GEORGE W. BUSH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

FINAL TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW #1 WITH EVAN A. FEIGENBAUM

November 20, 2020
Due to COVID-19 protocols, this interview was conducted securely online.

Participants

University of Virginia
Russell L. Riley, chair
Barbara A. Perry
Brantly Womack

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Russell L. Riley: Let me begin by thanking you for this. I might as well note for the record that you're sort of like John Glenn for us today, in that we're embarking on something that we haven't done before, which is to try to record an oral history interview remotely. I appreciate your indulgence and Brantly [Womack]'s willingness to help us in this. It ought to be spoken for the record that this is so.

This is the Evan Feigenbaum oral history as a part of the [George W.] Bush 43 project. I guess we ought to go ahead and go through the standard introduction so the transcriber will know our voices. I'm Russell Riley. My colleagues are—Barbara?

Barbara A. Perry: I'm Barbara Perry, and since I'm the only woman on the stage, I think the transcriber will know my voice.

Brantly Womack: I'm Brantly Womack. I don't know what I'm the only one of, but only Brantly Womack, and I guess Evan's not so sure who he is.

Evan A. Feigenbaum: I'm Evan Feigenbaum.

Riley: Thank you for agreeing to help us. Evan, you have posted to us a series of topics, which are terrific. I want to get to those as soon as possible, but you need to indulge us first. Tell us a little bit about your background before you joined the Bush administration. One of the great advantages of these oral histories is that we get into sort of political sociology. We get to learn about the kinds of people who are attracted to a particular position, a field, whatever. So tell us a little bit about your background, how you became interested in Asia, and how you developed your expertise in the field.

Feigenbaum: Sure. Well, I had grown up in New York City, and I had some sense of the world, because my parents traveled a lot and took me abroad and had sent me overseas to learn French for a couple of summers. But the main career influence on me had been an eighth-grade social studies teacher from North Carolina named Mrs. Beau Devens. Eighth-grade social studies was "World History and Cultures" at my school, a private school in New York City. And the way I remember it was that there was a unit involving some sort of vote for the culture we wanted the group to study, and I think I voted for Africa, but China won. She had this passion for China and it rubbed off on me, so I got interested in the place, started sitting in the school library reading everything I could, studying Chinese in a midtown night school since New York City schools mostly didn't offer Chinese in those days, doing my homework in the Chinese garden courtyard at the Metropolitan Museum—just to feel like I was someplace that kind of looked like China—

and then I had very understanding parents who I talked into letting me go off to China during summer vacations through high school to learn Chinese. I lived pretty close to Gracie Mansion, which is the mayor's house on the east side of Manhattan, and when Zhao Ziyang, the Chinese Premier, came to visit Ronald Reagan in 1984, he stopped in New York and met the mayor, so I walked down and stood outside Gracie Mansion on East End Avenue to try to get a look at him.

The serious Chinese language study started in Beijing in 1985, the summer after my sophomore year in high school; and 1986, the summer after my junior year in high school. In the 1980s we're still not that far into the reforms. Mao [Zedong] had died in 1976. Deng Xiaoping eventually took over, and the reforms had been launched at the end of 1978, so 1985 was only seven years into China's post-Mao era of reforms. I went to China on a Wellesley College summer program. Wellesley was one of the only language programs in the People's Republic of China at that point and the college had a historical connection to China because Madame Chiang Kai-shek was an alumna. So I learned my Chinese in high school in the summers.

I spent a lot of time during those summers, on weekends and class breaks, tooling around China by train—in those days, with some of the Chinese trains still pulled by steam engines and booking tickets in the so-called "hard seat" carriages, which is where you got to meet and talk with ordinary Chinese on a train. China is run by a Communist Party but supposedly "classless" China actually had four classes of train service in those days, ranging from uncomfortable "hard seat" benches up to somewhat comfortable "soft sleeper" compartments. So I tooled around in "hard seat" and "hard sleeper," from Qinghai and Gansu in the northwest, to Inner Mongolia in the north, and Henan in central China. I was pretty adventurous for a teenager—and I also had a thing for Asian languages and history more generally—I bought a lot of self-study books and dabbled in self-taught Thai and Nepali and Tibetan and whatever else I could find, all of which went absolutely nowhere. But I did go through a few much more serious Japan phases—studying Japanese in high school, also in night school at the Japan Society in New York, and then studying Japanese in Tokyo the summer after my high school graduation. So I spent a lot of time in Japan and Taiwan and elsewhere in Asia too over various points of my education from high school through graduate school.

I went off to the University of Michigan, largely because Michigan in the 1980s, as Brantly will know, was very much *the* place to do China. There was an incredible collection of people there, one of whom was a guy named Michel Oksenberg. Mike had been a driving player in the normalization of U.S. relations with China in the [Jimmy] Carter administration. He had been Zbig [Zbigniew] Brzezinski's guy on the National Security Council staff who had driven a lot of the normalization.

Mike took me under his wing. He put me in his doctoral seminar in my first term of my freshman year in college, which was unheard of, and he said to me, "I want to see what you can show me." I don't know what I showed him, but it got me interested in a more academic track and not just in China. When I got to the end of college, I went off to Stanford and got a PhD [doctor of philosophy degree] with a focus on Chinese politics. Mike, ironically enough, circled back to Stanford, where he had started his career, when I was about halfway through my own Stanford career. He ended up there, so I ended up working with Mike again and he was on my doctoral committee.

But the main two people, which becomes relevant to the story later—One is a guy named John [Wilson] Lewis, who has since passed away. I was John's last student of a nearly 50-year career. And John was really one of a remarkable first generation of American political scientists who studied China—people like Lucian Pye, [Robert A.] Bob Scalapino, [A.] Doak Barnett, John Lewis. I was initially thinking of writing a PhD dissertation in political science at Stanford on agriculture in China, because I somehow got interested in the politics of rural areas, which was where Deng Xiaoping's earliest reforms and the use of market incentives in China had really begun.

I remember John looking at me and saying, "Agriculture? You're from New York City! What the heck do you know about agriculture? You should do something like defense policy and the military." John himself had written the seminal books on the history of China's nuclear weapons program, China's strategic sea power and submarine programs, so he got me interested in the role of the military in all sorts of things in China—science, industry, technology, industrial organization, management methods, political and social networks, and so on. That became the foundation of my academic work and early writing, including a book. But that also moved me in a direction that was much more relevant to a public policy and foreign policy career.

The other person who was at Stanford was, of course, Condi [Condoleezza] Rice. I was Condi's teaching assistant for a class called The Role of the Military in Politics, and Condi was one of the five people on my doctoral committee. That became relevant later on, because, of course, when I went into the administration, Condi was National Security Advisor.

I was initially on a straight-up academic track, but I landed in a couple of postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard, first at the Center for International Affairs, in a program run by [Samuel P.] Sam Huntington, called the [John M.] Olin Fellowship, and then at the [Harvard] Kennedy School as a postdoctoral fellow, but then running Asia programs at the Kennedy School under Graham Allison and [Joseph S., Jr.] Joe Nye, and particularly a guy named [Robert D.] Bob Blackwill. I administered Bob's programs on China and Asia, and was almost like a chief of staff, where I directed a lot of stuff for him. Bob really taught me how to function in the real world with skills that equipped me for government later on, because as a young academic, you've literally been taught none of those operational skills. I would brief him on something or other and he would look at me and say, "Listen, big boy. I'm [President Dwight D.] Eisenhower; you're [Andrew] Goodpaster. You've got one minute to brief me on that and get it right." I learned how to brief well. I learned how to write better. I learned how to actually organize things, negotiate a little, bargain with people, basically get things done and do genuinely operational things. So by the time I got in the government, Blackwill especially had really put me through the wringer and taught me some useful skills.

Then I taught a course in the government department at Harvard on Chinese foreign policy. [Roderick] Rod MacFarquhar, who was a very well-known professor of Chinese politics, went on leave and asked me to come into the government department to teach some of his course load as a lecturer.

After [George W.] *Bush v.* [Albert] *Gore*, when Bush was finally declared President-elect, two of the people that had mentored me—one was Condi and the other was Bob Blackwill—both found themselves going into the administration: Bob as Ambassador to India, Condi as National

Security Advisor. I was not particularly political. I hadn't worked on the campaign, although I may have had a couple of exchanges with Joel Shin. But Bob—I don't think it was Condi, but Bob—talked to me about whether I wanted to go to Washington and play a role, and I said, "For sure."

The administration came in in January, and sometime around April I got a call from Richard Haass, who I knew, in part because he'd once interviewed me for a job at the Brookings Institution—for which he didn't hire me, by the way. But Richard, I think because Bob got in touch with him, gave me a call and said, "I'm Director of Policy Planning at State. I'm hiring. I'm looking for an Asia guy to do China, Japan, Korea, but especially China. Are you interested?" I said, "Definitely." So I ended up going down to Washington, talking to Richard, and a couple of weeks later he called me up and said, "OK. Let's do it." That's how I ended up in the State Department.

Interesting things transpired between the time I was hired and the time I actually arrived, the most important of which was 9/11 [September 11, 2001]. I was hired in the spring, but I didn't get on board until around October, so 9/11 had come and gone, and the entire dynamic in American foreign policy, particularly the way China fit into it, had changed significantly, because around the time I was hired, there was the EP-3 incident, where an American surveillance plane was in a collision with a Chinese fighter jet. China was *the* central issue at that point, but by the time I came to State, a lot had changed.

But to rewind—I was always interested in China, was interested in policy, but shifted from an academic track to a policy track, and then ended up, by serendipity, because of Condi and particularly Bob Blackwill, down in Washington by the fall of 2001.

Perry: Evan, you said that you had not worked in campaigns, but did you have an ideological bent?

Feigenbaum: The people I admired on foreign policy and the people who had mentored me were all Republican foreign policy grandees: Blackwill, Condi. I knew Richard [Haass], I knew Steve Hadley and Dov Zakheim a little from things I'd done with them at Harvard. Most of them—There were people floating around the Kennedy School, like Joe Nye or John [P.] White or Ash [Ashton] Carter—and I knew [William J.] Bill Perry a little bit at Stanford—who had served in Democratic administrations, but my foreign policy gravitation was toward people like Blackwill, who were basically Republican foreign policy realists.

I wasn't politically particularly active, and I didn't have a formal role on the campaign. Of course I was young. But that Bush campaign had a small group of foreign policy advisors. They called themselves the "Vulcans." It was Condi and Bob and then Dov Zakheim and Steve Hadley, Rich Armitage, and a few others.

I knew all of them, because one of the things I had done at the Kennedy School was I'd directed a set of China- and Asia-related security programs, first for Blackwill, and then Graham Allison, who was the head of the Belfer Center [Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs]. Graham and Joe Nye, who was the dean of the school, had agreed with Bob to seed me as the director of a new, broader Asian security program that I was trying to build up there. We had a

lot of those guys passing through Cambridge during that period and I got to know them, especially through Blackwill, so my orientation was toward their way of thinking about the world. The people I admired were people like [Brent] Scowcroft, because these people had all worked for—Condi had been on his NSC [National Security Council] and Bob Blackwill had been on his NSC. I knew Philip Zelikow, who was also on his NSC, because he and Condi had written a book on the end of the Cold War together, on the reunification of Germany. They were just the people I admired, and that was how I gravitated on foreign policy.

But I wasn't active on the Bush campaign, and I wasn't a deeply ideological person. Even in my approach to the world now, I'm sort of an old-fashioned, hard-nosed, balance-of-power kind of guy. I wouldn't characterize myself as somebody with an ideological prism on foreign policy, per se.

Riley: Brantly, is there anything we're missing on this that we ought to dig into?

