices’ (Gill, 2001: 257). This article draws on a theory of communicative action rooted in Habermas to reconceptualize engagement as a means for communicating and shaping state preferences and to evaluate the empirical record of engagement in the 1990s.

Despite heated political and academic debate, there has been little serious thinking about the theoretical foundations of engagement. There have been wide-ranging discussions of power transitions, the security dilemma, economic interdependence and socialization in the IR literature on China (Shambaugh, 1996; Goldstein, 1997/98; Johnston and Ross, 1999; Papayanou and Kastner, 1999/2000). Rather than this common focus on the political economy of economic engagement or the security ramifications

of increasing Chinese material power, this article emphasizes the central role of information and communication in the strategic relationship (Jervis, 1970, 1976). The primary problem complicating the strategic relationship between the US and China is the breakdown of shared norms, understandings and expectations about the nature of the relationship in the 1990s. While rationalist theory identifies the problem of the inability of either state to credibly communicate information about its preferences, its assumptions largely preclude a satisfying solution. Understanding engagement requires a richer conception of communication. Habermas's theory of communicative action provides such a foundation for a *critical* reading of engagement. Strategic dialogues, building interdependencies and participating in multi-lateral institutions carry the potential for such a communicative mode of action. The US–China interaction becomes an important empirical case for understanding the role of communicative action within a potentially conflictual strategic relationship. This article seeks to advance the emerging dialogue between rationalist and critical theories by focusing on the logic of communication within such strategic relationships (Dryzek, 1992; Adler, 1997; Checkel, 1998; Price and Reus-Smit, 1998; Schieman, 2000).

One of the most pervasive critiques of engagement has been that it became an end unto itself, with no clear articulation of the objectives. This is not entirely fair. While advocates of engagement policies have articulated a wide range of objectives, emphasizing different goals at different times, three consistently stand out — discovering the preferences of the targeted state, shaping those preferences in desired directions and creating stable international institutions. The rationalist theories upon which most engagement strategies have been based are, however, poorly suited to each of those objectives. Signaling models demonstrate the difficulty of communicating preferences, given the strategic incentives to misrepresent them under conditions of anarchy (Fearon, 1995; Morrow, 1999). Rationalist models explicitly rule out endogenous preference change except through political or institutional change at the domestic level (Lake and Powell, 1999). Rationalist models of engagement rely on a logic of behavioral modification through incentives and sanctions, along with a somewhat inconsistent neoliberal model of change, by which integration into the international economy will lead to democratization. Finally, rationalist theory says little about the legitimacy of international institutions, emphasizing instead their efficiency or their utility for the exercise of power (Hurd, 1999). In short, the theoretical orientation of rationalist theory strongly predisposes analysis towards expecting the failure of engagement.

Strategic action captures only one dimension of international politics, however. In addition to the instrumental logic of consequences, actors within social environments act based upon a logic of appropriateness. Much

recent constructivist research has focused upon processes of socialization, in which actors internalize established international norms (Checkel, 2001). When norms break down, however, or when the appropriate norm governing a situation is unclear, actors can engage in what Risse calls a logic of 'arguing' aimed at re-establishing common expectations and understandings (Risse, 2000). Drawing on James Bohman's theory of public deliberation, I define *communicative engagement* as 'a dialogical process of exchanging reasons for the purpose of resolving problematic situations that cannot be settled without . . . coordination and cooperation' (1996: 27). When two states recognize that neither can act effectively without taking into account the other, communicative engagement aims at establishing common interpretations and mutual expectations governing both cooperative and competitive behavior. The ideal of communicative engagement is a dialogue in which both actors enter into an open-ended discourse across multiple levels aimed at arriving at communicative consensus on these foundations. This does not mean, of course, that dialogue produces an automatic harmonization of preferences. It does mean, however, the construction of a thin common lifeworld within which it becomes possible to maintain more cooperative interaction. This clarifies the nature of the game being played, building common knowledge which stabilizes the intersubjective understandings of the interaction. Communicative engagement presumes only that states *might* prefer cooperation to conflict and seek ways to overcome the security dilemma and strategic information problems.

Engagement could follow either strategic or communicative logic, or a mixture of both. The problems troubling the US–China relationship had to do less with the shifting balance of power than with the breakdown of the mutual understandings and expectations that governed relations prior to 1989. Faced with the breakdown in these norms and expectations, the US and China sought to reconstruct the foundations of a relationship based upon common understandings, perceptions and expectations. The Clinton Administration's policy of engagement followed a logic of strategic action, defined in terms of changing China through non-coercive means rather than as arriving at mutually acceptable outcomes through the exchange of reasoned argument. Engagement was widely understood as a 'hedging' strategy, in which the United States attempted to reassure China about its intentions while attempting to bind and shape its behavior (Johnston and Ross, 1999). The American strategy of engagement, because of its unacknowledged rationalist theoretical premises, fell short of the international public deliberation necessary to recreate the foundations of common expectations and understandings necessary for normal interaction. The introduction of more communicative modes of action into engagement,

particularly after the Taiwan Straits crisis of 1996, helps to account for 'China's relatively recent (post-1995) embrace of multilateral institutions, particularly in the security sphere' (Shambaugh, 2001: 28). The empirical record suggests that where engagement has followed a more communicative logic, it has been more successful in achieving its *avowed* goals, if not the more ambitious goals of its critics. This can be seen in China's recent willingness to accommodate its behavior to prevailing international norms in the realm of nuclear arms control, including signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, military transparency, conventional and nonconventional arms sales and nuclear proliferation (Johnston and Evans, 1999; Gill, 2001). A recent Council on Foreign Relations report concludes that 'when intensive, high-level, strategic dialogue with China's leaders was conducted . . . progress was made in shaping Chinese thinking. Over time, Chinese perceptions can be influenced through dialogue, provided the Americans in turn are willing to listen carefully to Chinese views.' Crucially, 'the dialogue cannot be a lecture' (Economy and Oksenberg, 1999: 18).

The empirical claims made for communicative engagement rest on theoretical arguments about each of engagement's goals — revealing preferences, shaping preferences and creating stable institutions. This conception of engagement begins from the goal of achieving communication, rather than the goal of non-coercive manipulation. Communicative engagement more effectively reveals the preferences of each side regardless of whether an actor would prefer to bluff. Change in beliefs which is internalized through persuasion, the accepting of reasons or some other mechanism of socialization will be more likely to produce durable changes in state behavior (Checkel, 1997; Cortell and Davis, 2000).<sup>1</sup> Finally, dialogue offers an important route towards the development of mutually acceptable institutions, although the nature of these institutions contrasts sharply with the goal of the socialization of a weaker state (China) into norms and institutions established by the stronger.

US–China dialogues have generated such hostility and skepticism in large part because of this tension in the underlying theoretical assumptions about engagement. Conservative critics raged that 'appeasement doesn't work' (Charles Krauthammer), dismissed it as a sham (Michael Kelly), blasted it as fundamentally dishonest (Arthur Waldron). Robert Kagan and William Kristol dismiss military to military contacts as unequal exchanges where 'we share a great deal of information with them while they share nothing with us' (2001: 11). At a more academic level, David Shambaugh concludes that 'dialogue may increase clarity and understanding — even if it does not narrow differences — but those Americans who interact with the PLA, officially or unofficially, should be under no illusion about the depth of China's suspicion and animosity toward the United States' (1999/2000:

77). Human rights campaigners express concerns that bilateral dialogues are an ineffective 'alternative to international pressure through multilateral action' which is marred by a lack of transparency, accountability or clear benchmarks for progress (HRIC, 1998; Kent, 1999). To evaluate these claims it is necessary to rethink both the theoretical foundations and the empirical record of engagement. These criticisms of the *practice* of engagement should not be taken as a fatal critique of engagement itself. The inadequacy of practice represents a point of entry for a *critical* theory of engagement.

### *Communicative and Strategic Action*

Rationalist analysis relies on a strategic conception of rationality, in which actors seek the best strategy for realizing predetermined preferences. Habermas introduces communicative action as a distinctive mode of rational action, in which the orientation is toward seeking understanding rather than towards achieving immediate goals (Habermas, 1984: 286). Critics of Habermas have challenged the distinction between communicative and strategic action, arguing that he unnecessarily excludes the social from strategic interaction, while neglecting the purposive elements of communicative action (Schiemann, 2000: 3–6; Johnson, 1991, 1993). Habermas has defended the distinction by defining modes of actions in terms of *ends* rather than *means* — strategic action is defined by the orientation towards achieving predefined egoistic ends, treating the other as an object to be manipulated, while communicative action is characterized by the orientation towards achieving understanding, treating the other as an equal participant. He distinguishes mere communication — the exchange of information — from communicative action, which can

... be distinguished from strategic action in the following respect: the successful coordination of action does not rely on the purposive rationality of the respective individual plans of action but rather on the rationally motivating power of feats of reaching understanding, that is, on a rationality that manifests itself in the conditions for a rationally motivated agreement. (1998: 222)

In other words, communicative engagement involves an orientation towards coming to understanding over the conditions of interaction rather than an orientation towards achieving immediate self-interest. In such a dialogue, only the force of the better argument should prevail, as actors abstract from their identities and set aside power considerations in their joint pursuit of understanding. In contrast to strategic action, in which one actor attempts to change the other's behavior, communicative action allows for the possibility that both actors might change in the course of their dialogue. Public deliberation under conditions approaching conditions of the free

exchange of reasoned argument among equals which produces working consensus on underlying principles of interaction — but not necessarily on distributive outcomes — offers the route most conducive to establishing cooperative and mutually beneficial relations.

Where most analysis of public deliberation presumes the existence of a common lifeworld, international engagement strategies distinctively involve states which lack these common experiences and understandings (Risse, 2000: 14–16; Müller, 2001). The engagement of China, a state which had been particularly alienated from international society and thereby lacking in most elements of a common international lifeworld, served to build these layers of background knowledge, understandings and expectations (Zhang, 1998; Lampton, 2001a). International relations is built upon a deep structure of shared norms and institutions, such that any states in the contemporary international society enter into interaction with at least a thin common lifeworld. Post-revolutionary China represents something of a control case for this proposition, with its alienation from international society and intensely inward focus. Engagement has increasingly brought the PRC into this international society of shared norms and institutions. One rough indicator of this greater depth of shared experience is the dramatic increase in China's membership in international institutions — China has joined and participated in increasing numbers of security-related international institutions (Johnston and Evans, 1999: 238–9); in the economic arena, it stands on the verge of joining the WTO. More broadly, it is possible to see a convergence in the kinds of reasons and arguments advanced by China with those commonly accepted in these international institutions (P. Saunders, 2000a, 2000b).

The reliance of rationalist models upon the assumption of *common knowledge* suggests the importance of the background knowledge constructed through these interactions (Kydd and Snidal, 1993; Wendt, 1999). For rationalists, common knowledge means that the actors are aware of the nature of the game being played, its stakes and possible moves. This building of common knowledge shifts the strategic structure, even if capabilities and preferences remain constant. Ongoing, regular dialogues contribute to the building of a thin common lifeworld, which allows each side to more accurately understand the intentions, interpretations and expectations of the other (Müller, 2001). Discourses which might not seem to accomplish anything in an instrumental sense are crucially important in establishing these background conditions. Engagement has helped to increase the level of intersubjective common knowledge about the 'game' of post-Cold War international relations, at least on the part of Chinese foreign policy elites (P. Saunders 2000a, 2000b; Shambaugh, 2000). For example, Admiral Dennis Blair of the Pacific Command noted that because of military-to-

military exchanges, 'I have a sense of what is going on on the other side. I think this is a fundamentally safer situation, even if it does not lead to a nice, neat solution of a crisis' (quoted in Gordon, 2001: A1). On the other side, engagement gave the Chinese leadership, including Jiang Xemin and Zhu Rhongi, demonstrably greater understanding of American conceptions of interests (Deng and Wang, 1999).

