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# A Balancing Act Between Nationalism and Globalism: A Comparison of Two Chinese Official Newspapers in Portrayal of America 1989-2009

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A BALANCING ACT BETWEEN NATIONALISM AND GLOBALISM:  
A COMPARISON OF TWO CHINESE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS IN PORTRAYAL OF AMERICA  
1989-2009

by

SHUHUA DAI

Under the Direction of Leonard Ray Teel

ABSTRACT

This study uses discourse analysis to investigate and compare the coverage of America in two Chinese official newspapers, the Chinese language *People's Daily* and the English language *China Daily* in January in 1989, 1999, and 2009. This study compares the two newspapers in four aspects of the texts: topic selection, headline design, writing tactics, and visual components use, to find any differences in reporting tactics according to their different readerships. *People's Daily* employed a constant editorial preference for political content and a provocative reporting tactics. Meanwhile, *China Daily* used a more global editorial approach. Its content and its reports were increasingly consistent with Western journalism criteria: accurate, brief, and clear.

INDEX WORDS: Chinese official media, Reports on America, Globalization, Discourse analysis

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SHUHUA DAI

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts  
in the College of Arts and Sciences  
Georgia State University  
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This study uses discourse analysis to compare the news reports on the subject of America in two official Chinese newspapers, the Chinese language *People's Daily* [Chinese: 人民日报, *Renmin Ribao*] and the English language *China Daily*, in three distinct periods of time – 1989, 1999 and 2009. The study attempts to select news texts in January in each year as the target discourses, and to find the changing characteristics of the two newspapers in four aspects of the texts: topic selection, headline design, writing tactics, and visual components use. The study investigates how the discourse features may be varied or manipulated in the construction of a version of political reality written for the two different readerships.

### 1.1 Research Questions

Are there any differences between *People's Daily* and *China Daily* in covering the US in three periods in 1989, 1999, 2009? If yes, how are they different from each other? What are the implications of the differences?

### 1.2 Significance of the Study

At the beginning of China's "Reform and Opening" era, the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) made a politically fateful decision. As part of their drive to turn China into a modern, open market economy, they relinquished the Party's monopoly over the provision of information to the public by allowing newspapers, magazines, television, to compete in the marketplace instead of relying on government financing (Shirk, 2010, 2). They aimed to improve the efficiency of the organizations, and

thus to meet the needs of China's market economy. From then on, the changes in China's media began to change China from all aspects.

This study is timely and significant because of the emergence of China as a major actor in world affairs. In August 2010, China surpassed Japan as the world's second-biggest economy after three decades of growth and put overtaking the U.S. in reach within 10 years (McDonald, 2010, 1). Meanwhile, more and more economic and political conflicts between China and other countries, especially America, keep stirring people's nerves, and thus become a popular topic in news reports. It is widely accepted that choice of words in news reports is by no means arbitrary. To some extent, wording is not a journalist's own creation, but the representation or reflection of the social, political, or religious ideas shared by the social group the journalist belongs to. So, by examining the discourse tactics of the samples of American news reports in the two influential Chinese official newspapers which target different readerships, we can learn the changes of editorial policies and tactics in the two newspapers and thus better understand what image of America Chinese official media aimed to send to Chinese readers and foreign readers to make a balance between serving the Chinese government's interest and building a competitive media in the modern global market.

### **1.3 Reasons to Choose the Two Official Newspapers**

These two newspapers were chosen because they are the most influential and authoritative newspapers in China. They have been the official voices of the central government of the People's Republic of China since their founding. *People's Daily* started in June 1946 and has a current circulation of 3 million. *China Daily* was founded in June 1981 and has a circulation of 200,000. Both have published daily issues that provide the principal venue for the central government and the CCP to announce their respective

policies and disseminate governmental, political, and economic messages to the public and the world. Both newspapers can be seen as true barometers of China's official political climate on a daily basis.

Apart from these common features, the two newspapers have clear differences. *People's Daily* is published in Chinese, and is distributed through central and local government departments, mainly targeting Chinese readers, especially officers and officials. *China Daily* is the only English-language national newspaper in China, which specifically targets an international audience, including foreign diplomats and tourists in China, and is often given out for free in hotels.

#### **1.4 Reasons to Choose the Three Years**

The three selected months in three years belonged to three stages in modern China after "Reform and Opening." Engardio stated in *China is a private sector economy* (2005) that the first stage was initial and gradually industrial reform from 1978 to 1993; the second stage, called rapid privatization, from 1993 to 2005. The third stage, discussed by Brandt in *China's Great Transformation* (2008), has been characterized as retrenchment, from post- 2005 to today. The first stage involved the de-collectivization of agriculture, the opening up of the country to foreign investment, and the granting of permission for entrepreneurs to start up businesses (Engardio, 2005, 1). The second stage of reform involved "the privatization and contracting out of much state-owned industry and the lifting of price controls, protectionist policies, and regulations, although state monopolies in sectors such as banking and petroleum remained (Engardio, 2005, 1)". The private sector grew remarkably, accounting for as much as 70 percent of China's GDP by 2005 (Engardio, 2005, 1). In the third stage, the conservative Hu-Wen Administration began to reverse many of Deng Xiaoping's reforms (Brandt, 2008, 1). Brandt noted that the privileged

*state sector* became the primary recipient of government investment, which under the new administration, promoted the rise of large “national champions.”