Womack: Well, it's great to hear about Evan's background. I know him from afar. Not having been at Stanford or Harvard, this is as up close as we've been, and it's really interesting background to have and to bring to the administration. And the changes occurring, with the EP-3 incident providing a reality check on assumptions about the U.S.-China relationship, I'd like to hear more about what Evan says about that. Now he's out of government, but going to be in at *that* time, so that would be interesting. Then how does that huge reorientation toward the War on Terror and Afghanistan affect things? Again, you're coming into the chaos in October 2001. You probably had to walk from New York. But still, I'd like to hear those inside/outside stories before we get into the changes that occurred during first term and second term.

Feigenbaum: Sure. Before we get to me, when the Bush administration came in, there were people in the administration at senior levels for whom China was just front and center. It wasn't an organizing principle of American foreign policy, but it had a role that was analogous to the role that China plays in that today. There were people who already saw it as an increasingly central strategic challenge to the United States, to American foreign policy.

But terrorism was always in the background. I remember sometime in the spring being at a Council on Foreign Relations event in New York with Steve Hadley. Steve was Condi Rice's Deputy National Security Advisor. There was a cocktail hour either before or after he spoke. I wandered over to Steve, and we started yakking, and I said, "So how's it going?" And he said in passing something like, "You'd be amazed how much terrorism stuff comes across my desk." This was well before 9/11, but already, when they were back after eight years of the [William J.] Clinton administration, and I remember thinking, *Wow, that's interesting.* Steve was already struck by that intensity of focus on counterterrorism.

The EP-3 incident was pretty central in not just hardening views on China but in defining battle lines that became relevant later on among seniors in the administration. You remember the way the U.S. got out of that, and China got out of that, was through a tortured diplomatic process. I wasn't in the government at this point, but it's kind of a tortured diplomatic process, where the Chinese wouldn't even answer the phone initially, and then Colin Powell and his team found a way to express "regret" but without making any sort of apology for something for which, frankly, the U.S. didn't think it had any reason to apologize.

It was handled diplomatically, but there were clearly people in the administration who wanted to take a much sharper-edged approach, both to the resolution of that and to China more generally. Coming out of EP-3 it was pretty clear to people, both inside and on the outside, to anybody who was paying attention, that there was going to be a big fight on China in terms of how big a challenge China was, and how to organize the American response to it. I wouldn't say the lines of debate were clean, but, broadly speaking, there was a perception that there was a more diplomatic approach to China associated with Powell, and then there was a harder-edged approach associated with [Donald H.] Rumsfeld and Vice President [Richard B.] Cheney. That was the context into which I was hired.

I don't remember who it was that said this to me. It may have been Larry Wilkerson, who at that point was sitting on the Policy Planning Staff but later became Powell's chief of staff and had a lot of Army history with Powell from when he had been Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. It was somebody that was close to Secretary Powell. And this person basically said to me something like, "Just remember why we hired you—you're going to help punch out Rumsfeld's guys on China."

[BREAK] Audio and video freeze briefly.

Feigenbaum: But by October, when I was finally in the State Department, American foreign policy had moved away from all that, to terrorism and dealing with al-Qaeda in the first instance, but then Afghanistan in the second, because of course the response was President Bush's decision to deal with the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.

I came at the very end of September or early October, and at that point—First, the whole orientation of American foreign policy had changed. But two other things are relevant. The first was that my boss, Richard Haass, was dual-hatted. He was Director of Policy Planning, but he also had another hat as the coordinator for American policy on Afghanistan.

Richard was coordinating Afghanistan policy, but he was short-staffed because he was director of the planning staff, and the planning staff couldn't have had more than 12 to 15 people on it. So literally everybody on the planning staff was drafted into Afghanistan duty, so the Latin America guy was doing Afghanistan, and the Africa person was doing Afghanistan, and I was doing Afghanistan. But I was doing Afghanistan differently than the Latin America person, because China at least shared a border with Afghanistan. [*laughs*]

The second thing that was relevant was that China was a member of something called the Six Plus Two [Six Plus Two Group on Afghanistan], which was a contact group that included the six neighboring countries of Afghanistan. China, Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan were the six neighbors, so there was a process going called the Six Plus Two, which meant that China was intrinsically part of the Afghan discussion.

What I'm saying is, people began to start thinking about how to work with China on the Afghanistan issue against a backdrop where American foreign policy had shifted to focusing on something other than China.

And this was something that really redefined the lines of debate. Instead of having a classic Cold War–like balance-of-power debate about how to deal with China as a challenge to American power, the orientation in foreign policy shifted to terrorism–The War on Terrorism and Afghanistan in the first instance, but in the second, the potential to coordinate with China because it had an intrinsic role in that as a neighboring country.

People began trying to figure out how to work with China in that context: First, *could* China be worked with in that context? Second, if so, how? And third, how much did we want to get in their face and challenge the Chinese to step up to the plate? I was not just drafted onto Afghan duty; I had the ability, sitting on the planning staff, to try to push for leveraging the Afghanistan issue as a way to try to challenge the Chinese to step up on an issue that was not a classic one in the U.S.-China relationship, and was also not just one of those classic balance-of-power, "Chinese versus American power," issues in East Asia either, like Taiwan or the South China Sea.

That was the beginning of what I would characterize as a much more *globally* oriented approach to Chinese power. And that's important, because people now, in 2020, think of China as a global player, and everybody's talking about things like China's infrastructure initiatives, or China in Africa. Nobody thought of China that way in the early 2000s. But by default, because of 9/11 and what happened around terrorism and Afghanistan, you could already see the Bush administration not just foreshadowing the debate about China in the world that came later but, even before people *perceived* that China had stepped up to a global role, China was already being *pushed* into a global role.

If you want, we can talk about what happened on Afghanistan with China specifically, but 9/11 was important, because it didn't just shift the orientation of American foreign policy and make China more peripheral and less central to those debates in Washington; it also created the opportunity, and a set of issues, that the United States could leverage to try to push China differently through a very nontraditional set of issues.

The U.S. hadn't worked with China on continental Eurasia or on Afghanistan, really, since the Soviet invasion, so it was a shift in American foreign policy, but one that also created a lever to look at China very differently.

And I would argue to you that the Policy Planning Staff was ground zero for that, not least because Richard had that Afghan hat, and because Powell and Rich Armitage were interested in it.

Womack: Could I follow up on that with something that might be a good indicator of the importance of that shift? I think it was July before 9/11 that the Shanghai Five [China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan] was reconstituted as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, with its major identified goal being antiterrorism. So what I'd like to ask is this: You weren't in the administration that summer, but what I would suspect is that there was very

little interest or reaction to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's refounding at that time. That would provide a transition to China both as an antiterrorism partner and China as an influential part of an organization that included essential participants in Afghan operations after 9/11.

Feigenbaum: Yes.

Womack: I wondered if the SCO [Shanghai Cooperation Organization] and the attitude toward China's utility and significance, whether the shift could be seen in the attitude toward SCO.

Feigenbaum: Yes. To be honest, the Shanghai Five and then the SCO was on nobody's radar that I can recall, until the Bush second term. We should circle back to that when we come to my being Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central Asia, because at that point it *was* on the radar, and it came on the radar really in 2005, because that group adopted a statement that year calling for a timeline to end the coalition presence in Afghanistan. That was the first time [*snaps his fingers*] that the SCO really flashed on the radar in a meaningful way, because they were trying to shuffle us out of Afghanistan while we were busy trying to fight a war. Then in 2006 I got involved. I ran an interagency process on what to do about it, but I also gave a pretty pointed public speech on it at the [Richard M.] Nixon Center. I'm probably the only U.S. official that ever gave a speech entirely dedicated to the SCO. I gave it in 2006, so that comes on the radar later.

The first I ever heard about the SCO in the first term was around 2002-ish, and that was because, when they transitioned from the Shanghai Five into the SCO, they added a sixth member, and that was Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan—We can come back to this later too—had a certain reputation because its leader, Islam Karimov, was famous for blowing up every multilateral organization that he ever touched. Karimov and the Uzbeks had a reputation for being a highly disruptive force inside multilateral groups.

I don't remember if it was Condi or somebody else saying to me, "Well, don't worry about that group, because as long as the Uzbeks are in there, they're going to blow that thing up." I don't think it was Condi; it was somebody else. But the presumption was that as the group got larger, it would become more diffuse and less coherent. And particularly because Uzbekistan was known for being obstreperous, it wasn't something that was on people's radar.

What was more on people's radar was the Six Plus Two, because people saw it as a way to have a regional contact group on dealing with Afghanistan. I think it was Lakhdar Brahimi that was running that process—he was the UN [United Nations] Special Envoy for Afghanistan, if I'm not mistaken. I may be remembering that incorrectly, but I remember Brahimi coming in to meet with Richard about it.

So the Six Plus Two became one way into seeing what China would or wouldn't do on the Afghanistan issue. But the other was when the United States transitioned from coalition military operations to thinking about reconstruction in Afghanistan.

By late 2002, heading into 2003—at that point in the Afghanistan issue, people were really shifting their attention to Iraq by mid-2003—all this Iraq stuff started floating over to the State Department, but I wasn't involved in that. What was happening on Afghanistan at that point was

the transition to focusing on reconstruction. The United States, among others, was sponsoring a series of donor conferences. There was one in Tokyo and there was another one in, I think, The Hague.

China was an afterthought. I recall for the Tokyo Donor Conference that nobody initially even thought to *invite* China, and when Policy Planning was asked to clear on the ALDAC [all diplomatic and consular posts] cable—It might have been certain posts that got it, not an all-posts cable, but when we were asked to clear on the cable, inviting people to the Tokyo Donors Conference, I went to Richard Haass and said, "Why the hell is China not on here? It's a neighboring country. We've worked with it. It's in the Six Plus Two. They joined the United States as a permanent member of the UN Security Council on Resolutions 1368 and 1373," which were the two Afghanistan-relevant post-9/11 resolutions. "Why don't we push China to step up to the plate?" Essentially this foreshadowed the discussion about China being a "responsible stakeholder" later on.

So that got fixed. China was invited to both Tokyo and The Hague. And what was interesting about that was that China had initially given some money for Afghan reconstruction, but it was done bilaterally, not multilaterally. So by pushing them at Tokyo and The Hague, we were really pushing them to join in on a more multilateral approach to coordination, donation, and ultimately the reconstruction process, rather than doing everything bilaterally, which has traditionally been their preference.

And as I recall, they *did* step up with some money at the multilateral events. Their initial pledge to Afghanistan was done bilaterally. But then they made a modest contribution at Tokyo, and they made another modest one in The Hague. Their initial contribution to the Afghanistan issue came through the political coordination in the Security Council around [Resolutions] 1368 and 1373 but then, in the second instance, around a modest financial contribution at these donor conferences. And that was both unexpected to us and at least somewhat useful to the Afghans.

So this became a test bed for a lot of what happened in the second Bush term, where the U.S. would pretty aggressively challenge China to exercise its stake in a more coordinated, more multilateral, or at least multinational and more global way—not necessarily *jointly* with the United States but at least in a way that was *complementary* to the United States.

If Afghanistan and 9/11 hadn't happened, ironically, there never would have been that opportunity to use that issue as a test case.

Now, of course because I was sitting on a planning staff, I was doing a lot of the pushing not just in the Afghan context but in other ways, too. For example, in Policy Planning, you're the speechwriters for the Secretary [of State], in addition to being the strategic planning staff. So all of Powell's speechwriters—Lynne Davidson, [Christian] Chris Brose, Adam Garfinkle; there were a couple of other people, but Lynne Davidson was the chief speechwriter—they would work with the members of the staff on his speeches. And because of what I'm describing to you, I said to Lynne and to Richard and to Wilkerson, who at that point had become Powell's chief of staff, I think that our goal ought to be that every time Powell says the word "China" publicly, he should also say the word "global." "Global player," "global challenges," "global responsibilities."

If you go back and look at Powell's speeches and statements from the period, you will see that almost every time Powell says the word "China," he says the word "global." He sometimes says it in a descriptive context—"they're a global player," or "they have a global stake"—and sometimes he'll say it in a *prescriptive* and pushing context. He'll say, "We want them [China] to step up to their global responsibilities. We want them to join us in actually *doing* something about these global challenges."