Habermas's distinction between 'weak' and 'strong' communicative action helps to capture this process. *Weak communicative action* refers to the phase which best corresponds with communicative engagement, in which 'the actors do not yet expect each other to be guided by common norms or values and to recognize reciprocal obligations' (Habermas, 1998: 327). Entering into a dialogue under the conditions discussed above allows actors to move towards better mutual understanding and common expectations, which provides the foundation both for 'strong' communicative action and for more cooperative instrumentally strategic interaction. Such a process fits David Lampton's experience that 'before one can effectively address particular problems with the Chinese it is necessary to first establish a framework of interest, principles and intention against which they can assess particular issues. This frame of reference has several components that, in the aggregate, the Chinese call "mutual understanding"' (Lampton, 2001a: 371).

A common objection to the use of communicative action approaches in international relations is that international politics rarely resembles an ideal speech situation (Risse, 2000: 14–16). Dominated by the logic of anarchy and power politics, the international system, it is claimed, lacks the fundamental preconditions for entering into communicative dialogues. Nevertheless, public deliberation can mitigate the impact of power imbalances by forcing all participants to adhere to rough standards of reasoned argument. While it would be naive to think that states will set aside power considerations and search for truth, arguments which hope to win public support generally need to meet certain standards (Elster, 1998: 104, 111). This is one component of Elster's 'civilizing force of hypocrisy' — the direct appeals to power which might work in private bargaining will rarely carry public debate (Elster, 1995: 250). This acts to restrain the most obvious, blatantly self-interested or power-seeking actions — 'weak publicity does not make deliberation strategy-proof, but it at least constrains those strategic moves that are non-avowable' (Bohman, 1996: 38). The appeal to standards of discourse compatible with Habermas's is already relatively common in international politics; for example, in response to American pressure on human rights, China's Foreign Minister responded:

... we stand ready to have dialogue with others in order to better understand

each other and seek common ground while shelving differences. However, the prerequisite for such dialogue is let there be no confrontation . . . the dialogue must take place on the basis of equality and mutual respect.<sup>2</sup>

While such statements often reflect rhetorical action — the appeal for dialogue on human rights is meant as an alternative to coercive measures linking compliance with trade benefits, for example — the need to advance justifications and engage in argument before a public does shift the range of strategic options. From the vantage point of China, the weaker state, the commitment to dialogue confers respect and affirms recognition of its much-valued identity as an equal and responsible great power (Johnston and Evans, 1999). It also serves to constrain the unilateral exercise of superior American power by creating a vested interest in ongoing consultation and consideration.

### *Communication: Signaling and Communicative Action*

Following Habermas leads to an analytical focus upon the differing conception of *communication* found in rationalist and communicative approaches. Morrow defines communication as ‘sharing information to improve each side’s understanding of the consequences of a particular agreement’ (quoted in Kydd and Snidal, 1993: 125). Each actor strategically and selectively reveals information about its preferences in its attempt to achieve the best possible deal. This implies a strong incentive to misrepresent its own intentions in order to gain advantage, with the egoistic orientation toward self-interest outweighing a communicative orientation toward understanding. Finally, this exchange of information by instrumentally oriented actors takes place in a distinctively non-social context, with a radically circumscribed set of possible interpretations of each ‘move’ (Müller, 2001: 160; see Heath, 2001: Ch. 2).

Rationalist approaches to communication focus on the difficulty of conveying reliable information about preferences. States will discount insufficiently ‘costly’ actions or words as *cheap talk*, inherently unpersuasive because it could be issued by either an honest state or a liar (Morrow, 1999). The generic category of cheap talk reduces an astonishing array of state practices and actions to the status of a null category of inconsequential action (Johnson, 1993).<sup>3</sup> Because these rationalist models assume a strategic mode of action, where actors always have strong incentives to misrepresent their true preferences, communication is always inherently non-credible as a reliable signal of actor intentions. Nevertheless, recent rationalist work has found considerable value in cheap talk for coordination games (Heath, 2001; Müller, 2001; Schiemann, 2000). As James Johnson has noted, ‘game theorists simply lack the conceptual resources to account for the binding

force of cheap talk' (1993: 81). Communicative action, the exchange of reasoned argument oriented towards consensus before an audience — which might be dismissed as cheap talk — can convey the essential information about preferences needed to bring about mutually satisfactory outcomes.

By suggesting ways in which talk might in fact carry costs, Fearon developed the importance of publicity as a factor in costly signaling — 'crises are public events carried out in front of domestic political audiences . . . [and] if a state backs down, its leaders suffer audience costs that increase as the crisis escalates' (Fearon, 1994: 577). The concept of audience costs has generated a dynamic strategic choice research program aimed at demonstrating both formally and empirically that the introduction of an audience dramatically shifts the nature of strategic communication (Eyerman and Hart, 1996; Fearon, 1997; Schultz, 1998, 1999, 2001; Ritter, 2000). The audience costs research program introduces ontological and epistemological problems very similar to those created by the early literature on international regimes, however (Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986). The conclusions of the signaling literature rely on highly restrictive, non-social assumptions about the nature of communication in international politics. The typical signaling model restricts communication to threats or bargaining bids, without substance and with no interpretation of the 'move' required (Schultz, 1998).

Schultz's (1998) model of domestic opposition introduces a more active role for political parties, but still restricts their role to supporting or to opposing the government's foreign policy. For Schultz, 'it is crucial that parties compete in public. Open political debate means that foreign states can "overhear" the policy statements used to build electoral support' (1998: 832). The key intuition, then, is that as domestic public debate increases, it becomes more difficult for states to conceal or to misrepresent their preferences, and the more difficult for a leader to back away from a publicly declared policy. Schultz provides a crucial step in the logic of communicative engagement, but his rationalist assumptions about communication remain insufficient to account for communicative action. In the audience costs model, the only role for the public is to sanction or constrain governments in their pursuit of predefined preferences. This offers no room for the reasoned critique of the audience to actually affect the understanding of state interests held by policy makers. In this model there is no real exchange of argument about the interests of the state, the nature of the strategic situation, the relative value of different potential payoffs or the appropriate course of action.

The experience of US–China engagement, however, reveals substantive discourses over precisely these issues. The intense American political struggle over granting China Normal Trade Relations involved considerable self-

interested bargaining, but it also reflected real uncertainty about the nature of the strategic relationship and real arguments over the definition of collective interests. Americans disagreed about the threats and opportunities posed by China, the likely impact of each American policy decision on China's future policies, and the overall American national interest. Public sphere debates explicitly weighed human rights against economic interest, weapons proliferation against cooperation on regional security, an interest in Chinese economic growth against the dangers of rising Chinese power. In other words, this public debate openly contested precisely the preferences and expectations which rationalist theory takes as given. These substantive public debates about the nature and record of engagement, with deep disagreement reflecting real conceptual and political differences, formed an integral part of the communicative process. A similar debate inside China about the nature of the opportunities and threats in the changing international order has been carried out quietly inside government and military institutions (Deng and Wang, 1999; P. Saunders, 2000a). A model in which a domestic audience punishes leaders who back down from their public positions fails to capture the complexity of these communicative acts in the public sphere.

Weighing the audience costs models against a communicative action approach to the public sphere therefore produces very different conceptions of the role of communication in strategic relationships (Calhoun, 1993; Elster, 1998; Bohman and Rehg, 1999). Rationalist models conceptualize deliberation as cheap talk within strategic bargaining which might help to solve coordination games but not cooperation games. The public matters primarily as an exogenous constraint on the pursuit of fixed interests by state leaders. The introduction of audience costs shows that it makes a difference whether negotiations are carried out in public or are kept hidden from public view (Elster, 1995). Private diplomacy, outside the scrutiny of the media and of public opinion, follows the dynamics of strategic bargaining. Where bargaining is carried out before public scrutiny, the nature of the constraints shifts, as actors must provide compelling reasons for their positions. Communicative approaches to deliberation go beyond this conception of the public as an exogenous constraint. Public dialogue within overlapping national and international public spheres does more than simply provide information about preferences; it allows interested actors and expert observers to contest truth claims and interest claims. Prior to Tiananmen, for example, American and Chinese leaders concentrated almost exclusively on high-level diplomacy, with little public participation or serious public debate. After the crackdown, however, American public opinion and Congress forced public justification of China policy. In this context of publicity, the focus shifted from strategic relations to public argumentation

over what role China's human rights practices should play in calculations of American interests (Nathan and Ross, 1997, Ch. 12; Mann, 1999).

The *publicity* which lies at the heart of communicative engagement requires arguments and reasons which could in principle be accepted by both sides. Consistent with constructivist approaches in IR, state preferences are not fixed, subject only to constraints imposed by either an audience or domestic opposition, but rather are constructed through the exchange of reasoned argument in the public sphere (Haacke, 1996; Rustin, 1999; Lynch, 2000; Payne, 2000). While primarily carried out by government officials and experts, public dialogue would be addressed to a universal audience and open to effective scrutiny by the citizens of both states. In this conception of publicity, arguments which would be convincing only to a national audience are in this context 'private', no matter how fiercely contested in the domestic political arena (Bohman, 1996: 39). Direct dialogues among private citizens form a supportive layer which allows domestic publics to more effectively challenge and critique government justifications for policy (Bohman, 1998, 1999; Archibugi et al., 1999).<sup>4</sup> While communicative engagement initially involves primarily government officials, supplemented by 'track two' exchanges of semi-official experts, the communicative encounter will ideally expand to encompass the publics of both sides in order to establish a common lifeworld across societies. This is not necessary at the stage of weak communicative action which characterizes engagement, however.

Some analyses of international communicative action limit its applicability to democratic states, where a civil society and open public sphere provide the foundations for open and transparent interstate communication. Regime type makes an obvious difference, although the key variable is not so much democracy as the existence of an open, contested public sphere. The constant public exchange of argument and discourse about foreign policy provides greater transparency. The involuntary character of this transparency conveys more convincing signals about state preferences, crucially because governments cannot easily control whether or not information becomes public (Schultz, 1999). Realists generally frown upon the public's involvement in foreign policy for precisely the reasons that the logic of communicative engagement supports it — public involvement makes strategic misrepresentation more difficult. When only one of the states has such an open public sphere,

information of this sort is distributed asymmetrically — meaning that one side has information that the other side cannot observe — [so] identifying and agreeing on a mutually beneficial bargain can be problematic . . . informational asymmetries are compounded by a strategic environment that encourages concealment, deception, and bluff. (Schultz, 1999: 236)

Despite real disagreements within the Chinese ruling elite, for example, the United States puts out considerably more information about its preferences through its open public debate. While China is not a democracy, it has developed an increasingly open and contentious press which has allowed some public contestation about societal issues, however (D. Lynch, 1999; Gries, 2001; Polenbaum, 2001). Nevertheless, the closed nature of the Chinese system left the United States relatively dependent upon a restricted universe of cues. In contrast to the conventional wisdom that American domestic disputes detract from American policy, Phillip Saunders quotes a Chinese analyst as complaining that '[your open debates] give the US an advantageous position. You can argue that confrontational remarks do not reflect official policy, but they still have an effect' (P. Saunders, 2000a: 51). Evaluation here depends then upon whether goals are primarily strategic or communicative — do actors want to misrepresent their true preferences or do they want to overcome this problem to achieve cooperation?

