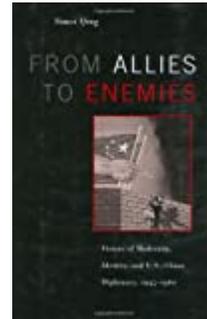




Simei Qing. *From Allies to Enemies: Visions of Modernity, Identity, and U.S.-China.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007. 410 S. \$52.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-674-02344-4.



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From Allies to Enemies

Much emphasis has been placed on the period from 1945 to 1960 in the study of Sino-US relation, the reason is that the founding of new China led to great transition of global politics. Simei Qin, professor of history and international relations, James Madison College, Michigan State University, published her book "From Allies to Enemies - Visions of Modernity, Identity, and U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1945-1960", in 2007, which provides a new perspective to the study of Sino-US relations. The book's innovation lies in its use of comparative sociology and cognitive psychology to analyze Sino-US relations of this period from the perspective of modernity and identity.

The book focuses its attention on a fundamental issue: why did Sino-US foreign policy of this period always produce the opposite of its desired and expected outcome? China wanted to avoid driving Washington to rescue the KMT, but the United States and Taiwan signed an alliance treaty in 1954; The United States wanted to avoid driving the CCP into the Moscow's embrace, and intended to promote Titoism in China, but the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance was signed in 1950; China and the United States were reluctant to confront each other

in North Korea, but finally fought a fierce war over that country; The Eisenhower Administration held the view that the Sino-Soviet Alliance would exist for long, but it quickly disintegrated. These facts show China and the United States had not reached their intended foreign policy objectives. The reason lies in that both China and the United States explained each other's intentions from their own points of view. Simei Qin argues that misjudgment originated from cultural differences between the two countries, particularly from the two different visions of modernity and identity. The value of this book lies in its tight grasp of visions of modernity and identity to interpret Sino-US relations.

What does modernity mean? Simei Qin doesn't further the discussion of modernity and its connotations. According to certain western philosophy, the pursuit of modernity originated in European Enlightenment. Modernity refers to the essential characteristics of modern society, such as progress, democracy, freedom, equality and rationality, which differentiated modern era from the pre-modern feudal era and the Christian theological era. Modernity not only called for the establishment of a

bourgeois democratic political system and market economy, but also individual freedom in the framework of the capitalist system. How does China understand modernity? The Chinese explain modernity differently. According to the discussion of Chinese intellectuals, modernity mainly refers to progress, harmony and equality. In fact, China and the United States share some common values like progress, democracy, freedom, equality and rationality, but the United States places more emphasis on individual freedom and social democracy, while China pays more attention to progress and equality. From the United States's point of view, China should establish a multiparty democratic regime and a free economic system, different from those practiced in the Soviet Union; From China's perspective, China's foremost task is to develop its economy and achieve the goals of modernization, and to establish equal diplomatic relations with other nations.

In addition to different understanding of modernity, how do they understand their status in international society? The United States regards itself as a beacon for the free world, and the global strategy of the United States after World War II was to spread freedom and democracy. According to Simei Qin's explanation, China is a country that needs democratization and liberalization in the eyes of the United States. If China chooses the path of the United States, China would become a huge market of the United States. On the contrary, if China chooses the path of the Soviet Union, China would be a threat that needs to be annihilated. However, Simei Qin ignores how China regards itself, which is an extremely important factor because China's self-awareness has a strong impact on its foreign policies. For Chinese, China used to be one of the most powerful countries in history; China's foremost task is to regain its former status. China does not seek hegemony, but China must become a strong nation again.

Different understandings produced conflicts. Simei Qin cites numerous examples to prove such cognitive conflicts. When World War II just ended, the United States wanted to bring China into the free trade system. The Truman Administration proposed to negotiate trade treaties with the Chinese government, and persuaded the Chinese government to reduce tariffs and trade barriers, although the treaty was finally signed, it met the strong opposition from most of the Nationalist government officials and national bourgeoisie. The United States believes that free trade is the foundation of the world economic system, but for the Chinese who had received unequal treatment from western nations during the past 100

years, such a treaty was viewed as an extension of those humiliating treaties. Although the United States tried to mediate between the KMT and the CPC after World War II, the United States still believed the Chinese Communist Party, in essence, was subservient to the Soviet Union. For its anti-Soviet goal, Truman set down a policy *à* bottom line. Even if the KMT refused to concede ground to the CCP, the Marshall mission should continue to support KMT. After the failure of the mediation, the United States supported the KMT militarily to launch the civil war, which caused the United States's image to decline further among Chinese citizens. The fundamental reason of American diplomatic failure lied in the unclear understanding of the nature of the Chinese Communist Party. The United States believed that the Communist Party of China was subject to the internationalism of Communist Party of the Soviet, and didn't recognize its deep roots in nationalism. After the second crisis in the Taiwan Strait, the United States believed that China wished to become a hegemonic power, thereby quickened its military involvement in Vietnam to contain China's "hegemonic" ambition. However, China's goal was only to achieve national unification with Taiwan and to build a prosperous nation. Those conflicts Simei Qin mentioned were indeed a manifestation of their different understandings and attitudes towards international system, but she didn't point out that such cognitive differences were closely related with China's modern history from 1840-1949. As the humiliation China suffered in its modern history is still clearly remembered, the Chinese people not only know the importance of peace and stability to China's development, but also are particularly sensitive to mutual respect for national sovereignty; As one of the most powerful countries in the past, China now puts particular emphasis on the Taiwan issue and aspires to regain its national strength and become a world power. We may say that China's modern history started with the Chinese dream of regaining world status, but the United States believes that this is either a step of fighting for hegemony or a conspiracy of the Soviet Union to export communism. This shows that the United States judged China from the perspective of ideology and power politics during this period, while the real spirit of the Chinese people is a combination of traditional culture and nationalism.