So you had this combination of issues in the first Bush term—Afghanistan, debt relief, reconstruction, donor conferences, counterterrorism in the Afghan context—and then the ability for Powell to push it rhetorically. The Secretary was willing to do that. He bought off on that agenda that really foreshadowed a lot of what came later.

That was all in the Bush first term, and that's a long way of saying that the very traditional way of thinking about U.S.-China, and also China's power, really transitioned in that period. I see first-term Bush 43 as being seminal to the much more *global* view of China. If you weren't in the government and you weren't working on these issues, you maybe didn't pick up on that, because the public wasn't so focused on China's role in Afghanistan, but inside the government, people absolutely were.

The last thing I'll tell you is, I remember at one point the Chinese offered a de-mining unit for Afghanistan. And there was a bit of a food fight in the interagency about whether to accept that, with some people, particularly Peter Rodman in the Defense Department, saying, "Why the heck do we want the Chinese running around Afghanistan?" Then other people were saying, "Well, yes, but it's de-mining. It's something that's more of a public good for the Afghan public. Why can't we find a way to accommodate this?"

I think the United States ended up saying, "Thank you, but no thank you" to the Chinese on that, but that's the kind of thing that was happening in the first term. Does that answer your question?

Womack: That does, but let me ask about a dimension you haven't mentioned yet, and that is, what about China's global economy and business interests and things of that sort? You've been talking about the security transformation, which is great. It certainly isn't part of the normal understanding of the U.S.-China relationship in this period. But you have not only U.S.-China trade expanding rapidly after WTO [World Trade Organization] admission, but also China's trade and China's economic significance for the rest of Asia—not so much Central Asia but Southeast Asia, Japan, South Korea—during this time. I was wondering how that would influence policy and how that might influence the President through business interests and things of that sort.

Feigenbaum: Yes. The core transition there was the completion of WTO accession in 2001. Of course Charlene Barshefsky had done the bulk of the negotiating in the Clinton administration, but the actual accession happened in the fall of 2001. At that point Bob Zoellick was U.S. Trade Representative, so he was USTR at the completion, which gets at the bipartisan nature of it.

Sitting at State, and particularly in the position I was in, I wasn't involved in the U.S.-China trade or investment issues, which were centered on Zoellick and USTR. It's ironic, because I

ended up working for Zoellick later, but I didn't know him, and I didn't even come into his orbit until he came over to the State Department as Deputy Secretary in 2005.

What I will say, because you mentioned Southeast Asia, is that China began to pop onto a lot of people's radar screens as a player that was leveraging its economic influence for political effect pretty early. That period from 2001 to 2005 was when you started to hear about that, particularly in Southeast Asia, in a much more concerted way.

As an example, I remember Jim Kelly, who was Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia, had a Chiefs of Mission Conference, I guess toward the end of 2001. There was a panel of Ambassadors serving in Southeast Asia, and one of them, [Richard E.] Hecklinger from Thailand, went into a long disquisition on how China was just all over the place in Thailand. He said, "You'd be amazed how they pop up in all kinds of contexts."

Of course, Thailand and China had always had a relationship, but what he meant was that China's economic role was beginning to bleed into the political setup in Thailand in ways that were impinging on American interests. This is not a direct quote, but he said something like, "A lot of my problems, where I face challenges with the host government in Thailand, can be traced back to them not wanting to get crosswise with the Chinese," either because of China's economic influence or just because of the nature of how that relationship had evolved.

The implication was that the Chinese were already turning their economic leverage into political heft and we had better step up our game. I know Rich and Jim were absorbed by that angle, which is one reason they were so focused on how the U.S. was postured with allies. Powell went to Thailand a few months later and pushed them to work with the U.S. in some less traditional ways, but that alliance had kind of atrophied over the years and the terrorism stuff just swamped everything at that point so a lot of what the U.S. was pushing for just took you right to back to counterterrorism. And Powell's counterpart, Surakiart [Sathirathai], wasn't an easy guy to work with anyway.

In the first half of the 2000s, China's role was expanding in manifold ways as a trader, but also increasingly as a lender, a builder, and an investor as well—in Southeast Asia and then in Africa too. I didn't work on U.S.-China trade issues, but you did get some of that, for instance in the Policy Planning talks that we were conducting.

I'll tell you a great story. The Millennium Challenge—It was called the "Millennium Challenge Account," which later became the Millennium Challenge Corporation—had begun in the first Bush term. This was an attempt to retool foreign assistance so that it was focused more on good governance and getting the governance fundamentals right. When the Bush administration set up MCA in 2002, I remember Richard Haass had a round of Policy Planning talks in probably 2003. The Director of Policy Planning from China was a guy named Cui Tiankai, who's now the Chinese Ambassador in Washington. He's been the Ambassador for several years.

They came in and asked us about MCA, and Richard and I and others looked at them and said, "Why on Earth would you be interested in this?" And Cui said something along the lines of, "Well, we presume you know there are a lot of Chinese companies that are active in Africa, for example, and there's a lot of corruption in these countries. We hear a lot from Chinese firms,

both state-owned and private, that they're having problems in country X with government Y taking action Z, in ways that have made it harder for this Chinese company to operate. We're getting a lot of complaints about this, and we'd be really interested to hear what you're doing on these anticorruption disciplines." So we all went backward in our chairs and said, incredulously, "Really? Really? You're interested in that?"

As China was pivoting toward a more global role, they were encountering political risk and investment risk for the first time. And at least *some* people in the Chinese system were beginning to think about that, because it was impinging on Chinese interests, which is interesting, because the way we think about China now is that they are not just risk-tolerant but risk-oblivious [*laughs*]. That's the way some people talk about it now on some of their investments.

But that's how I encountered it. I didn't work on the U.S.-China trade issues at that point in time.

Riley: Evan, I want to go back and ask you a question about the state of play within the administration. You had indicated, particularly after the airplane incident, that there was a sort of division there between the more military approach as opposed to the more diplomatic approach, which mainly follows the Defense/State divide, but you didn't mention Condi Rice in that particular point that you were making. What I'm trying to do is hear from you, as somebody who was on the inside, about your perception of what Condi perceived her job to be at this time. Then does that have particular implications for waiting on this divide and how the President is seeing things as he's developing the administration's policy toward China.

Feigenbaum: My impression is that, again, 9/11 and Afghanistan, and then later Iraq, were the central issues in American foreign policy. China began to become more peripheral, even by the fall of 2001. So it was neither an organizing principle nor *the* central foreign policy challenge the U.S. was facing, whereas in the spring of 2001, before I got there, it was much more front and center, and there were lines of orientation that were a little bit different. My impression by the time I got in was that the main differences of view around how to deal with China, and what kind of challenge China was, largely followed the Powell/Rumsfeld divide.

But to be candid, I think the President was the key force there, because the President, at least on China—His instincts always struck me, both anecdotally and as an outside observer—"outside" in the sense that I wasn't in meetings with the President on China at the top level—as much closer to Powell's on what China meant to the United States, on how China could be challenged or not.

There were probably three reasons for that. One was that President Bush had direct experience with China from when his mom and dad had been in Beijing. George Herbert Walker Bush had been the Director of the Liaison Office in Beijing back in the [Gerald R.] Ford administration, and I think President George W. Bush had visited there. So it was one of the places in the world that he'd been to, and had some firsthand experience with. If you'd seen China in the 1970s, and then you saw China in the early 2000s, it was a transformed place.

China, just by accident, happened to be the host of the APEC meeting, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting, in the fall of 2001. It was in Shanghai, the APEC summit, and President Bush went to APEC. I always thought to myself, if you'd been to China in the 1970s

and you hadn't been back until the fall of 2001, and then you suddenly landed there and saw what China had become, it would have to strike you that China was a different kind of place. That firsthand experience that the President had was probably relevant.

Second, not knowing how he and his father might have talked about China—His father, of course, had a longtime interest in China, was wise about it, had deep experience and a lot of strongly held views about it. It's unknowable how much of an influence that may have been, but I have to believe that he and his dad talked a lot about China, so that presumably shaped his views in some ways, whereas on other issues many people have argued that the Bush 43 administration was very different, strategically or ideologically, from the 41 administration. On China, I think you can make the case for more consistency with the classic American approach to China.

Then third, because it wasn't *the* central issue in American foreign policy at that point, and people were looking at China differently than they are today, it was less of a food fight than you saw on other issues, like Iraq, for example. And Condi was running that process.

The most telling thing, I think, on the NSC in that period was that the National Security Strategy that the Bush administration issued in its first term had a very interesting chapter on great power competition. The Policy Planning Staff, as I recall, had done the first draft of the National Security Strategy, and when it went over to the NSC, as I recall, Condi didn't like it and she just tossed it. She had Phil Zelikow essentially rewrite it. [*laughter*] Philip tossed out our handiwork, rewrote the whole thing, and what came out, if you look at the first of the Bush National Security Strategies, was a chapter on relations among the great powers that essentially said, we're at a disruptive moment in global history in which, for the first time, the great powers have the opportunity to compete in peace rather than just prepare for war.

I think it was the penultimate chapter of that National Security Strategy. It postulated a *possibility* of greater convergence among the great powers than had existed historically. It was not a naïve chapter; it didn't say that great power competition was going to go away. It talked about competition. But it said, "Compete in peace rather than prepare for war." And of course that was Condi's document, because the planning staff one was tossed, and Condi and Philip—It was their vision.

That was broadly consistent with the orientation that we had at State when I talked about challenging China to step up to a more global role. But Condi did have a kind of edgy view on China, I think, on some things.

Riley: Let me ask one other question, and this is maybe a completely naïve question. The roots of it are about China and terrorism. You've talked about it with respect to Afghanistan because of it being a neighboring country, but given the American experience with communism, very broadly, and its association with global disruption and terrorism, my question is: Was that at all a factor in how Americans were perceiving China? Or was that kind of global disruption not at all a factor in Chinese communism as it existed in 2001, and therefore is this just a completely irrelevant question to be thinking about?

Feigenbaum: I don't recall people talking about China in a highly ideological way that was so focused on their communism, as opposed to their strategic role. You had a lot of people in the administration who were much more focused on classic balance-of-power questions, and saw China as a strategic challenge. People were not naïve about their Leninism at home and their communism abroad, but they were viewed more through a strategic and balance-of-power lens as a challenge to American security interests in East Asia and strategic interests globally, and less through the ideological prism.

The terrorism thing came in because the Chinese, I think by the spring of 2002, had realized that they could try to leverage the American focus on counterterrorism for some of their own domestic agendas in Xinjiang and with the Uyghurs. They came to the United States and attempted to get the United States to designate these groups.

There was one called ETIM [East Turkistan Islamic Movement]. There was another one called ETLO, East Turkistan Liberation Organization. There was another one called SHAT [Sharqiy Turkestan Azatliq Teshkilati]. I don't even remember what that stood for. These acronyms started popping up, and they wanted these things designated. It was along the lines of, "If you want our help on counterterrorism, we've got a terrorism problem here, so you'll designate these groups." But I wasn't party to any of that, because that was centered on the intelligence community, rather than the policy side, having to make judgments about whether those groups were real or not, whether the Chinese had cooked that up or not. That whole thing was centered more on the intelligence side, in CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at State. None of that really came across my desk.

Riley: Thanks.

Womack: How many of those three groups were declared terrorist organizations?

Feigenbaum: I don't recall. ETIM definitely was designated. I know that because about three weeks ago Mike Pompeo lifted the designation.

You could look at that and say the Chinese were successful in getting the U.S. to designate some groups. If you talk to people in the intelligence community who were there, they'll probably tell you how they looked into it, how those were designated, and whose intelligence went into it. I just don't know, but there was at least one I know that was designated because Pompeo just rolled back the designation.

It's interesting because counterterrorism was an issue that the United States had globally—and you can see already the Chinese trying to lever an American priority to fit with their own *domestic* priority.