Therefore, these three years can represent the three stages of “Reform and Opening,” during which China experienced a dramatically changing process of politics, economics, culture, and international status. By comparing the reports in these three years, we can get a historical picture of the ideological and strategic changes of how the Chinese government employs official media to meet their political and economic needs.

## **1.5 Background**

The form of zigzag waves in the Sino-U.S. relations has become a kind of development mode in the last 30 years, throughout China’s “Reform and Opening.” In December 1978, China and America simultaneously issued a joint communiqué calling for the establishment of diplomatic relations. In January 1979, the two countries officially established diplomatic relations (Chinese Embassy website, 2003). The United States severed official relations with Taiwan, which was to the satisfaction of both sides. However, this was followed by the U.S. Congress' adoption of the Taiwan Relations Act which has so far affected and will obstruct the healthy development of the Sino-US relations (Jiang, 2008). In 1982, Ronald Reagan threatened to restore diplomatic ties with Taiwan and strengthen arms sales to Taiwan (People’s Daily, 2001). For a time, dark clouds hung over the Sino-US relationship in its infancy. Then the Sino-U.S. relationship went into a slump in 1989 because of the Tiananmen Square events. America announced “sanctions” against China and suspended high-level exchanges (Jiang, 2008).

The relations between the countries experienced ups and downs in 1990s. In the first half of 1990s, Bill Clinton attacked the Bush Administration's "appeasement" toward Beijing (Jiang, 2008). The Sino-U.S. relations seemed to move out of dark cloud. However, in 1996, the claim of an "independent Taiwan" from the then Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui triggered off confrontation between both sides. In 1997 and 1998, the top leaders of the two countries made the first exchange of visits (Chinese Embassy website, 2003). Both sides would commit to establishing a constructive strategic partnership, and thus leading the Sino-U.S. relations to the best situation formed since 1989.

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the conflicts between America and China gradually turned to commercial field. In 1999, because of the bombing of Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia, there emerged a strong anti-U.S. wave in China, and the Sino-U.S. relations were plunged into a slump. In the following year, Clinton helped China to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), and thus temporarily improved the Sino-U.S. relations, until plane collision incident in 2001, which caused another fierce anti-U.S. wave in China. But the Sino-U.S. agreement sustained because of the huge commercial activities between the two countries. From 2005, the conflicts between China and America mainly happened in commercial field, such as trade deficit, piracy, protective pricing system, and exchange rate.

An editorial in *People's Daily* reckoned that "feebleness and tenacity constituted the basic characteristics of the Sino-U.S. relations (People's Daily, 2001)," because "these two big countries have opposite ideologies, conflicting political systems, divergent social structures and different cultural traditions (People's Daily, 2001)." Since it is hard for them to establish a kind of mature and stable relationship, it is important to understand how they portray each other in their mass media and foster public opinions in favor of their own interests.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Since 1979, China's "Reform and Opening" policy dramatically changed Chinese media. Kalathil states in *Chinese Media and the Information Revolution* (2002) that under Mao's totalitarian regime, the media's function was to serve the state and impose ideological hegemony. His regime was characterized by vertical control of communication, exemplified by a top-down media system that acted as a conduit carrying Party rule to the masses. The "Reform and Opening" policy acted as constant attempts to move China from dependence on former president Mao Zedong's charismatic and absolute power to sort of a legal-rational system. The primary goal is "not to install a system of rule of law which subjects state power to judicial checks and balances, but instead to establish rule by law so that the legitimacy of the Party can be strengthened through the promulgation of more concrete guidelines (Lee, 1994, 3)." It is in this context that Polumbaum has documented a series of administrative innovations developed to "accommodate the vast sociopolitical change and thus bring the media increasingly under control by more explicit rules and bureaucratic procedures (Lee, 1994, 4)." Kalathil claims that with the advent of economic reforms in 1978, the role of media began to change. No longer defined by the government as an instrument of class struggle, media were promoted as an instrument of economic development and social modernization, with an emphasis on business information and entertainment. Liebman argues in *Watchdog or demagogue? The media in the Chinese legal system* (2005) that over the past decade, the Chinese media have emerged as among the most influential actors in the Chinese political system. As "media commercialization and increased editorial discretion have combined with growing attention to social and legal problems, the media have gained incentives to expand their traditional mouthpiece roles in new directions (Liebman, 2005)." Liebman reckons commercialization has resulted in incentives for the media to expand the scope of critical reporting, and to challenge propaganda department content regulations.