The argument in favor of publicity cuts against entrenched wisdom about foreign affairs, precisely because it challenges the assumption of a strategic mode of action. Armstrong, for example, claims that 'negotiations that successfully lead to a rapprochement are conducted at a high level, are nonpublic, and involve the fewest possible participants' (1991: 22). Secrecy, it is claimed, allows flexibility by excluding rigid bureaucracies and interest group pressure, facilitates a focus on shared strategic interests rather than on contentious political issues and builds trust between top officials prior to bringing the new relationship into the open. Public deliberation can force caution on participants, preventing them from honestly stating their interests and positions — 'closed debates permit the open expression of interest; open discussions force it to go underground' (Elster, 1995: 244). Public positions can make it difficult to back down, meaning that positions taken for public consumption can become binding (Elster, 1998: 111). Public deliberation can also lead to 'outbidding', in which participants are more interested in playing to the passions of their audience than in reaching rational consensus (Barnett, 1998). Indeed, the spectacle of American politicians falling over themselves to be tougher on China than their opponents does not raise hopes for the possibility of a reasonable discussion of American interests towards China.

Nevertheless, secret negotiations are likely to fail to produce outcomes which will either secure domestic ratification or survive subsequent shifts in the distribution of power and interests. It is quite striking that two decades of strategic cooperation (1970s–1980s), or a decade of rapidly increasing economic interaction (1990s) between the PRC and the US produced so little by way of mutual understanding or empathy. Ignoring human rights might allow the US and China to coordinate security policies or to pursue

economic advantage, but this alienates American public opinion and undermines the normative support for these relations (Gill, 1999). The official dialogues over human rights initiated by the Chinese government as an alternative to public confrontations have been determinedly non-public — ‘almost exclusively between diplomats, behind closed doors, and no official reports of the proceedings are issued by either side’ (HRIC, 1998: 2). Such non-publicity allows each side to make unverifiable claims about the content of the dialogues to their private (national) constituencies. *Privacy keeps talk cheap*, then, since it does not generate either audience costs or a substantive domestic public debate. Private talks ‘may not allow [states] credibly to reveal their own preferences . . . or to learn those of other states’ because of the absence of public checks on misrepresentation (Fearon, 1994: 578). Secret talks allow for the more straightforward application of power and self-interested trade-offs, since they forgo the need for the appeal to rational argument and moral justification. This often produces agreements which do not meet the minimal conditions of at least one party and cannot easily be justified to their publics once revealed. These agreements are unlikely to be internalized, accepted as legitimate by the actors involved, or to survive shifts in the distribution of power or interests. Because of the demands of such deliberation, public dialogues are likely to produce a higher quality of agreement (Bohman, 1996: 26).

### *The American Engagement of China: Strategic or Communicative?*

The American engagement of China must be placed in the context of the breakdown of normal relations in 1989.<sup>5</sup> In the early 1970s, Nixon and Kissinger’s secret diplomacy reversed decades of hostility and estrangement, during which China had been almost completely isolated from international society. The rapprochement, based in strategic concerns and largely shielded from public scrutiny, became the subject of critical public debate after the Chinese army attacked students demonstrating in Tiananmen Square in 1989. International public outrage at the Chinese repression coincided with a dramatic shift in the distribution of power due to extraordinarily fast Chinese economic growth, increases in military spending, and regional assertiveness. This growth coincided with its acceptance of a form of capitalism, with profound domestic transformative implications, and its dramatically increased participation in international institutions. All of these developments, combined with the strategic repercussions of the end of the Cold War, severely disrupted existing expectations of and conditions for the US–Chinese relationship, making it impossible ‘to simply go on as before’ (Bohman, 1996: 41).

While the first Bush Administration sought ways to quietly maintain strategic relations, domestic political mobilization over human rights transformed the political arena. Turbulence and inconsistency in the Clinton Administration's early relations with China, with tense struggles over MFN and human rights, forced a rethinking of the policy. Clinton's policy of *comprehensive engagement*, articulated in 1993, was overtly behavioral and strategic in conception, meant to allow the US 'to apply a wide range of inducements and pressures on issues where we wish to encourage China to adjust its course'.<sup>6</sup> Critics noted its failure to prioritize areas of China's behavior of most concern, which led to a bewildering proliferation of threatened sanctions and requests for behavioral change (Lieberthal, 1995; Gill, 1999). China, for its part, responded to this strategic approach with an equally strategic resistance to American pressure and rejection of the terms of the proposed relationship. Faced with skepticism that this behavioral model of engagement would effectively shape China's behavior, and daunted by China's effective rejection of human rights linkages, Clinton developed a longer-term neoliberal model of change in which trade would strengthen Chinese moderates, create domestic constituencies interested in the international status quo, enmesh China in a web of international institutions and ultimately promote democratization.<sup>7</sup> In Iain Johnston's terms, Chinese 'adaptation' to international pressures would give way to 'learning', ultimately changing China's preferences (Johnston, 1996).

In 1996, Chinese threats against Taiwan during its election campaign and the American decision to send naval forces through the Taiwan Straits disrupted the policy of engagement and demonstrated the real risks of a spiral of conflict. With these tensions, as well as the increasing domestic politicization of China policy, Clinton developed a new policy deliberately placed between the 'extremes' of containing China and relying on 'increased commercial dealings alone'.<sup>8</sup> During Jiang Xemin's October 1997 visit to Washington (the first by a Chinese leader in 12 years), a joint communiqué described the relationship as a 'strategic partnership'. This policy established regular, ongoing dialogues from the highest levels (three summits between Clinton and Jiang Xemin in three years) down to functional, issue-specific working committees (Suettinger, 2000: 19–20). Clinton's reciprocal visit to China in 1998 advanced these dialogues, and included an unprecedented public debate over human rights. The strategic dialogue was explicitly meant to reshape China's preferences:

... the evolution of our relations with China will depend primarily on how China defines its own national interests. . . . Through our strategic dialogue, we are encouraging the Chinese to accept what we believe is true — that China will be able to find greater security, prosperity and well-being inside a rule-based international system than outside.<sup>9</sup>

The engagement practiced in the second Clinton Administration, then, retained a strategic logic of ends, but introduced significantly more open-ended dialogue.

Domestic political criticism of engagement on both sides escalated in this period. American critics, long focused on its moral shortcomings, increasingly emphasized its supposed willingness to overlook Chinese threats to American security. It was precisely the more empathetic and communicative tone of American approaches to China which infuriated American hawks as signs of weakness. Realist warnings against appeasing rising Chinese power dovetailed with sensational discussion of a 'Chinese threat' to create an atmosphere of impending confrontation. The May 1999 Cox report on Chinese nuclear espionage, while devoid of convincing evidence, profoundly shaped popular perceptions of China as a threat.<sup>10</sup> Over the second half of the 1990s, for their part, Chinese officials began to construct a coherent image of an American preference to exploit its dominant power position to constrain China's growth and contest its interests. This reading of the US type drew on a wide range of signals, including the American-British unilateral bombings of Iraq in December 1998, the 1999 NATO war in Kosovo without Security Council authorization, American statements and actions towards Taiwan and the escalating attacks on China in the American domestic political arena. The NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade led not only to massive popular demonstrations against the United States, but also to China's suspension of military, political and human rights dialogues (Gries, 2001). Failure to reach agreement on China's WTO membership during a visit by Zhu Rhongi humiliated Chinese moderates. After tensions peaked, both sides looked for opportunities to restart the dialogue. By the autumn of 1999, tensions had cooled sufficiently for a cordial meeting between Clinton and Jiang Xemin, and in May 2000 Clinton secured approval for Normal Trade Relations with China. Over the summer of 2000, however, the American move to develop and deploy a National Missile Defense generated tremendous opposition from China, which felt both threatened and ignored. The election of George W. Bush brought to office an American administration notable for its hawkish views on China and its criticism of the policy of engagement. Within a month, US-China relations experienced a major crisis over the crash of an American spy plane in Chinese territory, which was resolved only after tense diplomacy and which drove the spiraling mutual mistrust and hostility. Bush spoke of China as a 'strategic competitor', in a direct repudiation of Clinton's search for a 'strategic partner'.

This historical overview suggests the persistence of engagement strategies even in the face of severe domestic political costs on both sides as well as the low perceived success of the policy (Haass and O'Sullivan, 2000). The focus

on these moments of crisis, as well as on its most visible success, masks much of the underlying, less publicized substance of engagement, however. Within the ups and downs of high-level challenges and threats, Chinese and Americans engaged in a wide range of substantive discourses over matters of shared concern in the security realm. These dialogues led to clear changes in Chinese understanding of its interests in nonproliferation, military transparency and arms control.

Johnston and Ross define engagement generically as ‘the use of non-coercive means to ameliorate the non-status quo elements of a rising major power’s behavior’ (1999: 14).<sup>11</sup> Engagement strategies generally intend to induce a rising power to adopt foreign or domestic policies in line with the norms of the dominant international order. A strategic mode of action might seem to be built in to such a definition, since it implies the purposive use of a policy by one state to change the behavior of another state. The concept of communicative action does not rule out purposive action, however. The distinction rests upon the orientation of the action and the approach to the other. Whether strategic or communicative, engagement strategies are *intentional* policies aimed at creating more cooperative relations between states, not a condition defined by empirical levels of interaction or an unintended byproduct of interaction. Engagement typically involves some combination of the provision of incentives, the increase of trade and investment, diplomatic dialogues, the building of interdependencies and the induction of the target state into international organizations.

*Strategic engagement* strategies follow the logic of strategic action, in which the initiator aims to manipulate the behavior of an actor through threats and incentives in order to bring it in line with one’s preferences.<sup>12</sup> What characterizes these strategies as ‘strategic’ is that they are instrumental state policies attempting to shape a targeted state’s behavior in a pre-determined direction. They take the target as an object, rather than as an equal partner. These threats and incentives may lead the target to rationally recalculate its interests as it realizes the costs of the proscribed behavior, but the mechanism of change is ultimately a behavioral one (Schimmelfenig, 2000). American engagement policies, for example, rely upon high levels of trade and membership in international economic organizations to moderate the target’s conception of its interests by shifting incentives, building networks of interdependence and giving it a stake in the status quo. Such strategic engagement strategies aim ‘to influence and affect China’s behavior through a consistent penalty-reward mechanism. The problem, however, is that the model does little to accommodate and incorporate China’s strategic concerns and demands’ (Wang, 1998: 70).

Taking the reflexivity and awareness of target states seriously forces the state pursuing engagement to deal with the other as a partner rather than as

an object (Berejikian and Dryzek, 2000). Rationalist models of engagement seem to assume that the targeted state is not aware of the behavioral modification strategy being employed against it. Behavioral change directly reflects a rational adjustment to environmental incentives, independent of the target's beliefs, intentions or consciousness. For the targeted actor to acquiesce would require either ignorance (implausible), an acceptance of the desirability of change (likely to be distributed unevenly) or a calculated gamble based on asymmetric information about the regime's ability to manage change. The engager must implicitly assume a superior understanding of the nature of international relations or of political behavior, which will enable it to trick the target into accepting a Trojan Horse. Such assumptions of ignorance become even harder to sustain when top American officials repeatedly state this logic in public.<sup>13</sup>

*Communicative engagement* takes seriously the awareness of both actors, who enter into a dialogue oriented towards achieving consensus through the give and take of reasoned argument.<sup>14</sup> Rather than a 'sender' (the US) using engagement to manipulate a 'target' (China) in pursuit of predefined interests, communicative engagement initiates a dialogue to produce international arrangements amenable to the interests of both parties. Within a communicative logic of action, actors should make a sincere effort at empathy, to understand the interests and concerns of the other in order to arrive at a formula which can satisfy both. Ideally, participants in a dialogue temporarily set their self-interest aside, formulating generalizable arguments oriented towards a consensus position acceptable to all affected parties. Where strategic engagement aims to induce the other to accept a predefined set of institutions, communicative engagement aims to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution which does not rest upon coercion or manipulation. Giving all affected actors a voice in shaping institutions, rather than socializing new actors into existing institutions or punishing deviant behavior, characterizes the underlying logic of communicative engagement.