Fast-forward to today and some people argue the U.S. got snookered into that, essentially, by the Chinese. Other people take a different view on that. And of course Xinjiang policy in China has headed in a horrific direction, with camps and so on, that have made that issue much more tragic today, if you look back with 20 years of hindsight.

Womack: But it's worth noting that even back in the early 2000s, and certainly increasingly after that, the Uyghurs were the primary people responsible for a whole series of dramatic

terrorist acts—knifing 22 people in the Kunming train station in Yunnan, blowing up people in Tiananmen. By most people's standards of terrorism, it wouldn't be difficult to say that terrorism occurred in China, and violent actions against innocent civilian populations occurred.

Feigenbaum: Yes. As I recall, one question the intelligence community had to look at was whether there were Uyghurs in Afghanistan. But like I said, this was all really concentrated in the intelligence community, not on the policy side. It came to the policy side at a higher level than my desk, but it's interesting because it's an example of where the Chinese tried to leverage where the U.S. was headed globally for their own domestic priorities and agendas.

Perry: This is coming from my position as a complete layperson in this field. Someone who would've been doing something similar to what you were doing as a policy planner in China, up to the highest levels in China, at this time when things were changing about how the United States policy was looking at China as this global player, and wanting them to be a global player, What does China want at this point? Not just some of these smaller strategic things about their domestic terrorism, or as they see it, opposition to the regime, but what do they want the big picture to be like for them in the world?

Feigenbaum: To be honest, when the U.S. started pushing them on the global thing, I don't think they got it, and they didn't get it until—It gets much more interesting in the second term, for reasons that we can get into later, but we're still in the first term.

At that point in the first term the Chinese, in the first instance, were slow to appreciate, in my view, the opportunities they had as a result of the shift in American focus away from *them* and onto something else. That's interesting, because we tend to think of the Chinese as these Sun Zi–reading, Go-playing strategic masters, but I thought they were very slow to realize the opportunities they had as a result of the U.S. focusing on something else.

Perry: And why was that?

Feigenbaum: They didn't really get it. First of all—This is true even today, when China's much more globally oriented and is much more assertive globally, but particularly 20 years ago—their priorities—first, second, third, fourth, and fifth—have been largely domestic.

If you're the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, the first five things you think about when you wake up in the morning are largely domestic: first, how to keep the Chinese Communist Party in power; second, how to grow the economy at a requisite percentage to keep the country stable and keep yourself in power, because that's the basic social contract between the Party and the public—*you* stay out of organized politics and *we'll* give you opportunities to get rich; third, how to create the ten to eleven million new jobs a year that they need to keep the public satisfied; fourth, how to deal with a demographic time bomb, where the country's getting old before it's getting rich; and, fifth, how to deal with a growth model that's energy-intensive but energy-inefficient and extremely environmentally unfriendly. The last one matters to the Party politically because the number one source of social protest in China, other than land seizures for real estate deals by local officials, is environmental protest.

So their priority agenda has largely been domestic, and it's focused on the Party keeping a lid on protests and threats to their power at home. Because of that, they were not assertive globally at

that point in time, except in their Asian neighborhood and on the issues that had been their core security interests. Those were the things where they had irredentist or revisionist territorial claims: Taiwan, South China Sea, East China Sea. Then, there was their growing economic role in the world, and then their traditional great power relationships with the United States, Japan, India, and so on.

So that's interesting because, number one, the U.S. is pushing them in this first Bush term on this global stuff, but it's really not part of their worldview at that point.

Plus they don't get it initially, which is also interesting, because they got it earlier. For example, if you go back to the [Henry A.] Kissinger conversations with the Chinese and the Nixon administration, Kissinger had a much more global conversation with China than the United States was having with them in the Clinton and in the Bush 43 first term, simply because China was thought of in the context of U.S.-Soviet competition and the Cold War, which was a global competition. So at that point in the 1970s, the U.S. and the Chinese were talking about things like Cubans in Angola, and [Jonas M.] Savimbi in Southwest Africa. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, there was a U.S.-China angle to that.

That was a much more global conversation. But by the time Clinton and Bush 43 roll around—Remember, it's post–Tiananmen Square also, so there'd been a big disruption in U.S.-China relations—the conversation is really much narrower.

One of the reasons I was pushing Powell so hard through the speeches and through leveraging the Afghan issue to say the word "global" every time he said the word "China" was that the U.S. and China didn't see eye to eye on any of those neighborhood issues, like Taiwan, South China Sea, East China Sea. So if you wanted to put U.S.-China relations onto a more stable footing, where you were challenging China and getting in their face to move the relationship in a more salutary direction, you needed China to step up and do things that would be productive on a different set of issues, on global and functional issues that might be less difficult for the U.S.-China relationship.

There wasn't much positive in China's posture around its periphery in East Asia. The U.S. and China didn't have anything positive around Taiwan. They didn't see eye to eye. The Chinese hated American policy. We hated their policy. The U.S. had made a big arms sale to Taiwan in the first year of the Bush 43 administration, had ripped off the Band-Aid and made a big arms sale. The Chinese didn't like that, obviously.

So the more *global* conversation was the only way to challenge them—and make this thing more positive, potentially—but it didn't get a lot of traction with China until the second Bush term, because the Chinese didn't see the world that way.

So, like I said, look at Afghanistan: First, they made the contribution bilaterally, and then it was only when we pushed them that they stepped up more multilaterally. But it was still much more modest, the contribution they made.

After the U.S. invaded Iraq, quite apart from the UN Security Council piece, which had been about getting the Chinese on board with Resolution 1441, former Secretary [James Addison] Jim Baker was brought back as Special Envoy on Iraqi debt relief. Among the places he coordinated

with was China, and he pushed the Chinese to forgive the Iraqi debt that the new government in Baghdad inherited from Saddam Hussein. It was somewhere north of $1 billion and Baker had some good meetings with the top leader, Hu Jintao, and the premier, Wen Jiabao, who told him they'd maybe do it on "humanitarian" grounds, but also said they'd look seriously at some reconstruction funding. Those were the kinds of issues where the Chinese were being pushed on a much more global agenda.

To your point: Our counterparts in China—the policy planners in the Foreign Ministry, and then, presumably, the policy planners elsewhere in the system, including in the security services—were disproportionately focused either on the foreign policy elements of their domestic agenda or on the classic set of U.S.-China and East Asia security issues.

I do think American pressure had some role in getting them to think about how to match their framework a bit better to where their power and capacity were already headed at that point. I'll give you another example from later on—from very early in the second term, but with momentum from the first term. The U.S. and China set up a bilateral Global Issues Forum, where Paula Dobriansky, the Under Secretary for Global Affairs, would pull in a big interagency group to do public health, and especially clean energy coordination, with her counterpart, Shen Guofang, an Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, who would convene Chinese functional agencies all together on their side. The discussion involved challenging China frontally to step up on global problems where they actually had some real capacity to contribute to a solution. One example was malaria, because China had most of the global supply of a plant called artemisinin that was a critical ingredient in antimalarial drugs, so there was a big push on them to deal with supply bottlenecks and step up on antimalarials in a way that tried to push them into being more of a joint problem solver on a global challenge where results could then be measured. Does that make sense?

Perry: That does. Yes. Thank you so much.

Womack: Could I add something there on the change in China's position? That really after Tiananmen, and the disillusionment about China becoming just part of a global situation, China rediscovered its neighborhood. You don't have the normalization of Chinese relations with Indonesia, Singapore, South Korea until the early '90s, and you had this switch in the attention of Chinese policy toward being a good neighbor during this period. The apex of that is in the early 2000s with Southeast Asia and the China-ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] Free Trade Area in 2002, and the agreement on the South China Sea that was adopted in Phnom Penh at that time.

Certainly domestic policy always is key in China. It's a big place, a fifth of the world's population. But you also had this shift in attention to the neighborhood, and now it's a mix of those two things. You can see the Belt and Road Initiative as something with global pretensions, but it starts with the neighbors, moving out from the neighbors to global.

Feigenbaum: Yes. To be honest, there were two things that happened in 2002–03 in the neighborhood that really got American attention, one of which was viewed as having potential for collaboration, and the other, which was viewed as disruptive and foreshadows where we are now.

The collaborative one was what happened with North Korea. Jim Kelly, of course, went off to Pyongyang in 2002. The Bush administration came in with a very hostile view toward North Korea, unwound the 1994 Agreed Framework, and discovered the North Koreans cheating on it by developing an alternate route to a nuclear weapon, which was a uranium-enrichment route, rather than the plutonium route that had been at the core of the '94 Agreed Framework. So, after a big debate in the administration, Jim Kelly went off to Pyongyang as the Special Envoy in October, and that visit didn't go well. It blew up, especially with Kang Sok Ju, the Senior Vice Foreign Minister, when he confronted them with the American discovery of the uranium-enrichment route. Jim and his delegation came away with the perception that the North Koreans not only admitted it but threatened the U.S. with it.

At that point, it became very confrontational between the U.S. and North Korea, but the United States very quickly pivoted to trying to enlist China to put some pressure on North Korea. I wrote a Policy Planning memo for Powell, because when Jim left Pyongyang, he quite naturally went off to Tokyo and Seoul and consulted them, but if I recall correctly he did not go to Beijing to consult them on that particular return trip.

Haass and I sent a memo saying, "What about China?" This memo said, look, China provides whatever percentage of their coal, whatever percentage of their power. They've got all this latent leverage. We should be trying to pressure China to get inside the tent with us.

Powell liked that idea—I remember him scribbling something nice on the memo, and then he told Haass that he'd sent it around to Condi, Rumsfeld, Cheney, and the others—and so did Kelly, and the U.S. began, essentially, trying to leverage the North Korea issue to get the Chinese to not just be a collaborator but really to be a source of pressure on the North Koreans—not to have America's proxy, but really to come on board to exercise some coercive leverage on North Korea. And the NSC team—Mike Green, Jim Moriarty—was pushing in that direction too.

That culminated in President Jiang Zemin going to the President's ranch in Crawford, Texas. The President really shoved him around on North Korea, and the Chinese came on board as the organizer of, initially, three-party talks—U.S., China, North Korea—and then ultimately six-party talks, which some people wanted to make even bigger. I remember John Bolton, who was the Under Secretary for Arms Control, wanting to use the Security Council, so he wanted something more like ten-party talks, where it would be the P5 [five permanent members of the UN Security Council], where the British and the French were going to be in, plus you'd throw in the South Koreans and the Japanese. We ended up at six, but that was an attempt to get the Chinese to step up in a positive way as a collaborator in the neighborhood on an issue where there had hitherto been a lot of contention.

The other one, which was at the other end of the spectrum, was in 2003, to Brantly's point, when the ASEAN, the ten Southeast Asian countries, had agreed with China, Japan, and South Korea to set up an ASEAN Plus Three mechanism. The motivation for the Plus Three was for China, Japan, and South Korea to coordinate to push the ASEANs to take a more expansive view of the region, because ironically, most of the regional multilateralism in East Asia was centered on the ASEANs, but disproportionately the power and capacity in the region was sitting up in northeast Asia.

There was a disconnect between who was driving multilateral groups and who actually had the power and capacity to lend to multinational solutions. So when you got the ASEAN Plus Three process, there was an ASEAN Plus Three summit in Bali, Indonesia, in 2003, and the Chinese, the Japanese, and the South Koreans held a side meeting among themselves where they agreed to negotiate a Plus Three trade agreement, [*laughs*] just among the Plus Threes, as part of something called the Bali Process that Prime Minister [Junichiro] Koizumi of Japan was really pushing. Of course the U.S. was already excluded from ASEAN Plus Three, so we were out of that, and then suddenly we had two of our allies pushing toward a free-trade agreement with China that we wouldn't be part of either.

So in contrast with the North Korea issue, here was an issue where the U.S. was excluded, where we saw our partners, potentially with China, moving toward a process that would disadvantage the United States.