In the wave of liberalization in 1980s, even the official media, including *People's Daily* and *China Daily* promoted independent reports. Competition from the commercial media also drives the official media and the government itself to become more transparent; to preserve its credibility, the government must release more information than it ever did before. In all these ways, the transformed media environment improves the responsiveness and transparency of governance (Shirk, 2010, 4-5). Kalathil gives an example of their reports in Tiananmen Square events. He states that “the Tiananmen crackdown was also perhaps the most seminal in terms of media involvement in protest. The protests were attended by reporters at smaller publications as well as by employees of prominent national media organizations such as the *People's Daily* and the English-language *China Daily*.”

However, China's media is still highly involved with political economy and under strict control mechanism, especially in setting the agenda for public debate on foreign affairs. Lee states in *China's Media, Media's China* (1994) that “different cross-currents impinging on China's media politics have caused ambiguities and contained contradictions in China's media, and the economic reform did not unleash a momentum sufficiently robust to loosen political and media controls (Lee, 1994, 7).” Kalathil claims that Chinese leaders themselves attempt to shape current trends in media development, often resulting in ambiguous messages. He states that “few see a totally independent role for the media. The president at that time, Jiang Zemin, describing the power of the information revolution in an August 2000 speech, extolled the speed and scope of free-information flows while simultaneously warning against the dangers of so-called harmful information and calling for an international treaty to regulate it (Kalathil, 2002).”

Liebman also claims that media commercialization may be reinforcing traditional norms of Party-state interference in shaping public opinions. In this process media professionalism--defined as a commitment to claims of objectivity, balance, and ideological neutrality--has also been severely assaulted. Kalathil

argues that “amidst a liberalized economic environment and an increasing diversity of information sources for the general public, the media has continued to play a strong propaganda role for the central government, especially in setting the agenda for public debate on foreign affairs (Kalathil, 2002, 1).” This analysis of Chinese media's reporting of the Balkan crisis in 1999, including the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, shows that media are far from free of state pressures to present the central government's version of overseas events.

The patriotism and nationalism have gradually become one of the main ideological guidelines in Chinese media. In *Controversial true journalist* (2008), Lu Keng compares the two rival Chinese regimes, Mao Era and “Reform and Opening” stage, and reveals that the authoritarian Nationalists have exercised more explicit media censorship than the totalitarian Communists. Han and Shi argue in *The ‘brokeback mountain’ of Chinese media: A case study of Chinese media construction of nationalism on reporting of 78th academy award* (2007) that “the nationalism discourse rising in recent years in China has caught wide attention, in which Chinese media play an important role (Han & Shi, 2007, 1).” Suna makes a close-up analysis of the deployment of an array of discursive forms and discursive forms and tactics for nationalistic purposes in the Chinese media in the 1990s in *Love your country in your own way: Chinese media, nationalism, and official culture* (1998). Her study shows that “the content of nationalism has become increasingly fluid, and the circulation of nationalist sentiments has become a two-way traffic, between the central and regional China, the state, and the individual as the result of the decentralization in social, economic, and cultural spheres within China and increasing globalization of the Chinese community (Suna, 1998, 1).”

These changing characteristics of Chinese media are also represented in their reports on the subject of America. *The report of the development of Chinese media* (2007) shows that the reports on



America in Chinese media present a trend “from limited to ample, from negative to positive, from political to cultural, and from ideological to economic.” Liu studies the image of America in Chinese media in *the Image of the United States in Present-Day China* (1991), and draws a conclusion that “ after ‘Reform and Opening,’ Chinese media always reports America as a wealthy, modernized, open and democratic country and those reports are relatively accurate and objective (Liu, 1991, 35).” His conclusion is the same as Xu’s conclusion in 1994. After he did a research on the content in a series of Chinese official media, namely *People’s Daily*, *Guangming Daily*, and *China Youth Daily*, Xu claims that though Chinese media published some reports on American crime and violence, they made a positive and constructive image of America in general (Xu, 1996, 304).” Xu’s study shows that the reporting emphasis of Chinese media in 1990s includes activities of American government, American international policies, military activities, American domestic politics and policies, international trade between America and other countries (Xu, 1996, 303). Xu also finds that after “Reform and Opening,” Chinese media gave more coverage of America and the reports were more accurate and favorable. They seldom published review articles. When they made comments, the comments tended to be conservative and gentle. He claims that this is “because Chinese media won’t offend the government rule to criticize America (Xu, 1996, 304).” In Xu and Liu’s argument, Chinese official media convey a positive image of America to Chinese readers and portray America as a developed, rich, and free country.