The strategic mode of action produces compromise between divergent preferences on the basis of the distribution of power and commitment. The communicative mode of action produces a consensus based on mutual intersubjective validity and empathetic understanding of interests. The logic of communicative engagement is not to provide sufficient carrots to influence the targeted state, nor to strike a bargain on the distribution of goods and prestige which reflects the distribution of power. Nor is it precisely the same as persuasion through rhetorical action, in which one actor attempts to change the policies of the other through arguments or appeals to shared norms (Cortell and Davis, 2000: 76–7). Instead, communicative action aims to produce shared social rules which all parties

view as legitimate, within which they can compete for the distributional goods without calling into question the existence of the game itself (Bohman, 1996).

The practice of engagement rarely fully lived up to this communicative ideal, of course. The American policy of engagement has been eminently purposive and instrumental in its ends. At no point have China and the United States entered into a serious dialogue predicated on coming to a reasoned consensus about the nature of their interaction, in which each side is prepared to change its mind in the face of new information. China has not been notably more communicative in its orientation than the United States. Deeply suspicious of American intentions, and consumed by a sense of regime insecurity, the Chinese leadership has shown little inclination to open itself up to serious dialogues (Deng and Wang, 1999). At the same time, both sides have recognized the instrumental value of such dialogues and have pursued them even in the face of severe domestic criticism. Dialogues on specific issues in the security realm have come far closer to the communicative conception. A more nuanced evaluation of the empirical record suggests that the success of engagement closely tracks its communicative rather than strategic orientation.

These distinctions help to make clear the ways in which the Clinton Administration's policies of engagement remained strategic rather than communicative. In evaluating engagement, American officials used 'the implicit and sometimes explicit standard [of] whether Chinese behavior complies with US interests as American political and military leaders define them' (Johnston and Evans, 1999: 245). At no point did the United States question its own goals of maintaining the status quo by changing China's behavior and internal structures. The mechanism of change is the shifting in domestic coalitions and incentives, rather than persuasion or the conscious accepting of normative claims. Rather than engage China in a public dialogue over the normative value of human rights, the United States would raise the costs of violating human rights norms, while empowering domestic groups which favor human rights and ultimately changing Chinese state policies from within. The logic of rationalist engagement therefore involves a two-step process — first, a state behavioral change in response to material incentives; and then an internal transformation of domestic institutions, as actors are differentially empowered by the international economy. Without the second step, there is no reason to believe that the targeted state will not revert to revisionist preferences as soon as the distribution of power or opportunities shifts.

The second Clinton Administration in 1996 introduced some of the *means* of a communicative engagement policy, but retained the instrumental *ends* of changing China. Defined operationally as regularized, high-level

exchanges between state officials, the strategic dialogue aimed at mutually improving understanding and at establishing ongoing rather than episodic discussions of contentious issues (Suettinger, 2000). In the security field, this extended from high-level military contacts to meetings of arms control experts and nuclear scientists (Johnston and Evans, 1999: 254–6). Despite the adoption of potentially communicative means, the Clinton approach to dialogue remained overwhelmingly strategic in its ends. Rhetorical action which aims at more efficiently persuading a target to accept one's preferences retains the logic of strategic action. As rationalists have effectively demonstrated, such a dialogue suffers from almost unsurpassable incentives to misrepresent preferences, suspicion about motives and considerations of relative power.

The most reasonable measures by which to evaluate engagement are in terms of its avowed goals.<sup>15</sup> The tendency to evaluate engagement based upon assumed but unstated 'real' goals fails to consider how the discovery of real motives and goals is an integral part of the dialogue itself. One of the implications of conceptualizing engagement in communicative rather than rationalist terms is that objective measures of success will be much more difficult to construct. The communicative action approach articulates standards based not on outcomes but on process. By moving away from the rationalist focus on the instrumental pursuit of ends (changing China), communicative engagement defines success in terms of establishing the conditions for non-conflictual ongoing interaction:

deliberation . . . begins with a problematic situation in which coordination breaks down; it succeeds when actors once again are able to cooperate . . . success is measured not by the strong requirement that all can agree with the outcome but by the weaker requirement that agents are sufficiently convinced to continue their ongoing cooperation. (Bohman, 1996: 33)

One of the key indicators for strategic approaches, for example, would be the extent to which China met specific demands, such as the release of political prisoners or the cancellation of an arms sale to Iran; for the communicative perspective, such behavioral markers offer only an indirect and contingent indicator of preferences. All indicators in such a process are likely to be highly politicized and subject to interpretation. The politicized interpretation of the outcome of engagement is in itself a crucial part of the communicative dimension. When the targeted state can observe how the debates in the engaging state discuss the criteria for success, it can better evaluate the real preferences of the engager. When President Clinton attempted to sell the PTNR deal to Congress by declaring it the best means by which to constrain and democratize China, '[he] is saying, in effect, that Americans may disagree about short-term tactics in China but not about

ultimate goals' (Mann, 1997: A5). China's leaders are then free to draw their own conclusions about the sincerity of American discourse.

It is important not to overstate the informational or transformative potential of communicative engagement (Elster, 1998). As Knight and Johnson warn, 'there is good reason to suspect that [deliberation] might even exacerbate conflict . . . as a creative process, deliberation might well proliferate rather than diminish understandings of what is at stake . . . [and] focus attention on the depth of disagreement' (1994: 286). One might reasonably ask what deliberating with Hitler would have accomplished; it only became possible to discern the extent of German ambitions when Germany actually invaded Poland, and almost no verbal commitment on Germany's part would have made this determination of type any easier (Morrow, 1999: 83–5). Domestic processes may well overwhelm the impact of any international initiatives. The 'engaged' state has multiple international relationships, which might push in different directions (Johnston and Ross, 1999). States should be expected to pursue their self-interest and security, and are unlikely to be persuaded otherwise. Finally, any communicative engagement policy is likely to face deeply entrenched suspicions and hostilities which will make it difficult to build trust. Keeping these important caveats in mind, I focus on how the introduction of communicative action might recast the analysis of the three major dimensions of engagement identified above — revealing preferences, changing preferences and producing stable international order — and argue that a communicative mode of engagement is demonstrably more effective at achieving these goals.

### *Reading Preferences*

The American strategic relationship with China revolves around the dilemma of reading preferences. The traditional Realist response has been to derive interests from structure. Because knowledge of capabilities is viewed as far more reliable than knowledge of intentions, states must assume that rising Chinese material power will necessarily lead it to challenge American dominance. It is simply not obvious that rising material power implies revisionist preferences or that the provision of economic incentives necessarily will produce a more moderate China, however. Liberal theory has responded by rooting state interests in the domestic political arena (Moravcsik, 1997). Constructivists have challenged both claims — first, they reject the notion that capabilities can be measured independently of their social context and question the direct inference of preferences from structural position; second, they view state interests as rooted in identity and discourse, and not only in the aggregation of domestic private interests. Virtually every major approach now attempts to account for and to

incorporate variation in state preferences (Katzenstein, 1996; Checkel, 1998; Katzenstein et al., 1998; Lake and Powell, 1999; Moravcsik and Legro, 1999).

The need to interpretively discover preferences should not be taken to mean, as it sometimes is, that China is *not* a revisionist power (Deng and Wang, 1999; Xiang, 2001). Aggressive as well as benign intentions are socially constructed. The difficulty of reading China's type can be seen in the widely varying conclusions of scholars. David Shambaugh concludes that China is a classically revisionist power:

China today is a dissatisfied and non-status quo power which seeks to change the existing international order and norms of inter-state relations. Beijing is not satisfied with the status quo, sees that the international system and its rules were created by Western countries when China was weak, and believes that the existing distribution of power and resources is structurally biased in favor of the West and against China. It does not just seek a place at the rule-making table . . . it seeks to alter the rules and existing system. (1996: 186–7)

Iain Johnston (1996, 1999), Yong Deng (1998) and Thomas Christensen (1997) conclude from very different theoretical perspectives that Chinese foreign policy is characterized by a hyper-realist understanding of international politics, but derive very different conclusions about how this Realist China will respond to the United States. Andrew Nathan and Robert Ross (1997) emphasize China's preoccupation with internal change and domestic challenges, and its growing dependence on international trade for economic growth, and hence its need for a stable and non-threatening international environment (also see Deng and Wang, 1999). Far from intending a challenge to regional or international order, in this view, China is content to work within existing institutions in order to further its domestic development. Its military modernization program is largely defensive in nature, and its regional aspirations are limited to its immediate environment (which includes Taiwan). The appearance of a more threatening or exclusionary external environment might push China towards revisionist preferences, but it will otherwise be relatively benign in its foreign policy. The dominant feature of the literature on Chinese foreign policy is the extent of uncertainty found in expert assessments of Chinese preferences. These disagreements extend from academic to political discourse — 'the policy of constructive engagement . . . rests on the notion that China is, or is on the brink of becoming, a status-quo power, seeking peace and free trade . . . the facts suggest otherwise: they suggest that China is instead a revisionist power' (Waldron, 1997). Because we cannot determine a state's preferences deductively, reasonable area experts disagree, and domestic politicization renders clouds the construction of inferences through observation of word

and deed, engagement's first and overwhelming goal is to provide this vital information about preferences.

Morrow (1999) demonstrates the difficulty of establishing reliable information about a state's type within rationalist assumptions. Because there is always a strategic incentive to misrepresent intentions in pursuit of advantage rather than a communicative incentive to truthfully convey preferences in pursuit of agreement, states can never simply declare their preferences in a credible fashion. Because many actions are consistent with multiple types, only unique actions are effective signals — China invading Taiwan would resolve the question of whether China was the moderate type trying to influence Taiwan or the radical type trying to conquer Taiwan, but China's 2000 White Paper warning against a Taiwanese declaration of independence is ambiguous, potentially consistent with either type. What is more, strategic actors have every incentive to use this cloudiness to misrepresent their types through ambiguous signaling in order to achieve strategic advantage. Worse yet, hard-liners have an incentive to pool with moderates, in order to draw the benefits of cooperation for as long as possible before defecting. Signaling through deeds offers only a cloudy picture of type, while the incentive to misrepresent renders communication untenable. The logic of this rationalist argument rests almost entirely on its assumptions about communication and strategic behavior, however, particularly the assumption that the pursuit of immediate egoistic ends will always take precedence over the joint pursuit of understandings about the conditions of future interaction.

The difficulty in making accurate inferences about preferences from signals relies on the rationalist argument that communication can never provide reliable information.<sup>16</sup> A recasting of the costly signals concept discussed above uses a political conception of costs to mount an internal critique of the signaling literature. Contrary to the conclusions of the signaling literature, it is possible to generate reliable evidence about each actor's preferences through dialogue. The publicity inherent in international deliberation creates something closer to costly signaling, and therefore can be a viable means of revealing state preferences. Shifting to a communicative mode of analysis allows us to see a wider range of actions within the generic category of cheap talk. Communicative engagement will be politically charged and be viewed as an important interest in a relatively constrained time frame. In a high profile, public dialogue over international order, such as between the United States and China, it can be assumed that there will be considerable public attention. As Haass and O'Sullivan point out, 'engagement requires policymakers to expend at least as much energy in the US domestic political realm as they do working with the target country' (2000: 178–80). Because public deliberation requires consistency across multiple

public spheres, actions consistent with deeds in order to prove sincerity and high audience costs, it more resembles a costly signal than it does cheap talk. It can also be comfortably assumed that there will be entrenched, strong opposition to the normalization of ties on both sides. Engagement will be subjected to severe public scrutiny on each side, and will have to be defended with reasoned argument. When the Clinton Administration maintains engagement in the face of extraordinarily high levels of political criticism, this acts as a credible signal of American commitment to the relationship. The regular give and take of argument before a public audience, by requiring consistency across arenas and at least the appearance of truthfulness, can provide more reliable information than signaling through deeds.