I was at one of the East Asia informals, which was the Monday afternoon 3:00 P.M. interagency meeting that Jim Kelly chaired every Monday in his office—with NSC, OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense], CIA, Joint Staff, State [Department] Policy Planning, and the front office principals from the State East Asia bureau. I remember Jim saying, "What the hell just happened in Bali?" Mike Green was over at NSC as the Japan expert, and Jim said to Mike, "What's Koizumi doing? What's Koizumi's game?"

So on one of those two issues, you had China as a potential collaborator, and on the other one China was viewed as pushing forward a process that excluded the United States and was trying to split us from our allies on some of the trade and economic issues. Again, both of those also foreshadow the dynamics that happen later as you swing into the second term.

Perry: Can I go back to the Crawford meeting? You said the President was pushing around the—was it the Chinese Premier?

Feigenbaum: Chinese President. Their number one was Jiang Zemin, who was the General Secretary of the Communist Party and the State President.

Perry: Right. And what do you mean by that? The President was pushing—

Feigenbaum: As I recall, the President went to the mat and said, "You need to step up. This is your supposed ally. We think you've got a lot of leverage on them, and it's time for you to step up to the plate and put the pressure on them and turn the screws; and if you don't, we will, without you." He put the heat on them, and Jiang essentially agreed to turn up some heat. At least he agreed *rhetorically* to turn up the heat. And they did a presser after the meetings. I remember Jiang wearing this kind of windbreaker. President Bush was very casual down there.

Perry: He'd just cleared brush.

Feigenbaum: We used to have a joke. I remember a picture of Steve Hadley, when the President was clearing brush, in loafers and khakis, and there was President Bush in his t-shirt and jeans and boots with his chainsaw [*laughter*], which, if you know Steve, was very much—

Perry: He was a preppy brush clearer.

Feigenbaum: Yes, Steve was clearing brush in loafers and khakis and a Brooks Brothers shirt. But the President did this presser with Jiang where he made clear that we were expecting China to step up in a way that they had not, and Jiang, at least rhetorically, suggesting that they were down with the program, although in public at the presser he did the usual noncommittal Chinese riff about preserving "peace and stability" and "consulting closely." Then we had the three-party, and later the six-party, where the U.S. was really shoving them to step up more. I was involved with North Korea policy, but I didn't attend the Six-Party Talks. I was more back in Washington, doing some of the strategy stuff and working with Kelly on some of the presentations that he was giving.

The expectation bar for China was raised way high. North Korea was seen as a test case of what they would and would not do in a way that had much more immediate impact than Afghanistan, where we were using it, as I was saying before, as a lever, but where their role was not that important, because they weren't party to coalition military operations. The U.S. had forces on the ground in Afghanistan. China did not.

So North Korea was a much more direct test of the theory that China could be pushed to step up more, and the perception was that they *did* step up much more. They were the organizer of the talks. They did, in my recollection, push the North Koreans. But they did not push the North Koreans in the sense of cutting off the fuel supply or using coercive economic leverage in a sustained and serious way.

There was a debate at one point about that because Chinese coal shipments to North Korea fell off for a couple of months, and the perception in Washington was that the Chinese had done that deliberately to use that as a coercive tool to get the North Koreans at least to come to the table on what were then joint American and Chinese terms, and to knock off some of the more provocative things that they were doing.

But the idea that China would cut off fuel supply or coal supplies permanently and turn the screws up to the point of regime collapse—"dismantle your nuclear weapons program or else"—because they had that leverage made no sense. There were people who had the theory of the case that you could get them to use their leverage that way. But it became clear by the end of 2003, early 2004, that they were *not* going to use that leverage that way. *Even* if anybody in China was willing to try that, there were countervailing forces within the regime in China that were not willing, either for sentimental reasons or for strategic reasons, to allow the North Korean system to collapse. So they were willing to push them, but within the parameters of Chinese policy.

I remember the planning talks with China became very interesting on North Korea, but also Jim would sit around with the Chinese negotiators, and they would tell stories about how much trouble they were having with the North Koreans. There's no love in that relationship, no love at all. I think the Chinese view the North Koreans as an obstreperous and, frankly, extremely ungrateful ally, who are ungrateful for all the things that the Chinese have done for them, including saving their bacon in the fall of 1950. [*laughs*] There's no love there, but, as I said, the Chinese have a hard-power view of the world that goes back to their domestic and ideological priorities, but also the way the U.S. is seen as a security threat around their periphery, so they were never, realistically, going to push the regime to collapse.

But the memo I wrote for Powell, the theory of the case, was *not* that the Chinese were going to push them to collapse; it was that the Chinese had leverage that could be harnessed that we were not harnessing sufficiently. That *was* persuasive to the President. It was also persuasive to Cheney, and it was persuasive to Rumsfeld, who wanted to subject the Chinese to a test.

[BREAK]

Riley: I was looking at your notes. You mentioned India and I wonder if there's anything from the first term about India. The country you don't mention in your notes is Pakistan. Is Pakistan a part of your portfolio in the first term, and if so, what do we need to know about that?

Feigenbaum: The South Asia guy on the Policy Planning Staff was a guy named Neil Joeck, who came from Z Division at the Livermore Lab on detail. But it's interesting that you mention Pakistan, because the Chinese have a very unique and special relationship with Pakistan, and although I didn't work on India policy until the second term—First of all, my mentor, Bob Blackwill, was Ambassador in New Delhi, and, second, from its very inception the Bush administration *did* have a view to improve the strategic relationship with India, and China was, if not front and center then certainly in the rearview mirror of that effort with India.

That's important, first, because the U.S. began developing its relationship with India in the first term separate from the India-Pakistan dynamic, which had always been the prism on it. The administration called that "dehyphenation"—to dehyphenate India from "Indo-Pak." That was the first thing that's important. Secondly, the rise of Chinese power was certainly in the background. That becomes relevant to my story later, when I become the guy on a lot of India policy at the end of the second Bush term.

The third thing to know about that was there was another interesting test case of how China would position itself, and it was related to Pakistan, in the first term. There was a terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament building in 2001. And after that there was a period where, first of all, there was some concern that India and Pakistan might go to war, so there was an effort to reach out to China to use its relationship with Pakistan to help tamp down some of those tensions. And then, secondly, the one place where I did get some visibility on Pakistan and India at that point was that there was a lot of infiltration by terrorist groups targeting India across the so-called Line of Control between India and Pakistan. The U.S. began sitting on the Chinese to try to pressure Pakistan to tamp down on the infiltration and to do something about the camps that those groups were using on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control.

I do remember a round of Policy Planning Talks with Wang Yi, who is now the Foreign Minister and State Councilor of China but at that point was the Director of Policy Planning in the Chinese Foreign Ministry, where he said to Haass, "We want you to know that your messages have been received and passed to Pakistan." That's important and interesting, first, because the good news was that the Chinese viewed that as an opportunity to signal to the Americans that they were doing something about a problem that the Americans had identified to them and therefore wanted to be seen in Washington as a constructive player in restoring stability and tamping down the

possibility of a hot conflict. But the bad news was that the way they framed it was, "We want you to know that we heard *your* message and passed on your messages."

But what we were looking for was for the Chinese to go to the Pakistanis and say, "Here's *our* message to you. Our message is that we, Beijing, think you need to knock off the infiltration. We, Beijing, think you need to do something about the camps." Instead, the way they seem to have delivered the message was, "We're passing on that Washington really wants you to knock off the infiltration—"

So they got it, but they delivered the message in a way that was much more tied to their agenda around U.S.-China relations than what I was describing to you earlier, which was the U.S. effort to get them to identify their *own* interests as being in concert with where the United States wanted to land.

The beginning of the real transformation in the U.S.-India relationship began in the first term. Blackwill was central to that. Condi Rice was central to that. Richard Haass played a role. Don Rumsfeld played a really central role, because I think the thing that came out of the first term that began to move it was the so-called Next Steps in Strategic Partnership, the so-called NSSP, which was a Defense Department initiative with India in 2004 that included a military technology–sharing component. It included a missile defense component, so Doug Feith was involved in working with the Indians as a potential partner on missile defense.

When I got into India policy in a very different job later on in the second term, the NSSP had had a foundational role, and Rumsfeld, Blackwill, the President, Condi, they all deserve a lot of credit for that. Then in the second term Condi and Zelikow and people like [R. Nicholas] Nick Burns become front and center in that.

Riley: OK. Let's move on to the second term, unless there's something else big that we've missed.

Feigenbaum: I don't think so.

Riley: Tell us about your transition and how your portfolio evolves.

Feigenbaum: The Planning Director had changed in the middle of the first term from Richard Haass to Mitchell Reiss. With Reiss, that's when I got a real taste of North Korea policy, because he was brought in to work on it. I had not necessarily expected to spend virtually the entire eight years in the administration, but in the second term Bush had been reelected and Condi became Secretary of State. So of course I had described to you earlier the relationship I had with Condi from Stanford days, so that was exciting.

In her first day or two on the job, I called up [Laura E.] Liz Lineberry, who was her assistant, and I said, "I'd like to come up and say hi," and she said, "Oh, yes, Condi wants you to come over." So I walked down the hall and through the door. Policy Planning's on the seventh floor, and there's the big public office, and then there's the private office the Secretary has in the back. Condi and I sat there in the little office, just the two of us, and I remember looking at her and saying, "Holy —! You're the Secretary of State! Can you believe this? You're the Secretary of

State!" It was amazing—my former PhD committee member, and I'd been her TA [teaching assistant], and suddenly she's the Secretary.

I stuck around and was still sitting in Policy Planning; I expected to continue for a bit to see how it was going to evolve under Condi. But what became kind of the hinge, not just of my role in the second term, but really of my career, was that she picked Bob Zoellick as her Deputy Secretary.

I didn't know Bob. I had never met Bob. I had no prior relationship with him, but he had a long-standing interest in China. And of course he's a unique guy. He's strategically agile, but he's also an operator. He's got experience with the security and political issues, but also the economic issues. Bob's a multidimensional guy and a big thinker, so he was my kind of guy. I'd say, I don't know, three or four months into his tenure as Deputy Secretary, the entire Policy Planning Staff was asked to do a sit-around with him.

The Director of Policy Planning at this point was a guy named Steve Krasner, who was a colleague of Condi's from Stanford, a very famous professor of political science. I knew Steve because I'd had a class with him at Stanford. We had a great relationship, but I don't think he'd really figured out how to use me yet.

We were asked to brief Zoellick as Deputy Secretary. In one of the conference rooms, the entire planning staff, all 18 or so people, sat around with him. Three people were selected to brief him, and, interestingly enough, I was not one of them. China was not one of the topics. Somebody briefed him on Iran, somebody briefed him on Africa, and then there was a briefing on something else.

Not too long into this thing, Zoellick interrupts and says, "All right, enough about this. Who around the table does China? I want to hear from the person who does China." So I stuck up my hand, with an assist from Barry Lowenkron, who was the Deputy Director. Barry interjects "Evan—" and I said, "That's me!" And Bob said, "All right, tell me about China."

I gave him a pitch that I had tried out on Powell and on Armitage and on others in the first term but that had never really taken. I basically said to him, "If you think about China's role in the world, if you look at U.S. statements and rhetoric, we talk about China as a country that needs to be 'integrated into the international system,' but structurally, China *is* in. It's a member of the permanent five of the UN Security Council. They're in the WTO. They're in every protocol on everything from ozone depletion to chemical weapons."

So I said, "Why are we still talking about trying to 'integrate them into the international system,' when structurally speaking, they *are* integrated? We really need to shift our attention from structure to conduct and behavior. In other words, the issue is not how to *get* them in, but now that they're in, how to push them to use the seat that they have at the table to articulate their interests in a way that's consistent with *our* interests and our view of how they should lever their power."

This was a way of encapsulating what I talked to you about from the first term. And I had rehearsed it not just on Powell—without too much success, in his case—but in a transition memo on China that I wrote for Condi, which was included in the Policy Planning Staff's transition book for the new Secretary. China had a more global role. That was a fact. China was much

more integrated. That was also a fact. China had power and capacity. That was a fact. But our rhetoric and our view of China were not aligned with those realities. We were talking in ways that were five years behind where their power and capacity actually were.