However, Chinese media’ friendly and liberal reports about America, especially *People’s Daily* and *China Daily’s* coverage, fit into the government’s plan to build a large, coordinated propaganda system. Kalathil analyzes a series of reports on America in Chinese media in 1990s and 2000s in *Chinese media and the information revolution*. For example, in 2001, he argues that the U.S. spy plane incident on Hainan Island “touched off a flurry of nationalistic sentiment on the *People’s Daily* “Strong Country” web

forum, set up earlier by the newspaper after the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade.” Similarly angry postings also rose in volume following the September 11 attacks on the U.S. He states that the Chinese government “has historically used nationalism to bolster public support and divert attention from domestic problems.” As a result, much official news on domestic websites features a nationalistic tone – “although this can be altered to suit the policy objectives of the central government.” Another instance is in January 2002, while nationalism fanned following the Belgrade embassy bombing, was deliberately further dampened, following the discovery of bugging devices on the then Chinese president Jiang Zemin's American-produced plane. Hence, while the Chinese government hopes that cultivating nationalism will boost its legitimacy, it is also aware that overly militant public opinion could constrain its policy choices, and in the worst-case scenario, turn against the government. Besides, Chinese media painted the military campaign as part of a US-led plot to subjugate first Serbia and then the world under the guise of international humanitarianism, and barely touched upon Slobodan Milosevic's policy of ethnic cleansing (Kalathil, 2002).” Kalathil noticed that the Chinese media also waited two days before reporting President Clinton's apology following the bombing of the Chinese embassy on May 7, 1999. He argues that subsequently, the press “played a key role in fanning nationalism and anti-Americanism, at least until the end of July, when the central government ordered a stop in order to improve ties with the US to counter Taiwan's independence rhetoric.”

Therefore, an argument upon whether Chinese media has published more liberal news reports on America in the context of internationalism and commercialism has risen in academic field. This paper will provide more materials and evidence on this subject by comparing the reports in two influential official media in different languages.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This study uses discourse analysis to compare the news reports on the subject of America in two Chinese official newspapers, Chinese language *People's Daily* and English language *China Daily*. The targeted news articles were published in the month of January in three years, 1989, 1999, and 2009, which belonged to three different developing periods of "Reform and Opening." These articles are compared in topic selection, headline design, writing tactics and visual components use to find if discourse features were varied and manipulated to convey different messages to two different readerships.

Discourse analysis is a qualitative methodology that has been adopted and developed by social constructionists and can be used in answering many kinds of questions that are posed in many fields that traditionally focus on human life and communication, such as anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, communications, and sociology. It is based on a view that is largely anti-scientific, though not anti-research (Johnstone, 2002).

Discourse analysis is a way of understanding social interactions. Fairclough (1995) argues that analysis of media language should be recognized as an important element within research on contemporary processes of social and cultural change, a theme that is attracting growing interest in the social sciences. The researchers acknowledge their own bias and position on the issue, known as reflexivity. Fulcher (2005) stated that "the aims of research vary: The aim of one investigator might be to understand power relationships in society in order to bring about change; but another investigator may be interested in an interaction or conversation simply for its own sake (in terms of not knowing what the study might uncover). The research begins with a research question (and not a hypothesis in the formal sense) that is aimed at a theoretical position. A conversation or piece of text is transcribed and then deconstructed. This involves

attempting to identify features in the text. A discourse is a particular theme in the text, especially those that relate to identities.”

In this study, the ideological underpinning of media discourse will be explored by analyzing language usage in media and wordings in news texts. As many scholars point out (Fairclough, 1989b, 1995; Fowler & Kress, 1979), language is regarded as a material form of ideology. The workings of language reflect and in part construct particular social ideas, values, and meanings. The analysis of language is thus an indispensable part of any attempt to study ideology in the print media. According to Bell (1991), media discourse can be targeted as the research object in order to discover how the media mask their ideological positions, embodied in their attitudes and opinions, in the way they represent issues.

This paper is a longitudinal study. It collects news texts from *People's Daily* and *China Daily* in the month of January in 1989, 1999, and 2009, including news, commentaries, features, visual components and captions. Among them, visual components include photograph, caricatures, and cartoons. The brief news on stock prices and current exchanges are not included. *People's Daily* published total 132 articles on America, 44 in January 1989, 36 in January 1999, and 52 in January 2009. *China Daily* published total 227 articles on America, 56 in January 1989, 78 in January 1999, and 93 in January 2009. The two newspapers are compared in each year. First, their topic selections are explored and compared. Topic selection is the representation of their basic coverage principle. By studying their reporting emphasis, we can learn whether they have political preference, or economic preference, or other preferences. Second, headline design is compared because headline is the condensation and summary of the reporting content and main idea. Bloom (1994) argues that the choice of topics in media can influence the quantity and quality of language produced. The comparison of the headlines in these two newspapers represented their differences in editorial approach, reporting perspective, and technique of expression. Third, to compare their writing

tactics is to probe into case studies. By comparing their specific reports on one event, we can learn how they gave different explanations of the same event to convey different ideological information. Last, this study specifically compares the visual components use because “one picture is worth a thousand words,” meaning that a picture can convey a message more effectively and more economically than words could ever do.

The common reporting topics include politics, economics, society, crime, culture, environment, technology, education, sports, and entertainment. This study compares the number of reporting articles on each topic in the two newspapers and analyzes the reasons for the different preferences. After exploring the topic selection, headline design and writing tactics are investigated according to political topic, economic topic, and other topics. This paper uses case study to analyze and compare the two newspapers’ reports on same events. The headline design analysis emphasizes the most popular words used in headlines, the length, and the logic of headlines. The logic of headlines means whether they are direct headlines or indirect headlines. Direct headlines refer to the headlines which summarize the reporting content and clarify the main ideas. Indirect headlines mean the headlines which use vague words and do not clarify the main content of the reports, such as questions and puns. The writing tactics analysis focuses on lexical choices. Finally, visual components use tactics of the two newspapers are compared to see on which topics they used visual components and what messages the picture conveyed to readers. All the above discourses features are explored to see if the discourses are manipulated to convey different messages to two different readerships.