Strategic analysis has difficulty accounting for the empirically observed importance of audience costs, since the common knowledge of the effectiveness of costly signals makes the generation of audience costs the preferred strategy for a state which wishes to bluff (Eyerman and Hart, 1996; Schultz, 1999).<sup>17</sup> The existence of a public sphere renders audience costs involuntary, however, inherent in the political system rather than generated strategically by the state actor. Such costs allow the targeted state to read the engager's real preferences more accurately regardless of whether the engager would prefer to misrepresent (Schultz, 1999; Ritter, 2000). For example, when both Congress and the President risk significant political costs by publicly pressuring Israel to cancel a weapons sale to China, this action sends a far more compelling signal of American conceptions of China as an enemy than do any words claiming that the US views China as a friend or a partner. The logic here is that hotly contested domestic political battles will be of higher salience to a democratic leader, and therefore she will be less likely to hold real strategies or winning arguments in reserve. The public nature of international deliberation also acts as a check on misrepresentation, by reducing the potential for tailoring different messages for each audience and by forcing each state to justify and defend its position to both audiences. Public deliberation forces consistency in two senses — between words and deeds, and across domestic and international public spheres. Publicity therefore gives speakers a greater incentive to be truthful, since audiences will be able to compare words and deeds and will form conclusions about the actor's reputation for reliability and trustworthiness.

As transparency increases, so does the potential for unintended feedback effects between public spheres (Final and Lord, 2000). As Clinton argued,

we cannot allow a healthy argument to lead us toward a campaign-driven Cold War with China; for that would have tragic consequences . . . the debate we're having today about China is mirrored by a debate going on in China about the United States . . . and we must be sensitive to how we handle this.<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, when China ‘seeks to shore up nationalist credentials through propaganda aimed at a domestic audience while simultaneously sending reassuring messages . . . to foreign audiences’, American readings of China’s domestic public sphere can undermine Chinese efforts at signaling (Downs and Saunders, 1998/99: 122). As domestic opposition in one public sphere highlights the negatives of the other for its domestic political objectives, their counterparts appropriate the hostile discourse and use it to build hostility in their own public sphere by claiming that the hostile public statements, not the benign policies, reveal the underlying preferences of the other. Increasing information can render it difficult to distinguish ‘signal’ from ‘noise’, reducing the quality of that information for making inferences about preferences. Strategic interaction theorists have therefore suggested that as noise increases bad information drives out good. By contrast, the communicative approach might suggest that the distinction between ‘bad’ and ‘good’ information is overstated. Should a Chinese leader pay more heed to President Clinton’s calls for strategic dialogue or to the *Weekly Standard*’s escalating calls for confrontation? From the President’s perspective, the Republican ‘noise’ represents bad information clouding his attempts at signaling American intentions, but the internal debate provides important information to Chinese observers about the indeterminacy of those intentions. To the extent that domestic American debate about engagement provides evidence that the US is attempting to mask strategic goals within its communicative talk, then this involuntary revelation of American preferences should be seen as a success, not a failure, of engagement.

Communicating preferences is better served by the ability of one state to observe the argumentation used by the other state’s leaders in a fiercely contested domestic political arena. A transparent and highly contested public sphere may make it more difficult for a state to act strategically, but it will make its signals more reliable for exactly that reason. Arguments such as National Security Advisor Sandy Berger’s assertion that ‘the Communist party is committing slow-motion suicide’ by accepting economic liberalization and Clinton’s description of the WTO agreement as a ‘poison pill for the Communist system’ help to win domestic debates, but also offer China perspective on how Americans view the ends of engagement. On the other hand, the constant, well-articulated arguments made by Clinton and his chief advisors that the United States prefers ‘a strong, stable and healthy China playing an active role in the international system’ are less effective at winning domestic debates even if they more accurately reflect Clinton’s thinking.<sup>19</sup> For a state trying to establish understandings about long-term trajectories of the other’s real preferences, the winning arguments in the domestic public sphere usefully reflect societally embedded rather than

personally idiosyncratic ideas. Since the objective of communicative engagement is to reach rational agreement, not to maximize relative gains, the difficulty of strategic misrepresentation is an important positive rather than a negative. If Chinese leaders learn from public deliberation that the United States really does prefer to change the Chinese regime, constrain its foreign policy behavior and limit the scope of its international actions, then a more conflictual approach would be rational.

### *Shaping Preferences*

Engagement is not only about communication — these strategies aim not only to read preferences, but to change them. As Madeleine Albright put it, ‘the fundamental challenge for US policy is to persuade China to define its own national interests in a manner compatible with ours’, and officials regularly argued that the US interest was to encourage China to go towards an open, internationalist, constructive status quo path.<sup>20</sup> This avowed goal is awkward for rationalist models which hold preferences constant, since it seems to go beyond simply behavioral change. It is also awkward for the communicative action approach, which ostensibly does not have instrumental aims. The communicative action approach has as one of its central arguments that actor preferences can change in the course of interaction; some theorists even define deliberation as ‘the endogenous change of preferences resulting from communication’ (Elster, 1998: 8). Three crucial points distinguish this conception of preference change. First, in communicative engagement the preferences of *both* actors are open to discussion, whereas in strategic engagement it is solely the *target* state’s preferences which are the object of discussion. While it might seem unlikely that the United States would allow its preferences to be shaped by China, this is less implausible than it might seem. The US is internally divided over China, and there is a great deal of uncertainty about the American role in Asia and the future of US–China relations. In other words, American preferences towards China are not fixed; the question is whether these preferences will be shaped by an objective reading of the international environment, by domestic politics or by some form of communicative action. A dialogue which provided reliable information about Chinese intentions, beliefs and expectations could shape that internal American debate. Second, the communicative approach does not assume that changing preferences means changing the regime of a targeted state. Finally, changing preferences involves more than simply changing strategies or behavior.

Chinese arms control and nonproliferation practices provide perhaps the best evidence of the potential of engagement for shaping preferences. Chinese arms sales, nuclear weapons programmes and provision of nuclear

technology to states such as Iran, Iraq and North Korea generated considerable American concern. As Gill and Medeiros point out, however, ‘over the course of the 1990s, China’s arms control and nonproliferation policies have undergone a remarkable evolution’ (2000: 66; Johnston, 1996). After a long tradition of suspicion towards the Test Ban Treaty, China endorsed it in 1993 and signed it in 1996, primarily because of the presence of an overwhelming consensus in the arms control community of its normative importance. International dialogue and persuasion to comply with international norms seems to have played a crucial role in shaping this Chinese behavior — ‘faced with the possibility of opposing an arms control agreement which had near universal support . . . China was compelled to go along [with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] in spite of deep reservations’ (Gill and Medeiros, 2000: 68). In 1995, and again in 1998, China issued military White Papers in response to arguments for transparency. China has adopted controls over a number of sensitive materials, and began to participate actively in international arms control regimes. China ‘has developed a more sophisticated and constructive arms control policy’, with an institutionalized arms control community with regular experience with international dialogues and negotiations, and greater familiarity with prevailing norms and expectations (Johnston, 1996: 57).

In contrast to its accession to arms control practices based in a widespread international consensus, China only reluctantly curbed arms sales to Iran under American pressure, and does not seem to have rigorously complied with those promises it has made in this field. US failure to secure agreement through dialogue over the *reasons* for ending such sales — and the absence of a universal multilateral framework — accounts for China’s spotty compliance on this issue. With the United States far and away the largest supplier of arms to the Middle East, its demands that China end such sales to an American rival could only be viewed cynically. Where American demands are based purely in private strategic interests, rather than publicly redeemable shared interests, China has proven much less likely to change its preferences. Where it goes along, it does so for strategic reasons, which makes the behavior subject to easy alteration if circumstances change.

Comparing outcomes in the security realm helps to specify some of the mechanisms by which communicative engagement can shape preferences. The mechanism most prominently discussed in the IR literature is *binding* — public deliberation can force states to act in ways consistent with their avowed positions, even if these actions go against ‘real’ preferences. Even cynical actors can become bound by their public discourse, forced to live up to their public commitments in order to save face, build reputations or maintain cognitive consistency (Elster, 1999; Risse, 2000). Thus, as China attempts to construct an identity as ‘responsible great power’, and engages

in dialogues with the United States towards that end, it commits itself publicly to arms control norms in ways to which it can then be held accountable (Johnston, 1996). This is especially the case during periods of competitive framing, in which actors strive to prove the sincerity of their discourse and the credibility of their claims against the challenges of other actors, which approximates the scenario of communicative engagement. In order to demonstrate credibility, action must match discourse; the more costly and irreversible the action taken, the more credible the argument. Over time, particularly when engaged in ongoing rather than episodic deliberation, the defense of positions, norms and identities can change the actor's conception of her positions, norms and identities. This includes the growth of constituencies inside the state committed to the new policies and norms, in this case the arms control community in the Chinese government (Johnston and Evans, 1999; Checkel, 2001). This spiral model of socialization through binding lies at the heart of recent arguments about the role of norms in bringing about international change (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). To survive changes in the distribution of power or incentives, these new preferences must be internalized into institutions, discourse and practice (Cortell and Davis, 2000).

A more ambitious claim is that deliberation can transform preferences through the act of argumentation itself. Under conditions of uncertainty, where actors seek to reach an agreement and are relatively insulated from political pressure, they might open themselves up to persuasion by good arguments (Checkel, 2001; Risse, 2000). As actors accept the reasons given in argument as valid, they then revise their preferences according to their new understandings and expectations. Unlike binding, in which the actor first agrees for interested reasons and then gradually internalizes the new practices, persuasion entails the actor consciously agreeing to a new set of beliefs. Such direct preference change is both the most ambitious of the claims for communicative action, and the hardest to document empirically (Checkel, 1998, 2001). Since such persuasion is likely to be viewed as strategic manipulation and thus generate resistance, it is far less likely to occur during the 'weak communicative engagement' phase.

Rather than returning to a veiled strategic logic of rhetorical manipulation, the goal of communicative engagement is to construct the foundations of mutual understanding which will allow future strategic interaction to proceed in a more cooperative manner. When dialogue is jointly oriented towards reaching understanding, the incentives point towards mutual role-taking, attempting to understand the interests and concerns of the other. Bohman suggests various mechanisms by which deliberation might produce this background agreement, including

[making] explicit what is latent in their common understandings, shared intuitions and ongoing activities . . . ; back and forth exchanges about differences in biographical and collective historical experiences . . . ; incorporating the opposing claims as component parts of a more elaborate proposal . . . ; [determining] how to apply a given norm or principle to a particular case . . . ; [and] employ[ing] the capacities for perspective taking and role taking implicit in communication. (1996: 59–63)

This list, while not exhaustive, suggests how ‘in the course of successively undertaken abstractions, the core of generalizable interests . . . emerge step by step’ (Habermas, 1998: 118).

Communicative engagement assumes only that actors might prefer cooperation to conflict. It does not assume away conflicts of interest. Public deliberation might in fact clarify the extent of differences and hostility. Recognition of clashing interests does not preclude the utility of communicative engagement, however. McCarthy points out that ‘when public discussion, rather than leading to rationally motivated consensus on general interests and shared values, instead sharpens disagreement by revealing particular interests to be ungeneralizable . . . we can still reach a reasonable agreement by moving discussion to a higher level of abstraction’ (1994: 56). For example, the United States almost certainly will not persuade China to change its views on Taiwan, but the two states can converge upon the more general principle that the island’s fate should not be settled by force. The long-standing policy of ‘strategic ambiguity’ on Taiwan allowed the US and China to continue interacting despite their inability to agree on its status or future.

