



Congressional Briefing

The History of U.S.-China Relations

Monday, March 27, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

#nhcbriefing

Meet the Presenters

Kenneth Pomeranz is University Professor in History and the College at the University of Chicago, and was President of the American Historical Association in 2013-14. His publications include *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, *The Making of a Hinterland: State, Society and Economy in Inland North China, 1853-1937*, and several co-authored, edited, and co-edited volumes. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Philosophical Society, American Council of Learned Societies, Institute for Advanced Studies, National Endowment for the Humanities, and other sources. He is currently working on a book called *Why Is China So Big?*

Jeffrey Wasserstrom is Chancellor's Professor of History at UC Irvine, where he edits the *Journal of Asian Studies* and holds a courtesy affiliation with the Law School. He has been traveling to China for thirty years and has written five books, including *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China* and *China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know*. He has edited or coedited several books including, most recently, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China*. He holds an M.A. from Harvard and a PhD. from Berkeley, and before moving to UCI, he taught at Indiana University for fifteen years, where he served, successively, as Associate Editor of the *American Historical Review* and Director of the East Asian Studies Center, which secured a Title VI grant during his tenure. In addition to writing for academic journals he contributes regularly to many general interest venues, including the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *Dissent*. He has been interviewed on Morning Edition and other public radio programs and given orientation lectures for China-bound Fulbright scholars.

Meet the Moderator

James A. Millward is Professor of Intersocietal History at the Walsh School of Foreign Service and Department of History, Georgetown University. He teaches a variety of classes on Chinese, Central Asian and world history at undergraduate and graduate levels. His research interests focus on China and Central Eurasia including Mongolia, Tibet and especially Xinjiang, as well as the silk road more generally. He has written extensively on the Qing empire, Xinjiang, the silk road, and is currently studying cross-cultural exchange in a history of lute-type instruments across the Eurasian silk road and the world. He has served on the China and Inner Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS), as well as on the Executive Board of the Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS). He was president of CESS in 2010.

Congressional Briefing on the History of U.S.-China Relations

Turning points in modern Chinese history

- 1911 Revolution toppled last dynasty, the Qing (founded in 1644)
- 1912-1927 Period of disunity and Warlord rule
- 1927-1937 Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists govern China
- 1937-1945 War of Resistance against Japan
- 1945-1949 Civil War between Nationalists and Communists
- 1949 Nationalists defeated, People's Republic of China founded
- 1949-1976 Mao Zedong rules China
- 1979 Reform era begins under Deng Xiaoping
- 1989 Tiananmen protests, June 4th Massacre
- 2001 China joins WTO
- 2010 China displaces Japan as world's second largest economy
- 2012 Xi Jinping, China's strongest leader in years, becomes president

Milestones in U.S.-China relations

- World War II through 1970s U.S. backs Chiang Kai-shek
- 1949-1952 U.S. refuses to recognize PRC, Korean War rages
- 1972 Richard Nixon meets Mao in Beijing
- 1979 Relations with PRC normalized, Deng visits U.S.
- 1999 NATO Bombs Hit PRC Embassy in Belgrade, triggering protests
- 2001 Spy Plane Incident Strains Relations
- Obama Presidency: Pivot to Asia
- Trump Presidency: Pivot Abandoned, Renewed Debate Over Taiwan

Enduring Chinese concerns and patterns of behavior

- Chinese regime less centralized than it looks on paper
- Consequently, it has intense focus on national independence & national unit
- Concerned with stability, more conservative than typical 'rising powers'
- Sensitive to perceived symbolic slights
- Legitimacy at home strongly linked to continued economic growth
- Legitimacy also increasingly rests on presenting the regime as a meritocracy

Recently emerging Chinese concerns

- Anxieties about resource constraints on growth
- Concerns about separatism (Tibet, Xinjiang) & instability in Central Asia
- Concerns about the cultural/intellectual effects of prosperity
- Corruption, environmental problems, etc., fueling discontent & instability

Patterns and Problems in U.S.-China Relations

- Presidential candidates are tougher on Beijing than sitting presidents
- Arms are sold to Taiwan despite formal recognition of Beijing
- Each side criticizes the human rights record of the other
- North Korea creates problems for both sides
- Presidential meetings with Dalai Lama a source of tension
- "One China Policy" often viewed differently in D.C. and Beijing