## 4 ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Comparison of the Reports in January, 1989

Although in January, 1989, both newspapers provided some themes and reporting perspectives that were similar, overall *People's Daily* coverage tended to be more political criticism on America, while *China Daily* provided more diversified topics and remained relatively neutral on America. More than one third of *China Daily* coverage utilized themes related to “safe” topics, such as economics, technology, environment, sports and entertainment, and *People's Daily* concentrated on America's as a trouble maker in the world. In general, *People's Daily* focused on political themes and excluded sports and entertainment news. Its coverage utilized a strong emotional tone. Meanwhile, *China Daily* coverage paid much more attention to a series of themes in addition to politics and made less commentaries and criticism.

#### 4.1.1 Analysis of Topic Selection

Table1 indicates that the two newspapers had huge differences in topic selection, although both put most attention on political topics. *People's Daily* narrowed its coverage to only three topics: politics, economics, and society, and the first two topics occupied more than 95 percent of its coverage. In contrast, *China Daily*, much more diversified than *People's Daily*, covered seven topics and the proportion of reports on politics and economics was nearly 15 percent fewer than those in *People's Daily*.

Table1 Comparison of Topic Selection in *People's Daily* and *China Daily*, 1989

Topics	People's Daily (44 in total)	China Daily (56 in total)
Politics	72.7%	60.3%
Economics	22.7%	12.6%
Society	2.2%	1.9%
Sports	0	19.6%
Crime	0	1.9%
Environment	0	1.9%
Entertainment	0	1.9%
Technology	0	1.9%

Politics occupied the overwhelming majority of both newspapers' coverage, but the proportion differed. *People's Daily* published 10 percent more political reports than *China Daily*. More than half of the political reports in *People's Daily* focused on the military conflict between America and Libya, in addition to a series of reports on U.S-Russia interactions. Meanwhile *China Daily* gave more emphasis to America domestic affairs, such as the inauguration of President Georgia H.W. Bush.

*People's Daily* also published 10 percent more economic reports than *China Daily*. Both emphasized the trade friction between America and Europe. *People's Daily* published more commentaries and expressed its concerns and worries more directly than *China Daily*.

In the coverage of other topics, *People's Daily* published only one article on American society which reported a questionnaire on what American people thought of America which showed American people reckoned the new administration was not able to solve a series of social problems. Meanwhile, *China Daily* made a relatively balanced and diversified coverage by reporting news in varied topics, including crime, technology, sports, and the environment. Even though most reports on these topics were limited, they

evidenced a more flexible and open editorial policy. One distinguishing characteristic was *China Daily*'s coverage of sports. While *People's Daily* totally ignored this topic, *China Daily* spent nearly 20 percent coverage of it, for at least three reasons. First, sport was one of the safest topics and could seldom cause readers' aversion or complaints. Second, sport was a popular topic and could attract more foreign readers and thus expand the influence of *China Daily*. Third, all the sports news in *China Daily* reported the triumphs of American athletes in international competitions, which would please American readers.

Another hot topic in *People's Daily* was America's relationship with Russia. *People's Daily* published five articles on it. But *China Daily* paid much less attention to it, only publishing two articles. The events *People's Daily* reported, including America's support to Russia and a questionnaire showing Russian people's attitudes toward America.

#### **4.1.2 Analysis of Headline Design**

##### Political Topics

In political reports, U.S.-Libya conflict became the leading theme in both newspapers; however, the discourse features, including headline design and writing tactics differed. The differences of headline design are fully represented by the coverage of three important political events about America that happened in January 1989: the military conflict between America and Libya, Georgia H. W. Bush's inauguration, and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sino-U.S. relations.

In *People's Daily*, the theme of the U.S.-Libya conflict occupied 57.6 percent of the total coverage of political topic, the inauguration occupied as 11.8 percent, and the anniversary occupied as 2.9 percent, only one article. The rest 11.8 percent covered the interaction between America and Iraq, Russia, and Africa. In *China Daily*, the theme of U.S.-Libya conflict occupied 83.8 percent of all political reports, inauguration



occupied as 10.8 percent, and 5.4 percent. Other 10.8 percent covered America's relations with Russia and Africa.

First, more than 80 percent headlines of the U.S-Libya conflicts reports in *People's Daily* included negative words, such as "criticize" and "disturb", to express the world's reactions and opinions to America's military activities. . For example, on January 6<sup>th</sup>, *People's Daily* published "The conflict between America and Libya is disturbing the world." The next day, it published "The world criticizes America for shooting down Libyan aircraft." Later on January 15<sup>th</sup>, it published "Libya criticizes that American fighters risk civil aviation safety." On January 7<sup>th</sup>, *People's Daily* even spoke out its opinion directly in the headline: "America should take responsibility of the peace in middle Asia." On the other hand, in *China Daily*, negative words or any emotional words were never to express judgment or criticism. The typical headlines included "U.S. warplanes shoot down two Libyan jet fighters," "Mixed reaction following U.S. downing of Libyan jets," and "Khadafy calls for talks with U.S. to ease tensions."