An underappreciated argument for public deliberation is that it can transform conflicts of identity into conflicts of interest (H. Saunders, 1999). Conflicts of identity, with institutionalized social relationships of enmity, are not readily amenable to negotiated solutions; hence, students of ethnic conflict find that symbolic issues of seemingly little material value tend to be the deal-breakers which prevent resolution. The US–China relationship has been bedeviled by such symbolic issues (Downs and Saunders, 1998/99). Internal processes of scapegoating and rhetorical attack, such as the explosive rage of Chinese nationalists over the embassy bombing (Gries, 2001), or the anti-China mobilization surrounding the Cox report, deeply constitute the background assumptions and expectations at the public level. It should not be assumed that actors want to overcome conflicts of identity; any move towards reconciliation with a bitter enemy threatens both the identity and interests of many individuals within each society, invoking deep historical memories and traumas which they may prefer to continue to embrace. Furthermore, those whose interests are threatened by engagement will often strategically invoke symbolic issues, which provide the most

effective means for mobilizing public opinion against materially beneficial engagement policies. Existential conflicts based on incompatible identities are far less amenable to negotiated resolution than are distributional conflicts. Bringing these issues into the public domain in order to defuse them is playing with fire, since this could lead to ideological war and prevent any possibility of agreement.

Despite these dangers, public deliberation is the most viable means by which social relationships of enmity can over time be transformed. Advocates of dialogue often focus on its contribution to building trust, empathy and a better atmosphere for subsequent negotiations. The functional logic of neoliberalism, in which the building of interdependencies leads to a web of shared interests and then to cooperation, neglects the importance of identity in the political construction of interests. Material foundations are not alone sufficient to transform social relations. Phillip Saunders quotes one Chinese strategic analyst as warning that the building of interdependencies ‘can’t substitute for strategic co-operation. We must have a real strategic dialogue on strategic issues’ (Saunders, 2000a: 50). Indeed, reliance on material interdependencies may substitute for the public engagement necessary to change identities and thereby actually impede the process of change. Communicative engagement directly targets this step in the causal sequence — where domestic opponents often derail engagement by invoking these emotional issues, deliberation pre-empts them by raising and defusing the issues. Deliberation brings to the surface underlying perceptions, fears, beliefs and discourses and thereby holds out greater prospects for transcending them.

### *Legitimizing International Order*

The focus to this point on actors, preferences and strategic interaction neglects international structure, defined in terms of institutions and norms. There is an important tension between the bilateral policy of engagement and the multilateral demands of formal international organizations. China has responded much more positively to those concerns in the security arena which are governed by formal international organizations and are expressed in universalizable terms. General principles of nuclear nonproliferation, for example, shaped Chinese preferences more than did specific American concerns about Iran or Pakistan. Chinese arms control behavior has similarly been more affected by participation within multilateral institutions than by unilateral American pressure, with socialization into international norms more effective than unilateral sanctions or inducements (Johnston and Ross, 1999; Gill and Medeiros, 2000).

The nature of these institutions becomes important, however. The

common rationalist focus on the information and commitment aspects of international institutions does not fully capture their contribution to the goals of engagement (Abbott and Snidal, 1998; Hurd, 1999). The more that the international order is *generally* legitimated through communicative action, the more likely communicative engagement will positively affect the *specifically* targeted state. Institutional arrangements constructed through public deliberation would then be more legitimate and stable. Put bluntly, those who have a say in making the rules are more likely to follow them. Participation in international deliberation over regional and international order can bind actors to that order. This is partly due to process — the act of participating in the dialogue — and partly due to outcome — the institutions will to some degree reflect the vital interests, perspectives, sovereignty and culture of all parties.

From this perspective, then, socialization of the targeted actor into an unchanged status quo is the wrong model for engagement. This is one of the biggest differences in the outcomes envisioned by rationalist and communicative conceptions of engagement — rather than socializing the rising state into existing institutions, deliberation aims at producing new institutions acceptable to both sides. This contradicts the general tenor of the American approach to engagement, which aimed at ‘encouraging China’s integration into the world community, thereby fostering China’s adherence to internationally recognized norms and standards of behavior’.<sup>21</sup> Despite occasional remarks that the United States welcomed the emergence of a ‘stable and thriving China’ that ‘not only abides by international rules but that plays an active and responsible role in setting them’, the overwhelming model was socialization into the status quo rather than communicative reshaping of international order.<sup>22</sup> Dialogue about regional order ideally creates institutions which reflect the interests of all consequential actors, which requires a significant concession by the more powerful actor. This will likely generate opposition in the stronger state. Robert Kagan’s (1997) rage at the idea that China be given a voice in the shape of international institutions — ‘until now, officials have not talked about letting China *participate* in making international rules’ — reflects this common objection. From a strategic perspective such institutions seem suboptimal in terms of the distribution of power, replacing a most desirable set of institutions (which reflect American preferences) with a less desirable set of institutions (which reflect some combination of American and Chinese preferences) when the distribution of power does not demand it. From a communicative perspective, it means establishing legitimate institutions through a deliberative process which all concerned parties accept as valid. Such a willingness to construct mutually acceptable institutions through dialogue without a primary concern for power or relative gains is the core distinction between a communicative and

strategic approach to engagement. China and the United States, like most great powers, have real disagreements and conflicts of interest which cannot be talked away. To the extent that those differences are the product of imperfect information or unjustified suspicions, however, communicative engagement clears the ground for recognition of the real terms of agreement and disagreement.

Reaching consensus and thereby rendering the aggregation of preferences unnecessary is a particularly ambitious goal for dialogue. Deliberative democracy theorists warn that deliberation does not provide a magic wand for ensuring harmony of preferences. Charles Kupchan's (1998) argument for benign regional orders assumes too easily that dialogues will result in consensus. The difficulties in reaching consensus should not be seen as an argument against international deliberation, however. As Knight and Johnson (1994) point out, it is neither necessary nor even desirable that deliberation result in consensus. Assuming that deliberation will not produce consensus, and that time is limited, at some point decisions will have to be made through the aggregation of preferences. It therefore becomes crucial to establish legitimate decision rules and procedures, which do not simply reflect naked power. Bohman (1996; also see Habermas, 1996) emphasizes the role of deliberation in establishing the preconditions for ongoing cooperation; even if all actors do not like a given outcome, they accept the legitimacy of the process which produced that outcome and are thus willing to continue participating in that process.

The experience of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) offers some insights into how such rules governing dialogue might operate in international security affairs, and how China might react to such a dialogue. Established in 1994 as a highly informal institution bringing together all states in the Asia-Pacific region, including China and the United States, the ARF involved non-binding, consensus-oriented discussions of regional security issues (Johnston, 1999). While skeptics see the ARF as ineffective due to the absence of binding decisions and a restrictive view of sovereignty, others view these institutional limitations as precisely the guarantees required to bring China into a multilateral dialogue. These institutional rules, like those in ASEAN, could in fact be viewed as close to a Habermasian ideal of reaching consensus through discussion. In the 'ASEAN Way', no decision is binding without consensus, defined not by voting, but through the progression of dialogue to a point where all agreed consensus had been reached. The emphasis is on non-confrontational discussions and the avoidance of topics which a member wants excluded. China found such an international institution far less threatening than other, more intrusive or binding, institutions and over time participated within its deliberations in a constructive way (Foot, 1998). ARF is credited with

encouraging Chinese moves towards military transparency through the publication of White Papers, as well as reducing the risks of conflict over territorial issues in the South China Sea. On the other hand, these institutional rules have generated considerable frustration among analysts more focused upon concrete outcomes and the efficiency of decision-making (Lim, 1998; Garofano, 1999). ARF demonstrates that China, despite its illiberal ways, is comfortable with open-ended discourses over international security issues.

### *Recasting Engagement*

Critics of engagement of China bitterly complained that nothing China did seemed to persuade Clinton that engagement should be abandoned. A key claim of the communicative action approach is that standards for evaluating engagement are better arrived at through a dialogic, communicative process than by unilaterally establishing criteria for evaluation. Laying out a set of litmus tests to evaluate progress, as well as to clarify how specific behaviors will be interpreted, have been at the heart of proposals for improving engagement (Shinn, 1996; Haass and O'Sullivan, 2000). Where such road maps simply reflect interests of one party to which the other is expected to accede, they epitomize the logic of strategic action critiqued above. Clinton's initial approach of attaching conditions to the granting of Most Favored Nation status 'was fatally flawed, driven as it was almost entirely by domestic politics . . . the mere public articulation of such conditions would be construed in the PRC as an ultimatum, therefore unacceptable' (Lampton, 2001a: 35). The objection here is not against establishing clear criteria, but rather that these criteria should be developed in a dialogue rather than unilaterally asserted by one party. Declaring to China that threatening Taiwan will be taken as evidence of revisionist preferences ignores the crucial question of how China understands its own behavior — it might view its position as a defense of the status quo against Taiwanese revisionism — and could easily produce inaccurate inferences.

Based on the criteria laid out above, the second Clinton Administration's policy came closer to communicative engagement than its previous policy, but fell short of even a permissive definition. Despite the avowed emphasis on dialogue, the American mode of action clearly remained a strategic one. Domestic pressure to demonstrate 'results' forced the administration into a strategic logic of behavioral change, undermining efforts at communicative engagement. The Clinton Administration emphasized consistently that engagement aimed at the pursuit of American interests which were best achieved through cooperation rather than conflict.<sup>23</sup> Engagement generally remained dominated by the behavioral logic of enmeshing China within

institutions and interests which would automatically change its preferences, combined with attempts at persuasion through rhetoric. In addition to the strategic nature of the dialogue, the discussions rarely — if ever — were insulated from power considerations.

Some of the more technical dimensions of engagement in the security realm have come closer to the communicative model. Involving China in multilateral institutions, from the ARF to highly specialized arms control organizations, has been a major avenue by which the goals of communicative engagement have been advanced. The advances in nonproliferation and nuclear arms control policies followed dialogues and exchanges of information among experts. In these dialogues, both sides were able to articulate common interests in international security and stability which gave credibility to the institutional and technical solutions proposed. China's dramatic shift of policy towards North Korea, in which it began to cooperate with the US on nonproliferation and encouraging the North to engage in dialogue with the South, followed from such dialogues, in which common interests and understandings were developed (Gill, 2001). High-level military and academic exchanges have been a particularly important area for the building of common understandings. Despite some tentative steps, however, 'direct interactions with the PLA elite remain rare and are tightly scripted, while an extremely low level of transparency further obscures the perspectives and capabilities of the PLA' (Shambaugh, 1999/2000: 54).

Human rights, while beyond the scope of this article, have been a highly public arena of international dialogues with China (Foot, 2000). While few would cite China's human rights behavior as a success for engagement, the approach developed here brings some important points out of the empirical record. China steadfastly resisted, and ultimately defeated, American attempts to coerce Chinese human rights behavior by linking trade with change in human rights practices. At the same time, China cares deeply about being perceived as a legitimate great power, which made it susceptible to shaming in international institutions (Foot, 2000: 18–20; also see Johnston and Evans, 1999). In contrast to its firm rejection of bilateral pressure, China has joined numerous international treaties and agencies, and has accepted the relevance of human rights norms even if it has not internalized or complied with them (Kent, 1999; Foot, 2000). After forcing the United States to delink trade and human rights, China moved to replace 'confrontation' with 'dialogue'. In the context of the argument advanced in this article, it is quite striking that non-strategic dialogue emerged as China's preferred approach (Kent, 1999). In summit meetings in Washington (1997) and Beijing (1998), Jiang Xemin 'agreed to public debate over human rights, signaling to domestic and international audiences that China had become a fully fledged participant in that discourse' (Foot, 2000: 23–4).