Essentially what I said to Zoellick was, structurally speaking they're a stakeholder. But they're not acting like one, and our rhetoric doesn't suggest that they are one. We're talking about them like they're on the outside looking in. But they ought to be pressed to take some responsibility to support and sustain the international system that has enabled their own success.

Bob picked up his pen and started writing, he engaged me in a discussion, and then at some point said, "Send me a piece of paper on that. I want a piece of paper." That was the beginning of an incredibly fruitful relationship between me and Bob that became really a seminal relationship in my career, where he's been a mentor to me. He and I just had a mind meld around not just looking at China but looking at foreign policy and international relations, and how you think about the relationship between structure and conduct, capacity and behavior.

I sent him a piece of paper on this, and it meshed very much with the way Bob had been thinking and talking about China for a long time. If you were able to use a FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] process to pull the memos I was writing for Powell, where I was using phrases like "constructive stakeholder," and you then also look at the speeches and articles that Zoellick had been giving and writing throughout that same period, where he was talking about China in exactly the same way, you can see why a light bulb went off for Zoellick. But also when Zoellick started talking, a light bulb went off for me. He and I had a mind meld, and we started to work together.

Bob and I and his chief of staff, who was a guy named Chris Padilla, began to work together to try to help Bob articulate the things that he had been thinking about for a long time, but now in his new role as Deputy Secretary wanted to be able to push to capture Chinese power in a different way. Bob had been thinking a long time, I had been thinking a long time, and there was kind of a mind meld.

I sent Bob this piece of paper, and he then started to work through this himself, and with Condi and with others. Steve Krasner was very generous to me in essentially allowing me to develop a relationship with Zoellick without him as the middleman. I was sitting in Policy Planning in 2005 but was essentially on the Deputy Secretary's staff. I joke with Bob that my role was to send him email—And he didn't use email, by the way—all the email came through someone on his staff named Lisa Martilotta. I'd get stuff that would say "From Lisa Martilotta, on behalf of Bob Zoellick."

My job was almost just to send email to Bob, commenting on stuff. He'd send me something and say, "What do you think about this?" I'd send him an email and I'd say, "That's stupid." And then, because he's a really expansive strategic thinker and has a supple mind, once I'd sent him a thing where I'd say, "This is stupid," he'd write me back and say, "Well, why is it stupid?" I'd say, "It's stupid for the following reasons: it doesn't appreciate China's role, doesn't understand Chinese power, and it doesn't frame the problem correctly." He'd come back and say, "Well, I agree with two of your reasons, but not the other, and here are six more things that you probably haven't even thought about." It was a classic Policy Planning interaction, where the seventh floor

principal and the staffer in Policy Planning are having a very strategic and adaptive conversation around first principles. What is China's role in the world? How is China's power evolving? What do we want? How are we going to push them?

In the fall of 2005, there was a really unique opportunity to articulate this publicly, because Zoellick decided to give the keynote speech for the annual gala dinner of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. Bob said, "I view this as an opportunity to give a big speech that frames the strategic issues publicly in a way that can last and endure." This is the origin of Bob's famous so-called "responsible stakeholder" speech, which is, in my view, the single most important statement of U.S. policy on China of the last two decades. I say that with a tip of the cap to Zoellick, because he understood what a lot of people do not, which is that you can use a speech to speak not just to the people *in* the room, but primarily to the people who are *not* in a room by framing a strategic concept that goes beyond just the immediate audience.

Zoellick saw that as an opportunity, and I and Chris Padilla, as the guy who had the pen, and Bob, and then a couple of other people, including Jim Keith, who was a Foreign Service officer, then acting as Deputy Assistant Secretary handling China in the East Asia Bureau, worked on this speech with him. I wrote the building blocks for the speech, which drew off of my original paper for Zoellick from when I first met him at that session in the spring, as well as some other things I'd written and the exchanges we'd had since then, then Padilla wrote a draft, and it was all to help Bob get his big ideas—to help him leverage this opportunity.

I wrote something in the builders—It was to capture this idea of relating structure and behavior, and so I wrote, The United States needs to push China "to rise to the responsibilities of a stakeholder," which Zoellick and Padilla then shortened to "responsible stakeholder." Chris's initial draft of it keyed off of an American Express commercial that you may remember, the tagline of which was "Membership has its privileges." The initial draft said, "There's this old American Express commercial that said, 'Membership has its privileges.' China's a member of all these groups. It's a beneficiary of the international system. Membership has its privileges. Hey, China, start exercising your stake responsibly." And Chris said, "The only way we can think of to shorten this thing about "rising to the responsibilities of a stakeholder" is just a pithy version as 'responsible stakeholder,' but it sounds a little business-school wonky, so maybe we should try something else."

There was some back-and-forth among me and Bob and Chris and Jim Keith, where there were some other plays on it that we tried out: "responsible power," "responsible player," "responsible country," "responsible nation," "responsible action," "responsible interest"—and I said to Chris, "look, I guess I just kind of like 'responsible stakeholder.'" First, because I had initially pushed it as "rise to the responsibilities of a stakeholder," which was too wordy but captured the basic idea very well—And that's because a "*stakeholder*" is different than a power, a player, or a nation. "Nation," "power," and "player" don't mean anything. They are descriptive. But "stakeholder" really gets at the idea that you're on the inside of the tent, have something to gain or lose, and so now you need to act to support it.

Zoellick was the guy who foreshadowed and articulated and understood the debate that we were going to have for the next 15 years about China's role in the world before anybody else, and the two aspects of that debate that I would highlight are, one, that the U.S. kept talking about

China's role in the world in terms of structure—as I said, "we need to bring them into the international system"—but in fact, American rhetoric was five years behind the reality of their power and capacity. Zoellick understood that we needed to transition from talking about *structure* to pushing them on *conduct* and *behavior*, so not that you need to just *be* a stakeholder, but that because you *are* one, now you need to exercise your power responsibly. Second, he understood that the arena for doing that was global at a time when—It's hard to see this from the vantage point of 2020, when we think about China as a global power, but nobody thought about China that way in 2005, nobody.

I talked about the first Bush term on this, but the examples that we talked about, like Afghanistan, were peripheral. China wasn't a central player, and where they *were* a central player, as on North Korea, it was still back to the classic security issues in their region.

But if you read Zoellick's speech, the examples he uses are Darfur, which was the genocide in Sudan. He talked about their energy mercantilism—and we accused them of trying to "lock up" energy supplies instead of relying on markets when, in fact, at least some of these commodities are fungible. And he talked about their global economic role in debt relief.

So he really foreshadowed the debate that we were going to have for the next 15 years, and that's why I think it's 15 years later and we're *still* talking about that speech. I can't name another speech by a sub-Cabinet official ever that a year later, much less 15 years later, nearly two decades later, people are still talking about. There are some speeches—the [George C.] Marshall speech at Harvard—There have been speeches in history that people talk about, but how many sub-Cabinet level officials can you remember had a speech that nearly two decades later people are still talking about? Bob understood that, and he understood the opportunity to use that speech. So my view is that Zoellick defined the strategic concept, but also the debates that we're having today.

A lot of people now with 20/20 hindsight look back at that speech as a scorecard, rather than a concept. They'll say, "Oh, it was a naïve expression of the American view that China could be enlisted to act in concert with the U.S." I don't want to speak for Bob, but I don't think that's how he thought of the concept. And I certainly didn't. It was a conceptual speech that was designed to push them to think of themselves as a country that had power and capacity and ought to have the will to use that. It wasn't supposed to be a scorecard, where we would go down an issue set—Burma, Sudan, North Korea—grade them pass/fail, and then conclude, "Hey, you're not playing your appointed role in the American-dominated international order."

It was meant to be conceptual, and by that standard, it holds up pretty well. First, because the debate we're having today is indeed about Chinese conduct and behavior; second, the debate we're having now is about China's global role; third, because the logical opposite of a "responsible stakeholder" is an "irresponsible free rider," and the United States had no interest, then or now, in encouraging China to be an irresponsible free rider, so it was the right kind of frame to use to push them; and fourth, because Bob viewed it as a concept, and it meshed with a debate that was going on in China at that time, to something that Barbara asked me earlier, which is how did the Chinese view their role in the world.

The Chinese had articulated a concept at roughly the same time that Brantly will know about, where they talked about a so-called "peaceful rise." There was a guy in China named Zheng Bijian, who at this point was not in a formal government role, but he'd been a speechwriter and assistant to Deng Xiaoping, and he cooked up this concept in China he called "peaceful rise," in Chinese "*hépíng juéqǐ.*" The idea was that, unlike previous great powers that had risen—and there was always great power conflict as a result of that—China had the potential to rise peacefully.

Within China there was a huge debate about that concept. Some people didn't like the idea of "rise" because they thought it sounded provocative, so the Chinese settled on calling that "peaceful development," rather than "peaceful rise," but in the fall of 2005 there was a debate sparked by Zheng Bijian in China around "peaceful rise" at the same time Zoellick was giving this "responsible stakeholder" speech. Could China rise differently than other powers had risen, without producing a great power war between the established great power and the rising great power?

So those two things meshed. I had a debate with Bob about how to begin the speech, because if you read the first couple of paragraphs of the stakeholder speech, he calls out Zheng Bijian. In the first few paragraphs of the speech, he says something like, "Recently, I was having a meeting with Zheng Bijian, and he talked to me about whether China could rise peacefully. We had this conversation, and that's a very interesting concept." I'm paraphrasing, but that's essentially the first two paragraphs of the speech. He mentions Zheng Bijian, and he talks about this. I said to him, "God, are you going to piss off your counterpart in China!" who was the Executive Vice Foreign Minister, Dai Bingguo. I said, "Dai is going to say, 'What the hell are you talking about Zheng Bijian for? *I'm* your counterpart.'" We had a discussion of this, and Bob said, "Yes, but this is the concept I want to play off of." And Zheng had actually written it up in an article for *Foreign Affairs,* so a lot of Americans were talking about it at that time.

If you think about the speech as a concept and not a scorecard, I think it holds up pretty well, in terms of shifting the debate from structure to conduct and behavior, and then shifting it from a regional view of China to the world. But then, second, in the context of that time, the Chinese understood very well what the U.S. was saying, despite a lot of hemming and hawing from people at the time who claimed that the Chinese "didn't understand" what the U.S. meant. They got it, and it changed the tenor of the conversation, including with Mr. Dai.

At one point, I wrote a twelve- or thirteen-page paper for Bob, which we gave him directly, just printed it out on white paper and didn't send up through the usual memo system with letterhead and clearances and all that—It's probably parked in a file cabinet in Policy Planning somewhere. The paper gave Bob a lot of illustrative examples of how to talk to the Chinese about this concept. It included paragraph-long answers to a bunch of really nasty questions that I had thought up that Dai could conceivably ask him. These were dummy questions like, "So who gets to judge whether a country is being 'responsible' or not? *You*?" And "What's the difference between asking a country to be a 'responsible stakeholder' and just telling them to adhere to international law?" And "Who the hell are you to tell us to be a 'responsible stakeholder' when you're so busy ripping up arms control treaties and invading Iraq?" I tried to walk in their shoes as a conceptual exercise, but was actually much nastier about it than the Chinese turned out to be.

Bob liked the paper, so he told me and Krasner to find a way to talk to the Chinese about the ideas that were in it, and to preempt and head off some of the questions they might have. And they understood "stakeholder" perfectly well. Krasner and I went to lunch with the Chinese Ambassador, Zhou Wenzhong, and basically walked him through all this. And Zhou asked some really interesting questions, like "Well, why did you use 'stakeholder' and not 'shareholder'?"—Because in the international financial institutions, like the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, where the U.S. and China are both members, countries are literally shareholders with voting weights assigned based on their numbers of shares. So the Chinese had the difference explained to them—And we had very conceptual conversations with the Chinese from beginning to end between September and the end of the year.