Moreover, in *People's Daily*, around one fifth of headlines included "International Council", such as "International Council continued discussing the conflict between America and Libya," and "International Council discussed the conflict between America and Libya." But *China Daily* never mentioned International Council in their headlines. This was because at that time, China tended to stress the importance of International Council and United Nations and considered them as the battlefield for the Third World to fight for their rights.

Second, in reporting the inauguration of President Georgia H. W. Bush, more than 80 percent of headlines in *People's Daily* used literal and vague words, while none of the headlines in *China Daily* used such words. For example, the two articles' headlines on the inauguration in *People's Daily* were "From Reagan to Bush," and "Steps toward White House." These headlines did not express the writers' opinions directly, but

only gave a hint of the content of the articles. *People's Daily* also used informal words in the headlines, such as “Bush’s inauguration kicked off.” While in *China Daily*, the headlines were much more objective and formal, such as “Georgia H. W. Bush is inaugurated as the forty-first President of the United States,” and “George H. W. Bush administration cabinet members.”

Third, in the limited reports of 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sino-U.S. relations, the two newspapers shifted their headline styles: *People's Daily* published neutral headlines, such as “The celebration of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and America,” and “China and America signed the memorandum.” Meanwhile, *China Daily* used more emotional words in the headlines, such as “Stronger U.S. ties with China urged,” and “East-West pact embraces wide-ranging cooperation.” Such changes and differences showed that *China Daily* more stressed on representing a positive image of China to the foreign readership by making less criticism and conveying opening and cooperative intention. Meanwhile, *People's Daily* took more responsibility on ensuring the political correctness and influencing Chinese readers’ opinions by publishing more commentaries, emphasizing the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and China’s close relations with the Third World.

Last, when reporting the relations between America and Russia, the headlines in *People's Daily* represented a picture of easing tension between those two superpowers. The headlines showed its interest in various events: U.S.-Soviet Union military issues in Afghanistan<sup>1</sup> and the Middle East,<sup>2</sup> the chemical weapon issues,<sup>3</sup> the way to deal with the tension between the West and the Soviet Union<sup>4</sup> and Russian people’s attitude toward the United States.<sup>5</sup> All the headlines used active voice and positive words, such as “Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> “America is expecting Soviet Union withdraw troops from Afghanistan on time,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.12, 1989, 6.

<sup>2</sup> “The U.S. and Soviet Union settled the Middle East meeting schedule,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.6, 1989, 6.

<sup>3</sup> “The U.S. welcome Soviet Union to destroy chemical weapons,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.27, 1989, 6.

<sup>4</sup> “America stressed that the western countries must be cautious. and not rash toward Soviet Union,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.31, 1989, 6.

<sup>5</sup> “Soviet Union made an opinion poll about Bush administration: Most people feel more positive,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.20, 1989, 6.

Union made an opinion poll about Bush administration: Most people feel more positive,” “The United States welcomes Soviet Union to destruct chemical weapons,” and “The United States and Soviet Union have successfully settled the middle East meeting schedule.”

### Economic Topics

In *People's Daily* and *China Daily*, the trade conflict between America and Europe was the leading theme in their coverage of economic topics. *People's Daily* informed its readers about the trade friction between America and Germany by publishing two background articles.<sup>6</sup> One slight difference in the emphasis was that, in coverage of America's domestic economy, *People's Daily* tended to focus on the economic activities that China could learn from them, while *China Daily* did not express such concern.

Both newspapers mostly used direct headlines that summarized the contents of the articles. Typical headlines in *People's Daily* included: “America urges Europe to open telecommunications market,” “The conflict between Europe and the U.S. is growing ease,” and “Europe postponed the anti-retaliation action towards America.” Similarly, *China Daily* headlines were simple and clear: “New year dampened by U.S.-Europe trade war” and “Rising U.S. rate strains Europe.”

Both newspapers gave America's domestic economy continuous attention. *People's Daily* emphasized case studies from which China could broaden insight and experience, while *China Daily* focused on economic policies and developing trend. *People's Daily* published economic activities in specific fields, such as “Analysis of the dollar exchange rate,” “The U.S. real estate creates enormous value,” and “America may lose its technological advantage in the information era.” Instead, headlines in *China Daily* focused on the general economic developing trend, such as “Bush economic machine gears up amid problems” and “An America recession, but not soon.”

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<sup>6</sup> “The background of the conflict between Germany and America,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.20, 1989, 6. & “The inharmonic voice between Germany and the U.S.,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.10, 1989, 6.

Besides politics and economics, *People's Daily* published only one article on American society, whose headline was “What are American people thinking?” Meanwhile, *China Daily* covered various topics, including crime, technology, especially sports and entertainment.