China (along with other Asian countries) responded to the universalizing claims of Western human rights activists, in a substantive and ongoing (if not fully satisfying) discourse. While these dialogues did provide the opportunity for regular open-ended bilateral discussions, they lacked the key characteristic of publicity, making human rights activists 'suspicious of the lack of transparency and accountability' as well as the notable lack of tangible results (HRIC, 1998). The important point here is that China resisted strategic approaches to human rights engagement, including both direct and indirect linkages and sanctions, but has been willing to engage in dialogue around universalized international norms.

Despite the general frustration with the policy of engagement, even its critics agree that there are few alternatives. Indeed, given the difficulties of unilateral containment and the absence of international support for multilateral containment, most critics of American China policy suggest only a tougher, more skeptical approach to engagement. The election of George Bush brought into office an administration which had made criticism of the engagement of China one of its major foreign policy positions. Bush and his advisors regularly spoke of China as a 'strategic competitor' rather than a 'strategic partner', and advocated a much more nakedly strategic approach to dealing with China. The first major incident for the Bush Administration came with the accidental downing of an American spy plane over Chinese territory, which led to a tense diplomatic negotiation notably lacking in empathy or benevolence. In the wake of this incident, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld authorized, and then aborted, a decision to cut off military-to-military contacts.

As Lanxin Xiang puts it, 'President Jiang Xemin has been puzzled by the new American administration . . . at the very moment of China's decision to integrate fully into the international system, the United States seems to have started the process of changing the rules' (Xiang, 2001: 8, 10). The American plan to build a National Missile Defense exemplifies the problems in the American-Chinese relationship (Ferguson, 2000). NMD seriously undermined the common understandings on mutual deterrence governing the strategic relationship. China did not accept the US description of NMD as a restricted system aimed at 'rogue states', which did not target Chinese deterrence. China viewed the American decision to pursue a National Missile Defense as a signal of America's 'type' as a hostile power seeking containment. Combative rhetoric from the Bush Administration, including a shift to the term 'strategic competitor' from 'strategic partner', strengthened this interpretation. As Erik Eckholm points out, 'it's hard to find any foreign-policy expert [in China], in or out of government, who believes the stated American rationale for [missile defense]'.<sup>24</sup> The American claim that

NMD had nothing to do with China was inherently incredible and almost certainly insincere, could not be maintained in a dialogue, and was contradicted by the internal arguments in the American public sphere. Indeed, where the Bush Administration made efforts to reassure Russia, it pointedly ignored China's concerns. Faced with what appears to be an American bid for power, China's options included a build-up of nuclear capabilities in order to assure its ability to overwhelm any NMD system, an appeal to international norms and expectations as a means to restrain American unilateral action, or a direct dialogue with the United States. Such an international public deliberation, not quite the same as the 'consultation' promised by the Bush Administration, would address this strategic problem by initiating the exchange of public argumentation. In this give and take, assertions would have to be backed by reasons acceptable to both sides. While this issue remains unresolved, the public American recognition of the legitimacy of China's interest in maintaining deterrence helped to defuse the sense of crisis in the relationship.

The analysis developed here suggests that a more strategic approach to engagement will be unlikely to achieve its articulated goals. This does not mean, of course, that such a coercive approach will be ineffective at achieving other goals. For a United States committed to a view of China as a potential threat to be contained, such a strategic engagement policy makes sense. To the extent that the United States remains uncertain about China's preferences, however, or seeks to shape those preferences in a cooperative direction, a 'tougher' policy will consolidate a strategic (rather than communicative) orientation in China. American–Chinese relations currently are characterized by the clear possibility of a spiral of conflict, as the imperatives of strategic interaction prohibitively push towards mistrust, misrepresentation and conflict. The costs of such a conflict, particularly if one or both sides would prefer to avoid it, make communicative engagement at least plausible despite the trend towards confrontation in the early days of the Bush Administration. The deterioration of relations, particularly the escalating rhetorical hostility in the domestic arena of each side, complicate communicative engagement, but also make it more important. It is precisely because widespread belief in the failure of engagement has built support for more aggressive policies that this recasting of the theoretical foundations of engagement seems urgent. To the extent that communicative engagement makes it more likely that states can effectively interpret each other's preferences, can modify those preferences in the direction of greater cooperation and empathy towards the other, and can generate legitimate international institutions, it holds out the potential for overcoming the security dilemma and the logic of strategic interaction under anarchy.

*Notes*

An earlier version of this article was presented to the 1999 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association. The author would like to thank Jim Bohman, James Fearon, Jennifer Mitzen, Jeff Checkel, James McAllister, Sam Crane, Iain Johnston, Rodger Payne, James Davis and several anonymous reviewers for useful comments and criticisms.

1. Iain Johnston (1996, 1999, and Johnston and Ross, 1999) has most developed this line of argument, noting how little attention has been paid by policy makers and by academics to the dimension of socialization.
2. Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, press briefing with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26 July 1997.
3. For reasons of space I do not go into Habermas's complex analysis of speech acts and the binding force of illocutionary acts. See Habermas 1984, 1996, 1998. For a useful introduction, see Bohman, 1996 and Johnson, 1993.
4. The potential for international public spheres to reshape the conditions for both strategic and communicative action is a separate issue from the focus on state strategies of engagement; see Lynch, 2000.
5. For overviews of these events, see Mann, 1999; Lampton, 2001a; Nathan and Ross, 1997; Bernstein and Munro, 1997.
6. Ambassador Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC, 5 June 1996.
7. For a particularly clear statement of the logic of the American strategy, see Stanley Roth, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Speech before the Washington State China Relations Council, Washington, 5 April 2000.
8. Remarks by the President on US–China Relations in the 21st century, National Geographic Society, Washington, DC, 11 June 1998.
9. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Luncheon Remarks, Wilmington, Delaware, 19 May 1997.
10. <http://www.house.gov/coxreport/>
11. For a compatible discussion, see Johnston and Ross (1999). Compare to Cronin and Cronin (1995). The Council on Foreign Relations volume edited by Shinn (1996) outlines the neoliberal approach of 'weaving a net' and behavioral modification through 'conditional engagement'; also see Gill (1999) and Lieberthal (1995), and compare to the more societally oriented overview of Vogel (1997).
12. The implications of communicative action have become a major issue for interaction between rationalist and constructivist political scientists. Risse (2000) surveys the German debate; also see Johnson (1991, 1993); Dryzek (1992); Hurd (1999); Schieman (2000); Checkel (2001); Heath (2001).
13. For one example among many, see Samuel Berger and Gene Sperling, 'Trade Deal Will Hurt China's Hard-Liners,' *New York Times*, 19 May 2000. President Clinton clearly articulated his belief that China's leaders were aware of these

- risks, and of the American debate, in his remarks at Johns Hopkins University, 8 March 2000 (<http://www.fas.org/news/china/2000/000308-prc-wh1.htm>)
14. I am not discussing Habermas's third mode of action, 'normative action', because this implies that shared norms already exist and have been internalized; in such a situation, there would by definition be no need for engagement strategies.
  15. For reasons of space and focus, I will not deal here with several arguments frequently advanced for deliberation — it might help to specify better solutions to problems or to eliminate unacceptable solutions prior to decision, or that it contributes to the moral improvement of the participants. I also do not deal with the argument that deliberation can create the expectation of future interaction so crucial to cooperation, since this is not unique to deliberative forms of engagement. For elaboration, see Elster (1998) and Bohman and Rehg (1999).
  16. Glaser, 1992. Some rationalists argue that no communication can ever be truthful; the listener must always presume that the speaker has an incentive to misrepresent, and thus will discount the information. See Elster, 1998 for discussion of this point.
  17. Thanks to James Davis and an anonymous reviewer for this point.
  18. Remarks by the President, Mayflower Hotel, Washington, DC, 7 April 1999.
  19. Clinton's statement quoted in *New York Times*, 9 March 2000.
  20. Quote from Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Statement before the Senate Finance Committee, Washington, DC, 10 June 1997.
  21. Peter Tarnoff, Assistant Secretary of State, testimony before House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, 16 May 1996.
  22. Quote from Secretary of State Warren Christopher, 'American Interests and the US-China Relationship', speech to the Asia Society, New York, 17 May 1996.
  23. For example, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Stanley Roth, speech to the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC, 9 May 2000.
  24. Erik Eckholm, 'What America Calls a Defense, China Calls an Offense', *New York Times*, 2 July 2000; John Pomfret, 'China Warns of New Arms Race', *Washington Post*, 11 November 1999, p. A1.

### *References*

- Abbott, Kenneth W. and Duncan Snidal (1998) 'Why States Act through Formal International Organizations', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42(1): 3–32.
- Adler, Emmanuel (1997) 'Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics', *European Journal of International Relations* 3(3): 319–63.
- Archibugi, Daniele, David Held and Martin Köhler (eds) (1999) *Re-Imagining Political Community*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Armstrong, Tony (1991) *Breaking the Ice*. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace.
- Barnett, Michael (1998) *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Berejikian, Jeffrey and John Dryzek (2000) 'Reflexive Action in International Politics', *British Journal of Political Science* 30(2): 193–216.
- Bernstein, Robert and Ross Munro (1997) *The Coming Conflict with China*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Bohman, James (1996) *Public Deliberation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bohman, James (1998) 'The Globalization of the Public Sphere', *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 24: 199–216.
- Bohman, James (1999) 'International Regimes and Democratic Governance: Political Equality and Influence in Global Institutions', *International Affairs* 75: 499–513.
- Bohman, James and William Rehg (eds) (1999) *Deliberative Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Calhoun, Craig (ed.) (1993) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Checkel, Jeffrey T. (1997) 'International Norms and Domestic Politics: Bridging the Rationalist–Constructivist Divide', *European Journal of International Relations* 3(4): 473–95.
- Checkel, Jeffrey T. (1998) 'The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory', *World Politics* 50(2): 324–48.
- Checkel, Jeffrey T. (2001) 'Why Comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change', *International Organization* 55(3): 553–88.
- Christensen, Thomas J. (1999) 'China, the US–Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia', *International Security* 23(4): 49–80.
- Christensen, Thomas (1997) 'Chinese Realpolitik', *Foreign Affairs* 75(5): 37–53.
- Cortell, Andrew and James Davis (2000) 'Understanding the Domestic Impact of International Norms: A Research Agenda', *International Studies Review* 2(1): 65–90.
- Cronin, Audrey K. and Patrick Cronin (1995) 'The Realistic Engagement of China', *The Washington Quarterly* 19: 141–69.
- Deng, Yong (1998) 'The Chinese Conception of National Interests in International Relations', *The China Quarterly* 154: 308–29.
- Deng, Yong and Fei-Ling Wang (eds) (1999) *In the Eyes of the Dragon: China Views the World*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Downs, Erica and Phillip Saunders (1998/99) 'Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism', *International Security* 23(3): 114–46.
- Dryzek, John (1992) 'How Far is it from Virginia and Rochester to Frankfurt?', *British Journal of Political Science* 22: 397–417.
- Economy, Elizabeth and Michel Oksenberg (1999) *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.
- Elster, Jon (1995) 'Strategic Uses of Argument', in Kenneth Arrow (ed.) *Barriers to Conflict Resolution*, pp. 237–57. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Elster, Jon (1997) 'The Market and the Forum', in James Bohman and William Rehg (eds) *Deliberative Democracy*, pp. 3–34. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Elster, Jon (ed.) (1998) *Deliberative Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Eyerman, Joe and Robert A. Hart, Jr (1996) 'An Empirical Test of the Audience Cost Proposition: Democracy Speaks Louder than Words', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40(4): 597–616.
- Fearon, James D. (1994) 'Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes', *American Political Science Review* 88: 577–92.
- Fearon, James D. (1995) 'Rationalist Explanations for War', *International Organization* 49: 379–414.
- Fearon, James D. (1997) 'Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41: 68–90.
- Ferguson, Charles (2000) 'Sparking a Buildup: US Missile Defense and China's Nuclear Arsenal', *Arms Control Today* (March).
- Final, Bernard and Kristen Lord (eds) (2000) *Power and Conflict in the Age of Transparency*. New York: Palgrave.
- Finnemore, Martha and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', *International Organization* 52(4): 855–86.
- Foot, Rosemary (1998) 'China in the ASEAN Regional Forum', *Asian Survey* 38(5): 425–41.
- Foot, Rosemary (2000) *Rights Beyond Borders: The Global Community and the Struggle over Human Rights in China*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Garofano, John (1999) 'Flexibility or Irrelevance: Ways Forward for the ARF', *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 21(1): 74–86.
- Gill, Bates (1999) 'Limited Engagement', *Foreign Affairs* 78(4): 65–76.
- Gill, Bates (2001) 'Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: The Dynamics of Chinese Nonproliferation and Arms Control Policy-Making in an Age of Reform', in David Lampton (ed.) *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy*, pp. 257–88. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gill, Bates and Evan Medeiros (2000) 'Foreign and Domestic Influences on China's Arms Control and Nonproliferation Policies', *The China Quarterly* 161: 66–94.
- Glaser, Charles (1992) 'The Political Consequences of Military Strategies', *World Politics* 44(3): 497–538.
- Goldstein, Avery (1997/98) 'Great Expectations: Interpreting China's Arrival', *International Security* 22(3): 36–73.
- Gordon, Michael R. (2001) 'Rumsfeld Limiting Military Contacts with the Chinese', *New York Times* (4 June): A1.
- Gries, Peter Hays (2001) 'Tears of Rage: Chinese Nationalist Reactions to the Belgrade Embassy Bombing', *The China Journal* 46 (July): 25–43.
- Haacke, Jürgen (1996) 'Theory and Praxis in International Relations: Habermas, Self-Reflection, Rational Argumentation', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 25(2): 255–89.
- Haass, Richard and Meghan O'Sullivan (eds) (2000) *Honey and Vinegar*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1984) *Theory of Communicative Action, volume 1*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1987) *Theory of Communicative Action, volume 2*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