That's why a lot of what I told you about the first term—trying to push the Chinese to act more globally, but in smaller contexts—by the time you get to the second term, Zoellick was the guy. Zoellick used a speech to encapsulate that idea, and then pushed the Chinese to act a lot more constructively on specific issues like Darfur because Bob was really engaged on Sudan.

The arena for that was something approved by Bush and President Hu Jintao of China. At that point we had moved from Jiang to his successor, Hu Jintao. They agreed to set up a dialogue mechanism, which the Chinese called a "strategic dialogue," and the United States called the "senior dialogue," on the presumption that we only conducted "strategic" dialogues with allies, so we're going to call this the "senior dialogue." Zoellick and Dai Bingguo were the two people who did it, and it had a subsidiary economic track as well with the vice chairman of China's state planning agency, the National Development and Reform Commission.

Zoellick started leading a series of meetings every six months or so with the Chinese. The first of those meetings after the stakeholder speech, which was in September, was in December in Washington. Dai came very well prepared, [*laughs*] because I sat next to him. There weren't a lot of people in the room. It was Zoellick and Padilla. Chris Hill at that point was Assistant Secretary of State East Asia. I was there. Dennis Wilder was the NSC guy on China. Jim Keith. We all sat around the table, and I happened to be seated a few seats away from Mr. Dai, who had a set of legal pads in front of him, where he'd written a lot of notes by hand.

If you know how Chinese officials operate, they tend to have a lot of binders or formal papers, and they'll read their talking points from the binders. Dai put his papers to the side and worked off of these legal pads. Essentially what he said to us was, "We heard you on this 'responsible stakeholder' thing, and now I'm going to explain to you all the ways in which China is a responsible stakeholder. One, we're a big contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping operations. Two, we are giving contributions to the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and to the World Bank for replenishment. Three—Here's all the ways we're acting multilaterally to exercise our stake." So conceptually they got it, and Dai, at least, was trying to give illustrative examples of it.

Zoellick used that to pivot to, again, a very different kind of conversation than the United States and China had been having. One thing he did was, he wanted to take the Chinese to an offsite, and we had a little discussion about where to take Dai. One idea was Colonial Williamsburg, to highlight the American heritage. Another idea was Mount Vernon. Zoellick settled on Hyde Park, New York, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's house, on the theory that the great powers had

come together in a postwar context, and, as stakeholders in a stable, secure, and prosperous global order, had tried to come together on shaping a global order that would be stable. The idea for that came in a meeting we had with a bunch of outside scholars. I think it came from Richard Bush, who was at the Brookings Institution. I think Bob was tossing around some ideas with these guys, and Bush said, "Well, what about Hyde Park?"

So Bob went up with Dai to Hyde Park. I didn't go on the trip, but it's funny because there was a driving snowstorm up there, one of those upstate New York snowstorms. And Padilla joked with me afterward that they had to get a snowplow to go in front of the car. They had an interesting experience.

We put out a press statement that Bob issued after that December senior dialogue that we used to amplify the stakeholder speech from September, and then also to explain again what it meant, and then to use the Hyde Park visit for that. That press statement says, "I just completed a meeting with my counterpart, Mr. Dai Bingguo, building on this speech I gave in which I pushed China to be a responsible stakeholder in the international system that has enabled China's own success." Then he explicitly says, in the statement that we worked on, that that does not mean that China needs to be an American proxy. He says, "I told Mr. Dai that China, as a stakeholder in the international system, needs to support, sustain, and adapt the international system in which it has a stake, to meet the needs of the current global order, which is not the post-1945 order."

It really did produce a very interesting conversation among Americans, and among Americans and Chinese. There was a very bad reaction to it in the United States—but not the one we think of today. Now, you hear a few people saying, "Oh, that speech was so naïve in ever thinking that China could be a responsible stakeholder in anything." Brantly may not remember this, but at that time the reaction in China was much better than the reaction in the United States and the American criticism actually came from people who had good relations with China and thought the speech was incredibly hardline and too harsh on them.

Brantly, I don't know if you were in the room for that gala when Bob gave the speech, but the reaction in the room was horrific. I remember Dick Holbrooke turning green. [*laughter*] Because the speech—Ironically, you've got people now who claim to be hardliners on China who say, "Oh, that was the 'failed responsible stakeholder speech,' because it posited a constructive Chinese role in the world, and they failed all of our tests." And that's what I meant by the scorecard approach. But number one, that wasn't Zoellick's approach. And then number two, that wasn't how it was perceived at the time. It was perceived instead as an extremely hardline speech that was a conservative defense of the international order that basically said to the Chinese, "Step up, because you aren't; use your power, because you aren't, for good." The last part of the speech lectures them about their domestic failings, and the need to be an open system, and says that our relationships with democracies are always going to be less brittle than with countries with whom we only share interests but not interests *and* values.

The reaction in the room was terrible. Holbrooke looked like he was turning green. Another person, who I won't name—a very well-known person—came up to me and jabbed her finger in my chest after the speech and said in a very accusatory tone, "Did you write that speech? Did you write that terrible speech?" The Chinese Ambassador, Zhou Wenzhong, came up to me in the room, in his black tie, and he put his hand on my shoulder, and he started giggling. [*laughs*]

He came up to me and put his hand on my shoulder, and he just goes, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha," like that, and walks away. So people didn't like it. But one of the things that's interesting that happened after that is, the Chinese started asking around to see what Americans thought of it, and the Chinese Ambassador, Zhou, had that lunch with Krasner and me to explain the speech.

And as I said earlier, I drafted, and Zoellick cleared, a follow-up piece of paper that we actually gave the Chinese , a so-called nonpaper, explaining the speech and saying, "This is what 'stakeholder' means. This is why we used the term. This is what 'responsible stakeholder' means." So there was a lot of mythmaking that they didn't understand it, or they couldn't translate the term into Chinese. This is just nonsense. They understood it very well. We helped them understand it. We gave them a nonpaper. We gave it to the Chinese Ambassador. Krasner and I went to lunch and walked them through all of this with Bob Zoellick's approval.

By the time Dai Bingguo came in, in December, his presentation was "We heard your speech. Let me tell you all the ways in which we're a responsible stakeholder: PKO [UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations], IMF—" So they got it. It changed the tenor of the conversation, and that was constructive. Not everybody around the Bush administration was on board with that. I think Don Rumsfeld took a more skeptical view of how successful we were going to be in taking that approach, and Condi probably did too, but there were a few market tests of the idea. Darfur was one. Iraqi debt relief was another. On some of those, the Chinese stepped up. On others they didn't.

But my point was, I had, through this relationship with Zoellick, an opportunity to help frame the American approach in a way that stuck. People are still talking about it, sometimes wrongly, sometimes not. By the middle of 2006, Bob was looking to move on, and that's when I had the conversation with him about pivoting to a different set of responsibilities in the State Department. I talked too much, but that's to give you some context on that.

Riley: Any follow-ups? Evan, one of the things that you had mentioned in your notes was the significant reorganization in the second term, especially with respect to Central Asia. So why don't I just throw that out and let you take that and run with it?

Feigenbaum: OK, so now we're pivoting. In mid-2006 two things happened. One was that Zoellick had become a mentor to me, and he had decided to leave the administration, which he did in July of 2006. The second thing is, I had been in the same job in Policy Planning since October of 2001, and I either wanted to leave or do something different in the government. I got a reprieve because Condi and Bob came over, so I had this opportunity to be almost an adjunct to the Deputy Secretary, rather than just doing what I had been doing, so it gave me a lease on life to work with Bob on China for that year and a half.

I went to Bob and said, "I want your advice, since you're leaving. I want to do something different." He said, "What do you want to do?" And I said, "Three things. One is I want a promotion. [*laughs*] The second is I want something that's operational, as opposed to being in the strategic planning role. And third, I want something that has managerial responsibility, where I have people working for me. I don't know what the job is, but I want it to be a management job." Because in Policy Planning you're just an individual. "I want a promotion and I want an

operational job, not a planning job." He said, "OK. Let me think about it and talk to Condi. I'll work on it." So he thought about it.

I went off on vacation. I was in Bangkok and I got a call from Chris Padilla, saying, "Call me." So I called from Bangkok, and he said, "Bob and Condi have this idea. How about being Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs?" And I said, "Huh? [*laughs*] I'm a China guy and an East Asia guy." My vision of my career at that point was I would have a classic East Asia career. I was in planning. I had made a play at one point to be the China director at the NSC. I didn't get the job. Somebody else got it who was a very senior civil servant, so I was still sitting on the planning staff.

I wasn't sure what the job was. Was it Central Asia? Was it India? Was it South Asia? But that job was in a new bureau that had been created, called the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. That was a new bureau, because the United States, up until the Clinton administration, had dealt with South Asia—meaning India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka—as part of the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, which was a Middle East–focused bureau. So South Asia had been dealt with in a westward-facing bureau, not an eastern-facing one, and the U.S. didn't really treat India or South Asia as a part of Asia. Meanwhile, Central Asia was in a bureau that was focused on Russia and Europe, as a logical adjunct to the way they had been treated as part of the Soviet Union.

In the Clinton administration they had spun South Asia out of the Near East Bureau and created a Bureau of South Asian Affairs as a stand-alone. They started to treat South Asia as part of Asia, but Central Asia was still sitting up in the European and Eurasian Affairs Bureau.

When Condi became Secretary, she took Central Asia out of the European Bureau and meshed it in with the South Asia Bureau, creating a new Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. The idea, much as when they started to treat South Asia as part of Asia, was to put the "Asia" back in Central Asia, and to connect Central Asia to a concept of connectivity that in the first instance was about Afghanistan, because the U.S. was deep into Afghanistan at that point. Afghanistan had Central Asian neighbors, and for purposes of economic development, but also stability on its borders, the idea of linking it to Central Asia was viewed as a plus in that context. We wanted to work with Central Asians in the context of stabilizing Afghanistan too.

But second, Condi was very forward-looking, in my view, and saw that China was coming on in the region. Russian power was retreating, so treating Central Asia as part of Asia again was something that was ahead of its time.

In those days—Brantly has heard me speak on this in other contexts—there was no Belt and Road. Nobody thought about China as this Eurasian power in 2005 and '06, but Condi saw something, and she created this bureau. So the idea was for me to go be the Deputy Assistant Secretary who would be the C in South and Central Asia, the so-called SCA [South and Central Asia] Bureau. I was going to be the C in SCA, and preside over the transition, to, number one, help with the integration and, number two, be, I think, the first person without a Russia-centric background to handle U.S. relations with Central Asia. I had a China background but not a Russia background. I was not a Russian speaker, which was unheard of in that job. So that was the context into which I did that job.

And at first I said, “Huh?”

I did have some experience with Kazakhstan, because I had done some work with Bob Blackwill at Harvard focused on Kazakhstan and had been in Kazakhstan quite a bit in the late 1990s. He was doing some projects in Kazakhstan that I helped him with. I had some experience, but that wasn’t really the idea in giving me the job. So that’s what they proposed to me, and I said yes.

The new Assistant Secretary in that bureau was Richard Boucher, who was a very experienced Foreign Service officer. I ended up being very close to him and remain very close to him to this day. But Richard didn’t know me from Adam, had no idea who I was. He was very—I’ve heard anecdotally—resistant to the idea. He didn’t like it. My understanding, in retrospect, is that Richard said, “Who is this guy? He knows nothing about Central Asia. What the hell is this?” Bob either held up some other appointments until they took me on, or—so he initially just sort of pushed me on Richard, which may or may not be true but it’s what I’ve heard. And it’s ironic, because Richard and I ended up being amazingly close, and great partners in crime, but that’s how I ended up in that bureau.

It really was new, but I spent three-quarters of my time on bilateral issues, because that’s what you do in those jobs, for example managing U.S. relations with Kazakhstan. I tell you that story because the mere creation of the bureau, and the fact that somebody with my background ended up in it, is a pretty good indication that the United States in the mid-2000s, and people like Condi, were already onto the trend line that has reshaped Eurasia through Chinese power, Chinese money, connectivity, and so on.