#### Other Topics

*People's Daily* used an interesting question as the headline, which implied this article was not very formal. It covered a questionnaire made in America to ask American people what their opinions about the new Georgia H.W. Bush administration. In *China Daily*, all the sports news and entertainment news did not headline. The report on the crime used a scary headline as “Riots follow deaths of blacks in Miami.”

### 4.1.3 Analysis of Writing Tactics

#### Political Topics

Not only the headline design differed in the two newspapers, but the writing tactics showed divergence and thus represented the different editorial policies as well. Take the coverage of the three important events as example. In the coverage of the U.S.-Libya conflicts, more than 50 percent of articles in *People's Daily* were commentaries, longer than 200 words, while *China Daily* only published regular reports, shorter than 100 words. When reporting President H.W. Bush's inauguration, *People's Daily* published detailed commentaries but *China Daily* still only published brief reports. However, in the reporting the anniversary of the Sino-U.S. relations, *China Daily* published more commentaries expressing China's cooperative intention than *People's Daily*.

In the coverage of U.S.-Libya conflicts, *People's Daily* frequently used emotional words which caused upset feelings. In each article, it mentioned at least one time about “world peace,” “World danger,”

and “America’s responsibility.” For example, in their first report about the conflict, it put America on the opposite position of the world:

Obviously, the international situation is shifting from rivalry to cooperating. The conflicts in hot spots are easing in varying degrees. The affair between America and Libya is against the mainstream in today’s world. We feel sorry that America shot down Libyan aircraft. We hope both sides can be restrained and solve the problem by talking instead of force.<sup>7</sup>

When it reported the world’s reactions, the most words it used included “accuse,” “astounding,” “anger,” and “disgusted.” And people in the world defined America’s military activity towards Libya as “attack,” “invade,” and “destroy.”

At the same time, *China Daily* avoided to use such piercing words. It mostly “pompous,” “conflict,” and “unexpected.” And when its commentaries did not judge America’s activities but focusing on constructive advices. For example, in the article “Khadafy calls for talks with U.S. to ease tensions,” *China Daily* expressed China’s attitude that China was willing to keep the world safe with America:

Peace is the goal that China always tries to achieve and it should be the common goal shared by all the other countries, especially America. And China will always stands with the Third World. Whenever the developing countries have conflict with developed countries, China will support the former.<sup>8</sup>

In the coverage of the inauguration, *People’s Daily* was also used abundant adjectives, along with plenty of first quotations from the president speech and the interviews with common American people. For example, in “From Reagan to Bush,” the author analyzed Bush’ inaugural address, focusing on his announcement of “using a compromised and harmonious approach to solve domestic and international problems,” and drew a conclusion that Bush would be a “pragmatic, moderate and modest president.”<sup>9</sup> In another article, “Steps toward White House,” the author made a vivid image about Bush’s inauguration

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<sup>7</sup> “The conflict between America and Libya is disturbing the world,” *People’s Daily* [Beijing] Jan.6, 1989, 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> “From Reagan to Bush,” *People’s Daily* [Beijing] Jan.25, 1989, 6.

ceremony by describing the crowded audiences, celebrating performance, and decorations. The article made a positive image of Bush. Towards the end, several interviews with American people were provided:

A couple from Maine held up a sign which said: "President Bush, if Washington is too hot, please come back to Maine!" Anderson, who was in his 30s but already retired, told the reporter that he wanted to join the presidential campaign. Mary, a secretary living in Washington said: "old way, no change." A priest said: "I come to see where the money is wasted."<sup>10</sup>

These highly emotional adjectives and vivid quotations helped to make a very positive image of the new American president to Chinese readers and thus convinced them that China had a bright future with America to develop the economy. However, this article was not one hundred percent positive. *People's Daily* employed skillful framing tactics by ending this celebrating article with some disharmonic voices, especially the words from a priest, "I've come to see where the money is wasted." This sentence appeared in the end, acting as a balance to remind Chinese readers of the disadvantage of America's democratic system, which was also one of the bases of ideological opposites between China and America.

In reporting the anniversary, *People's Daily* published limited commentaries and used a conservative tone. While *China Daily* used more emotional words to express China's eager to cooperate with America. In a total of four articles, *People's Daily* did not show a clear thinking of how to send messages to its Chinese readers about Sino-U.S. relationship. The only one commentary emphasized China's four big concerns: first, recognition of China's economic achievement in the past 10 years; second, careful consideration of the Taiwan issue, which loomed as a dark shadow over the Sino-U.S. relations; third, recognition of the benefit for both countries to collaborate in the future; and fourth, it emphasized China's Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence should be the theme of the Sino-U.S. relations in the future rather than ideology:

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<sup>10</sup> "Steps toward White House," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.22, 1989, 6.

