

*Mike Lampton:* Well thank you to the organizers and all, before we go further, thank you, everybody concerned. I greatly respect the effort that went into this report. For truth in packaging, I want to make it clear that before I came to Stanford, I was head of China Studies at Johns Hopkins SAIS, and we've come in for a lot of commentary in Bloomberg, and Foreign Policy Magazine, and other venues questioning a grant we took from the The China-U.S. Education Foundation in Hong Kong run by C.H. Tung; there's commentary in the report.

I just want to point out: nobody ever called me to ask me the facts of the situation or at least as I understood, but I'm glad to answer any questions that deal with that, but I wanted you to know where I'm coming from just in terms of institutional responsibility. We have run a school in a joint venture relationship with Nanjing University for 32 years. Glad to talk about what that's produced and some of the problems as well as successes.

But, what I'd really like to do is just give you an overview of my reaction and then get into the weeds in two regards, because I think what seemed to be facts don't always speak for themselves. You need a little context so I'll just dig deep in two areas, but in terms of my overall reaction. Balance. Not balanced. That's my net assessment. Not balanced. Now, what do I mean about that or by that; Susan Shirk at the end, and bless her heart, she wrote a very clear, concise dissent and I don't think I can improve on it in any regards, but let me just—I'm sorry?

*Panelist:* I reproduced it here.

*Mr. Lampton:* Oh okay. But in any case then, let me extract what I take to be the core points. First of all, I think it tends to overstate the threat—whatever the threat is, and I'm not saying—first of all, I am saying, and I would agree with the report's authors and almost every China scholar I know that China is not going in a direction that is either in the interests of the United States or, I believe, even in the interests of its people.

Not going in the direction that many of us have tried to encourage, but I do think it overstates the threat. I mean, if I look at the threats to the United States, I don't know that this set of issues, minus illegal behavior and theft of intellectual property, but most of this wouldn't make my top ten threats to the United States just to be blunt about it. Secondly, I don't think it adequately distinguishes between, which I call legitimate activity and illegitimate activity.

For many years, most of us have been urging China to use soft power and improve the way it tells its story to the world, including the United States. And certainly, the United States has made major efforts from the earliest days of the Cold War to sell it. We had an entire agency called the USIA. Its bureaucratic tagline was sell America's story to the world. Well, I think, you know, much of what China is trying to do is sell its story and frankly, a lot of the means it's using are counterproductive.

That would be an interesting study. I'd add one thing to Susan's dissent, but it captures the core, and that is that the report doesn't consider what I would call the reactions of China to the world. This has China as the initiator and in many important respects it is, but also often China reacts. I wonder how the Chinese react for instance to Secretary Clinton's Open Internet policy in 2011, where it was explicitly the purpose of the United States to penetrate the Great Wall of China with the messages that we want to. We were even proposing to give grants to academic and commercial enterprises to find ways to do it. Now, so there is an action-reaction going on here as well. But, let me move beyond that and make a couple of recommendations—where there are recommendations that I agree with.

I think the report's emphasizing the need for Americans to emphasize reciprocity is key. Now, there is a big problem in implementing that, but I think that's a strategically correct direction for us to be going. So one of your core recommendations, I think, is perfectly fine. The other thing I would tell my people in China, particularly the Party, is they have succeeded in putting a target on the back of every Chinese person in the world. You just read the 13th Five Year Plan and the plan calls to mobilize Chinese all over the world to serve China's development.

Well, I started actually with a senior paper from Mike Oksenberg here on Indonesia, when the Indonesians in 1965 got mad at Chinese Indonesians, because of their association with Mao, the Cultural Revolution and so forth. So I think that we ought to emphasize reciprocity, the Chinese are to take the targets that they're putting in Chinese ethnic people all over the world off their backs.

Now, let me—I said that I wanted to focus on just a couple of examples, where facts don't speak for themselves. If you turn to page 11 in the report, it talks about Senator Mike Mansfield, and it talks about attempts made to influence Congress and it's absolutely true. China has really increased its attention to Congress.

Absolutely true. But Mike Mansfield, is, I will say, sort of accused, but you can put whatever word you want to. It recounts that he went in the 1980s, and I guess in the 1990s, to China three times. And he wrote a report or reports when he came back, and quote “these reports conformed to Chinese interests.” It seems to me, the implication is he went to China and came back with a Party line and fed it into Congress, and he was obviously the senate majority leader, so that is no small accomplishment.

Well, let me just give a few facts about Mike Mansfield. First of all, he went to China in 1920 and 1921 all along the Chinese coast. He became interested and became an expert, as experts go, in Congress and began to be the go-to guy in Congress for his opinions and so forth. He was just a congressman in 1944 and FDR picked him to go to China and write the Mansfield report. And what did he say? He came back and said that China and Asia are of increasing importance to the United States. You, FDR, ought to give more weight to China in our global strategy. So then you fast forward, and so now in the ‘80s and ‘90s, he goes to China, he comes back, says it’s important, we gotta get along with it. And he gets painted as conforming to Chinese interests.

Well he was either right or he was wrong, but it was his lifelong commitment and he knew more about the topic than anybody else in Congress. So, take that for what it’s worth, but I think that kind of was a more rounded picture rather than three trips to China in the ‘80s and ‘90s and he conformed to Chinese policy interest. Secondly, there was a whole section on local government and how the Chinese are targeting local government and, of course I think that’s true. Local governments do not have the obligation to raise all the human rights issues all the time. They’re more concerned with economic development; they have a different range of responsibilities.

It is intrinsically more attractive to the Chinese, the agenda at the local level than it is the national level, but I get the impression from the report and maybe somebody will disabuse me, that basically, the purpose of the report was to kind of encourage local governments to tighten up on these relations here. You’re undermining our central government’s policy. And I began to think about that. I mean, first of all, I’m nervous when we start encouraging the central—our central government—in intervening any university or local governments and so forth.

So there is all of that, but I thought about a specific case, and that’s our current ambassador in China. Terry Branstad. He is the longest

serving American governor in the history of the United States, period. He was from Iowa. It's obviously an agricultural state. He is fond of saying that one out of three rows of soybeans in Iowa goes to China. That's important and we're seeing in this trade war how important that is. I think we're now—how did he get chosen ambassador?

He got chosen ambassador because Xi Jinping came on a local government exchange in 1985 to his state, he happened to meet him, and then Trump found Ambassador Branstad by a process I'm not familiar with, and who is I think with the first Ambassador named by our new president. And he goes to China. Well thank you very much, I think it's terrific. We have a governor who A, knows the leader of China and B, can articulate a real place a Trump constituency set of interests, I think American interests, right? So I guess what I'm saying is I kept looking for something beyond just the general description and a tagline, and then we moved on to another.

I think all of these relationships are very complicated and they can't be boiled down to one or two sentences and then a footnote that doesn't even tell you who is talking. So, I guess I was just looking for more balance. Thanks.

*[End of Audio]*