So I got the promotion, I got the operational responsibility, I got the managerial role, but in a very different context than I had expected, which was to be a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the East Asia Bureau. There *was* some talk about that. Condi and Bob sent me off to talk to Chris Hill, but Chris didn’t want me either. [*laughter*] Chris seemed to want Jim Keith, who was acting as the China DAS [Deputy Assistant Secretary] to be made permanent in that role, and he was also bringing in a bunch of people who had worked with him on the Balkans, so he proposed a new role to me. He called it Deputy Assistant Secretary for Strategic Planning. It met my promotion criterion, but not my operational criterion. Chris is a great guy, but negotiating with Chris was like negotiating with North Korea, [*laughter*] who he was also negotiating with at that point. And at some point Richard embraced me and brought me on.

For me it was amazing, because it took my career, as Brantly knows, in a whole different direction. We can talk about how later on I ended up doing South Asia, but now everybody thinks of Asia as this integrated space: East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, China, Belt and Road. Asia wasn’t thought of like that then. Nobody thought about that.

People say to me now, “Oh, you were so clever; you were so strategic about your career. You’re the only guy in the whole country—” because there’s really no other American that’s had a career that has involved all three of those subregions of Asia. I’m it. People say, “Oh, you were so—” But it didn’t happen that way. Literally, Central Asia happened because I was looking for a job, [*laughter*] and it didn’t work out with Chris, so Zoellick and Boucher said, “How about Central Asia?” And I said, “Oh, OK.”

Then South Asia—We can get to that story later—happened because I negotiated something with Kazakhstan with Nick Burns supervising me. Nick owned India policy. He liked the way I negotiated something with the Kazakhs and said, "Hey, why aren't you working with me on India?" And Boucher was really supportive of that. So Boucher said, "Yeah, I want to switch you to the other DAS job." In retrospect, it looks very strategic, but it's a lesson in how careers move in extremely zig-zaggy directions that look smart only with hindsight.

I ended up as the DAS for SCA handling Central Asia. There were four tactical issues and one strategic issue that dominated that period. The tactical issues were, first, that Kazakhstan wanted to be chairman of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, an organization that, among other things, certifies elections as meeting high OSCE democratic standards. And Kazakhstan itself had never had an election that met OSCE standards, but they wanted to be the chairman in office of the whole organization!

The human rights and democracy people, and many others, didn't like the idea. But Rumsfeld and Cheney, among others, took the view that Kazakhstan was a strategically important country to the United States, so, what the hell, let's just do this deal. Condi sent me off to negotiate the agreement that allowed us to support their chairmanship. I negotiated something called the Madrid Commitments. In Madrid, after nixing their chairmanship bid the previous year in Brussels, we finished this torturous negotiation of an agreement in my second year in that job. I extracted from them a series of commitments to democratic and human rights reforms at home, and to not mess with the OSCE mandate on democracy observation abroad.

That was my first opportunity to be a negotiator, and I had never negotiated anything in my life. Condi told Nick Burns, who was the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, to keep an eye on me to make sure I didn't embarrass the United States of America. So I negotiated this deal with Kazakhstan called the Madrid Commitments. And we were negotiating text up until the moment the Foreign Minister read the Commitments in Madrid. I had to fight with a lot of the democracy folks at both State and NSC, and so on. That'll become important later on for the South Asia story because of Nick.

The second issue was that the dictator of Turkmenistan died, a guy named Saparmurat Niyazov, who'd been the dictator since the fall of the Soviet Union. He was a very eccentric man, called himself the "Türkmenbaşy," or "Father of the Turkmen." He built a gold statue of himself in the capital that would rotate mechanically to keep the sun on his face, so that he was always facing the sun. He renamed the months of the year after his mother and others. He had a book called the *Ruhnama* in which he retold aspects of the history of the world to put the Turkmen people centrally into it. So he was an extremely eccentric dictator. People used to call Turkmenistan the "North Korea" of Central Asia. But it wasn't really, because, the gold statues of the leader aside, we had the Peace Corps in Turkmenistan and we had educational programs in Turkmenistan. That stuff was unthinkable in North Korea.

But anyway, he died in December of 2006. Over the objections, again, of the human rights and democracy team that wanted to make relations with those countries conditional on a set of human rights conditions, Boucher and I convinced Condi to let us try for a rearrangement of that relationship. We managed to get Condi to send the new leader a note, and there was a lot of resistance even to sending him a note. Finally Richard went up there and gave Condi a piece of

paper, and she basically handwrote it with a Sharpie. Outside the normal channels and process, we just said, "Here, write something." So she took a pen and she wrote something like, "I look forward to the opportunity to potentially turn a page in the U.S.-Turkmenistan relationship." And we got her oral permission to send Richard Boucher to the state funeral. Richard went to this strange and interesting Turkmen funeral, [*laughter*] wielding Condi's handwritten note. That was in December of 2006.

Boucher and I got permission for me to go to Turkmenistan to meet the new dictator, who's still in power to this day, whose name is [Gurbanguly] Berdimuhamedow. Boucher went in December to the funeral. I went in January to have this very intense meeting with the Foreign Minister, and then I went back in June, had this long meeting with Berdimuhamedow, and negotiated a package of agreements to allow a series of U.S. delegations in different functional areas—foreign assistance, defense and security, human rights and democracy, gas and energy cooperation, trade and investment—to go explore what was possible. I had a very interesting, long meeting with him. There are pictures of me and of him having—[*laughter*] He was comparatively normal then. He's become more like Niyazov since, writing books about his sheepdog, and DJ'ing parties where he is literally on national television spinning and scratching records in a kind of Turkmen disco setting.

That was the second issue. The third issue was Uzbekistan, because there had been a Tiananmen Square–like massacre in Uzbekistan, in a city called Andijan, and the whole relationship with Uzbekistan had fallen apart. They'd tossed the United States out of an air base, which was one of two air bases that the U.S. was using in Central Asia for coalition mobility operations in Afghanistan, so we were left with just one in the region. I was trying to reestablish some kind of relationship with Uzbekistan but they had thrown us out of the base and a lot of the areas of cooperation had been cut off because of U.S. sanctions.

Then there was a fourth tactical issue, which was Kyrgyzstan. That country hosted our only remaining air base in Central Asia, and it was a logistics and mobility hub for the war in Afghanistan. U.S. forces in Afghanistan passed through Manas Air Base in order to get there, and there had been a revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, a so-called "color revolution," and the new regime kept threatening to toss us out of the air base there too. The Russians were working to encourage behind the scenes even though they had their own air base in Kyrgyzstan, and so we had a series of near-death experiences with our presence there.

For example, there had been an incident where a Kyrgyz truck driver was shot by an American. I don't remember which service, it might have been Air Force, but an American serviceman had shot a truck driver and that became a domestic political football in Kyrgyzstan. And there were other issues because the political situation was fluid and unstable. President [Kurmanbek] Bakiev and Prime Minister [Felix] Kulov were at each other's throats. There was a lot of political contention and even violence. On one trip, the Embassy sent me off to the airport while a hail of stun grenades was booming in the background as the government violently cleared protestors out of the main square in Bishkek after a political crisis.

At another meeting, I think it was on the same trip, our Ambassador [Marie L.] Masha Yovanovitch hosted meetings for me in her living room with some of the Kyrgyz political party and factional leaders, in succession, including two who later became presidents of the country.

One party leader showed up and his bodyguards were all heavily armed, really packing heat, which took me aback. But Masha, who is a very cool customer, just shrugged and said casually, "Well, at least they didn't bring the long guns!"

So there were four tactical issues. And you spend so much time in that job on the bilaterals, but always in the background there was the longer-term strategic issue that led to the creation of SCA, which was the concept of connectivity and putting the "Asia" in Central Asia. We cooked up a lot of these connectivity ideas, trying to work with the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank on road projects and power line projects, trying to lend American support to things that predated the Chinese Belt and Road but were designed to promote Eurasian connectivity and put the United States into the mix.

Riley: Let me step in, because this may be the best place for us to pause.

Feigenbaum: OK.

Riley: We've hit our appointed hour for today. I'm mindful of some things that we need to be doing on this end, so I think we need to go ahead and close off today with the idea that we'll need a second session, if you're amenable to it, to come back and finish things.

Feigenbaum: Sure.

Riley: Another hour?

Feigenbaum: Am I talking too much? Is that the problem? [*laughs*]

Riley: Oh, no! In oral history interviews, there is no—

Feigenbaum: You've done a lot of these, so I don't know how useful or good this one is, but I—

Riley: It's terrific. Thank you. You're being enormously cooperative, and, as usually happens with these things, we seldom schedule them for only two hours because we know that that time will evaporate in an instant, but in this case we felt that it was necessary because we were uncertain about the dynamics of doing this online and so forth.

But from my perspective it seems to be working very well, and if you're amenable to doing a second one to finish—We've got some resource constraints, but with another hour or two we would be able to complete this.

Feigenbaum: That would be great. Sure.

Riley: You have been immensely cooperative. I hope that you haven't found this to be too awkward.

Feigenbaum: No, not at all. It's fine. I do so many Zoom things now. [*laughter*] It's going to be hard to adjust to actually seeing people when we all get the Moderna vaccine, because I'm ready. I can't wait to get the jab in the arm.

Riley: Exactly. So if that predicate is OK with everyone, then we'll go ahead and call a conclusion. Mark your stopping point—I've been making some notes here—so that we'll know where to pick up, but I think the Belt and Road, the connectivity piece, strikes me, based on what I've read, from what you sent us, as a big piece. So rather than getting into it and having to stop in the middle of it, let's agree to start with that next time, and then we can devote the hour or two and try to get finished up from there.

Feigenbaum: That's great, and then we can close it on India. I read your Zelikow oral history and I saw he mentioned me in passing on the civil-nuclear. I was very involved in the endgame on that, so we can close with—

Riley: Yes. For those of us who are not specialists, that will be an important feature. And, again, Brantly, I'm sure there's scores of things that we're just touching the surface on, and if we come back and you've got the time to help us with another one, then I hope you'll flag some of these things that you really want to dig into.

Womack: This has been very interesting and informative for me. I'm very happy to participate, and I hope I haven't been too distracting from your more domestic interest in Presidential policy.

Riley: Not at all. The important thing to remember in this is the kind of people who are going to come into this archive and see an interview with Evan and link onto it are the kind of folks who are going to be interested in these very nuts-and-bolts policy issues that otherwise we wouldn't cover. People who do what you do are going to be a high percentage of the folks who will come visit this interview.

Feigenbaum: Again, if you want to go back on some of the interagency and foreign policy process stuff, that's fine, because, for example, with that Turkmenistan story I just told you, there was a huge food fight between the NSC and us at State about whether I could even get on a plane and go, because they wanted a set of preconditions and I refused.

Essentially, we can pick up with this story later, but what I want to convey to you is because Condi was Secretary of State, instead of being National Security Advisor, it became possible for me to flip my middle finger at some of our more difficult colleagues at the NSC [*laughter*] in ways that would not have been possible when Colin Powell was Secretary of State.

The NSC called me, for example, and said, "You can't do X, Y, and Z." And I said, "Here's what I'm going to do, and if that's a problem, you tell Steve to call Condi." Steve would never call Condi on something like that. I'll tell you that story, because they wanted a set of preconditions, and someone over there called me up and I basically said, "F— you." They complained to Nick Burns about me, and Nick called me, and then I called Condi. We could get into some of how the Bush administration operated once Condi was Secretary in ways that were very different. Then when [Robert M.] Gates came, it got really different, because when Rumsfeld was out of the picture that dynamic changed a lot too.

Riley: That's all really valuable.

Perry: That's very helpful.

Riley: I'm making notes, but if we can schedule this sooner rather than later our memories will still be fresh. We won't have to get the transcript prepared to review this and we can pick up where we left off. OK?

Feigenbaum: OK. Sounds good.