- Habermas, Jürgen (1996) *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1998) *On the Pragmatics of Communication*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Heath, Joseph (2001) *Communicative Action and Rational Choice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- HRIC (Human Rights in China) (1998) *From Principle to Pragmatism: Can 'Dialogue' Improve China's Human Rights Situation?* HRIC Report (June 23). Available at <http://www.igc.org/hric/reports/dialogue.html>
- Hurd, Ian (1999) 'Legitimacy and Authority in the International System', *International Organization* 53(2): 397–408.
- Jervis, Robert (1970) *The Logic of Images in International Relations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jervis, Robert (1976) *Perception and Misperception in World Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Johnson, James (1991) 'Habermas on Strategic and Communicative Action', *Political Theory* 19: 181–201.
- Johnson, James (1993) 'Is Talk Really Cheap? Prompting Conversation Between Critical Theory and Rational Choice', *American Political Science Review* 87(1): 74–85.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain (1996) 'Learning versus Adaptation: Explaining Change in Chinese Arms Control Policy in the 1980s and 1990s', *The China Journal* 35: 27–61.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain (1999) 'The Myth of the ASEAN Way? Explaining the Evolution of the ASEAN Regional Forum', in Helga Haftendorn (ed.) *Imperfect Institutions: Security Institutions over Time and Space*, pp. 287–324. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain and Paul Evans (1999) 'China's Engagement with Multilateral Security Institutions', in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert Ross (eds) *Engaging China*, pp. 235–72. New York: Routledge.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain and Robert S. Ross (eds) (1999) *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power*. New York: Routledge.
- Kagan, Robert (1997) 'The End of Engagement', *The Weekly Standard* (10 November).
- Kagan, Robert (1999) 'Clinton's Sorry Excuse for a China Policy', *The Weekly Standard* (22 March): 9.
- Kagan, Robert and William Kristol (2001) 'The "Adults" Make a Mess', *The Weekly Standard* (14 May).
- Katzenstein, Peter J. (ed.) (1996) *The Culture of National Security*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Katzenstein, Peter J., Robert O. Keohane and Stephen D. Krasner (1998) 'International Organization and the Study of World Politics', *International Organization* 52(4): 645–86.
- Kent, Ann (1999) *China, the United Nations, and Human Rights: The Limits of Compliance*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Knight, Jack and James Johnson (1994) 'Aggregation and Deliberation: On the Possibility of Democratic Legitimacy', *Political Theory* 22: 277–96.
- Kratochwil, Friedrich V. and John G. Ruggie (1986) 'International Organization', *International Organization* 40(4): 753–75.
- Kupchan, Charles (1998) 'After Pax Americana: Benign Power, Regional Integration, and the Sources of Stable Multipolarity', *International Security* 23(2): 40–79.
- Kydd, Andrew and Duncan Snidal (1993) 'Game-Theoretical Analysis of Regimes', in Volker Rittberger (ed.) *Regime Theory and International Relations*, pp. 112–38. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lake, David and Robert Powell (eds) (1999) *Strategic Choice in International Relations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Lampton, David M. (2001a) *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing US–China Relations, 1989–2000*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Lieberthal, Kenneth (1995) 'A New China Strategy', *Foreign Affairs* 74(6): 35–49.
- Lim, Robyn (1998) 'The ASEAN Regional Forum: Building on Sand', *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 20(2): 115–37.
- Lynch, Daniel (1999) *After the Propaganda State: Media, Politics, and 'Thought Work' in Reformed China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Lynch, Marc (2000) 'The Dialogue of Civilizations and International Public Sphere Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29(2): 307–30.
- Mann, James (1997) 'Clinton's Berlin Wall Theory Steeped in Paradoxes', *Los Angeles Times* (12 February): A5.
- Mann, James (1999) *About Face: A History of America's Curious History with China*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- McCarthy, Thomas (1994) 'Kantian Constructivism and Reconstructivism: Rawls and Habermas in Dialogue', *Ethics* 105: 44–63.
- Moravcsik, Andrew (1997) 'Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics', *International Organization* 51(4): 513–53.
- Moravcsik, Andrew and Jeffrey Legro (1999) 'Is Anybody Still a Realist?', *International Security* 24(2): 5–55.
- Morrow, James D. (1999) 'The Strategic Setting of Choices: Signaling, Commitment, and Negotiation in International Politics', in David Lake and Robert Powell (eds) *Strategic Choice and International Relations*, pp. 77–114. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Müller, Harald (2001) 'International Relations as Communicative Action', in Karin M. Fierke and Knud Erik Jørgensen (eds) *Constructing International Relations: The Next Generation*, pp. 160–78. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Nathan, Andrew and Robert S. Ross (1997) *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Papayouanou, Paul and Scott Kastner (1999/2000) 'Sleeping with the (Potential) Enemy: Assessing the US Policy of Engagement with China', *Security Studies* 9(1/2): 157–87.
- Payne, Rodger A. (2000) 'Habermas, Discourse Norms, and the Prospects for

- Global Deliberation', paper presented to the International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA (March).
- Polenbaum, Judy (2001) 'China's Media: Between Politics and the Market', *Current History* (August): 269–77.
- Powell, Robert (1999) *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Price, Richard and Christian Reus-Smit (1998) 'Dangerous Liaisons? Constructivism and Critical International Theory', *European Journal of International Relations* 4(3): 259–94.
- Rachman, Gidon (1995) 'Containing China', *The Washington Quarterly* 19: 129–40.
- Risse, Thomas (1999) 'International Norms and Domestic Change: Arguing and Communicative Behavior in the Human Rights Area', *Politics and Society* 27(4): 529–42.
- Risse, Thomas (2000) 'Let's Argue! Communicative Action in World Politics', *International Organization* 54(1): 1–39.
- Ritter, Jeffrey (2000) 'Know Thine Enemy: Information and Democratic Foreign Policy', in Bernard Final and Kristen Lord (eds) *Power and Conflict in the Age of Transparency*, pp. 83–114. New York: Palgrave.
- Ross, Robert (1987) 'International Bargaining and Domestic Politics: US–China Relations Since 1972', *World Politics* 40(2): 255–87.
- Roy, Denny (1995) 'Hegemon on the Horizon? China's Threat to East Asian Security', *International Security* 19(1): 149–68.
- Roy, Denny (1996) 'The "China Threat" Issue', *Asian Survey* 36(12): 758–72.
- Rustin, Charles (1999) 'Habermas, Discourse Ethics, and International Justice', *Alternatives* 24: 167–92.
- Saunders, Harold (1999) *A Public Peace Process*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Saunders, Philip C. (2000a) 'China's America Watchers: Changing Attitudes Towards the United States', *The China Quarterly* 161: 41–65.
- Saunders, Philip C. (2000b) 'Supping with a Long Spoon: Dependence and Interdependence in Sino–American Relations', *The China Journal* 43: 55–81.
- Schiemann, John W. (2000) 'Meeting Halfway Between Rochester and Frankfurt: Generative Salience, Focal Points, and Strategic Interaction', *American Journal of Political Science* 44(1): 1–16.
- Schimmelfenig, Frank (2000) 'International Socialization in the New Europe: Rational Action in an Institutional Environment', *European Journal of International Relations* 6(1): 109–40.
- Schultz, Kenneth (1998) 'Domestic Opposition and Signaling in International Crises', *American Political Science Review* 92(4): 829–44.
- Schultz, Kenneth (1999) 'Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform? Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War', *International Organization* 53(2): 233–66.
- Schultz, Kenneth (2001) 'Looking for Audience Costs', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45(1): 32–60.

- Shambaugh, David (1996) 'Containment or Engagement of China? Calculating Beijing's Responses', *International Security* 21: 180–209.
- Shambaugh, David (1999/2000) 'China's Military Views the World: Ambivalent Security', *International Security* 24(3): 52–79.
- Shambaugh, David (2000) 'Sino–American Strategic Relations: From Partners to Competitors', *Survival* 42(1): 97–115.
- Shambaugh, David (2001) 'China or America: Which is the Revisionist Power?', *Survival* 43(3): 25–30.
- Shinn, James (ed.) (1996) *Weaving the Net: Conditional Engagement with China*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.
- Stein, Janice Gross (1991) 'Reassurance in International Conflict Management', *Political Science Quarterly* 106(4): 431–51.
- Suettinger, Robert L. (2000) 'The United States and China: Tough Engagement', in Richard N. Haass and Meghan L. O'Sullivan (eds) *Honey and Vinegar: Incentives, Sanctions, and Foreign Policy*, pp. 12–32. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Vogel, Ezra (1997) *Living With China: US–China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Waldron, Arthur (1997) 'How Not to Deal with China', *Commentary* March.
- Wang, Fei-Ling (1998) 'To Incorporate China: A New Policy for a New Era', *The Washington Quarterly* 21(1): 67–81.
- Wendt, Alexander (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Xiang, Lanxin (2001) 'Washington's Misguided China Policy', *Survival* 43(3): 7–23.
- Zhang, Yongjin (1998) *China in International Society Since 1949: Alienation and Beyond*. New York: St. Martin's Press.