It can be summed up that the United States misunderstood China at least in three aspects. The first misunderstanding is the CCP was a client of the Soviet Communist Party; the second is the goal of Chinese nationalism is "exporting revolution ideology"; and the third is economic modernization in China's development is a service

for ideology in the secondary position. It can be found from Simei Qin's analysis that economic modernization has been the primary aim of development, and it plays a more powerful role in the process of China's foreign policy formation than ideology. For example, the mixed economic model employed at the beginning of New China affected diplomatic relations between China and the Soviet Union, it was one of the differences between China and the Soviet Union. China did not declare "lean to one side" policy at the beginning of the founding, but were willing to establish economic and trade relations with the United States and other Western countries to help realize China's industrialization. Even after announcing "lean to one side" policy, China's strategy was not based on the international confrontation between Chinese Communism and Western Capitalism, but on the need of increasing China's strength to insure a peaceful environment for China's economic development. Sino-Indian relations has been strongly affected by China's pursuit of modernization, China's modernization reforms in the Tibetan areas aroused opposition from some conservative Tibetans, which was an important catalytic factor for the rebellion of the Dalai clique in Lhasa, and finally led to the Sino-Indian dispute. In fact, the misunderstanding of China's economic modernization Simei Qin mentioned is more evident in contemporary age, and China's economic modernization arouses more concerns from the international community than the past few decades and exerts greater influence on foreign countries' diplomacy. Concerns for China's economic modernization from the outside world are revealed in the recent debates over "peaceful development" and "peaceful rise". For Chinese people, it is only natural for China to become a world power again with its long history, much admired culture, vast geographical scope and rich human and material resources, therefore, "peaceful development" and "peaceful rise" are not much different, as they both are expressions of China's dream to become a world power. But for the West, a huge threat hides in China's "peaceful rise", and they believe that China's ambition of achieving world hegemony is masked in "peaceful rise" theory. This is absolutely a misperception. The goal of China's economic modernization is not to achieve world hegemony but to fulfill the dream of being a big power, China pursues the harmonious coexistence with the world, rather than leadership and domination. Western misunderstanding shows that Western powers can not escape the logic of power politics.

As China and the United States employ different concept tools to explain each other's intentions, they often

fail to achieve the desired outcome in communication. Simei Qin borrows Barry Rubin's metaphor of a sailing boat to explain the pattern of Sino-US relations from 1945 to 1960. Barry Rubin argued that a nation's foreign policy is sometimes like a sailing boat, while it may intend to set off for the opposite shore of a river, it can end up 100 miles downstream. Why? The reason is that the people on the boat ignore the unfathomable undercurrents of the river. Sino-US relations from 1945 to 1960 shows that the two sides were deeply constrained by their own social undercurrents, their foreign policy produce unwanted results and had to change directions ultimately. The phenomenon still exists in today's China-US relations, because China's pursuit of modernization has not changed, China's visions of modernity and identity remain more or less the same, and invisible containment policy toward China is still the mainstream in the United States, America's visions of modernity and identity are still based on American exceptionalism. At the same time, the United States still has tremendous concern for China's economic development, and China also harbors deep worries if the United States would obstruct China's economic development. In such circumstances of mutual distrust, it is not impossible for Sino-US relations to deviate from "stakeholders" to adversaries. Sino-US relations can develop steadily only if the two sides judge each other's intentions properly.

In order to eliminate the gap of different visions of modernity among nations, at the close of the book, Simei Qin points out that intellectuals shoulder great responsibility to bridge the gap. In fact, today's globalization affects every country's development, and each country, especially developing countries, must face the problem of how to interpret modernity and identity, since a nation's understanding of modernity is mainly based on their own intellectuals' explanation, interpreting modernity and spreading discourse of modernity is an important responsibility for intellectuals. Generally, intellectuals elaborate the concept of modernity in the context of their traditional culture; therefore the intellectuals of different countries explain modernity and identity differently. The gap produces conflicts, also creates channels of communication. The global intellectuals in developed and developing countries should have international cross-cultural dialogue, seek consensus and mutual understanding in their different routes of modernization, respect difference and diversity, then nations and peoples can avoid perpetual struggle for power and repeated wars.

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