The past ten years of collaboration prove that the relationship between the two countries is not decided by ideology or social system, but determined by if both countries can comply with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. We believe that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence is the most reliable standard to deal with the relationship between countries and the base for building a new order of international politics.<sup>11</sup>

This article stated that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence would be China's foreign policy towards America in the next ten years. Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence were brought forward by Deng Xiaoping in the beginning of Reform and Opening. They are: 1) mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty; 2) mutual non-aggression; 3) non-interference in each other's internal affairs; 4) equality and mutual benefit; and 5) peaceful coexistence. Based on principles, economy becomes the mainstream, while ideology played an important but relatively concealed role. China would stick to the conservative Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, but also aimed to gradually build a new international political system.

*People's Daily* made more commentaries on the relations between China and United States and used many trade data to prove China had been a powerful country which deserved America's more attention. For instance, in the article "Suggest the new American administration to pay more attention to the Sino-U.S. relationship," the author analyzed political, economic, and military evidence to prove China had already become a powerful country in all the fields. It even gave the Bush Administration five suggestions as to how to make policies to cooperate with China, including adjusting America's international mortgage plan, enlarging technical assistance to China, assigning special budgets on the Sino-U.S. project, loosening the limitation of export to China, and opening American market to China after the latter joins WTO. The data on China's economic development were impressive:

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<sup>11</sup> "The celebration of the 10th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and America," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.1, 1989, 1.

China's trade has increased to 100 billion dollars in 1989 from 15 billion dollars ten years ago. And China's more than 1 billion population and its fast economic development will make it a powerful country at the beginning of 21st century. If America wants to compete with Japan, Europe, and South Korea in providing technology, equipments, and funds, it must be clearer about its policy toward China.<sup>12</sup>

In a thin celebrating atmosphere of the anniversary, *People's Daily* published several articles with harsh criticism. For example, the report, "the president of Hehai University criticized the Voice of America for giving distorted coverage of Nanjing Event, threatening the already unstable relationship between China and America:

The president [of the university] sharply denounced *Voice of America* for how it reported the conflict between Chinese students and international students in Hehai University. He said "this report is fabricated. It is bullshit and nonsense."<sup>13</sup>

This report showed a furious emotion toward America. A Chinese university president, who resented Chinese intellectuals of high social status, used "bullshit" and "nonsense" to criticize a short report about a students' conflict in an American radio. The students' conflict was an incident, and the article did not mention or quote the words how the American radio reported and described it. Only by using "bullshit" and "nonsense," from the mouth of a university president, *People's Daily* made a picture of an ill intentioned American media.

### Economic Topics

*People's Daily* used brief and neutral tones to report the U.S.-Europe trade frictions, seldom expressing China's opinions and concerns directly. Instead, under the rubric of in-depth journalism, *China*

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<sup>12</sup> "Suggest the new American administration to pay more attention to the Sino-U.S. relationship," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.16, 1989, 6.

<sup>13</sup> "The president of Hehai University criticized the Voice of America gave distorted reports on Nanjing Event," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.6, 1989, 1.



*Daily* investigated the mutual complaints between America and Germany and implied the trade friction was rooted in political conflict:

The reason for the friction between America and Germany is whether the Libyan factory is producing chemical weapons. They could have been settled in peace; however, American media attacked Germany as “concentration camp” and “sacrifice principle for profit.” Such words enraged Germany. So, the trade friction was rooted deeply into such contradiction. And U.S.-Germany relation is a symbol of U.S.-Europe relations.<sup>14</sup>

*China Daily* stressed on not only the possibility of a trade war between Europe and America, but also China’s concern. In the article “the new year is dampened by the U.S.-EU trade war,” an editorial claimed that the conflict would escalate into a trade war which would harm the rest of the world:

European officials are concerned that the new ban on importing U.S. hormone-fed meat will escalate into a full-blown trade war between the United States and the European Community. The dispute, if not resolved quickly, could lead to an exchange of even greater trade sanctions between the United States and Europe, diplomatic specialists say, but, more dangerously, could strike at the structure of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Combined with such unconnected but emotional issues as the controversy over low-flying allied planes in Germany, the dispute could spark latent anti-American sentiment in Western European nations, officials suggest. Several accidents involving U.S. aircraft or U.S. bases caused civilian deaths last year and aroused criticism of NATO training practices and complaints that sovereignty over German territory had been surrendered to allied military forces. No new talks between the United States and the community have been scheduled.<sup>15</sup>

With its broader focus for an international audience, *China Daily* reported as a participant in the world affairs, while *People’s Daily* positioned itself as only spectator of this conflict. This showed *China Daily* more considered China as a part in the international business and economy.

#### Other Topics

The article “What are American people thinking?” was an unusual report in *People’s Daily*, which paid attention to American common people. In the article, *People’s Daily* used data from a questionnaire

<sup>14</sup> “The background of the conflict between Germany and America,” *People’s Daily* [Beijing] Jan.20, 1989, 6.

<sup>15</sup> “New year dampened by U.S.-EU trade war.” *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 3, 1989, 2.

made by *New York Times* and *CBS* to imply that American common people had certain extend distrust to their new administration. It mentioned the two biggest problems in American society:

The survey shows that most Americans are positive to the national status and the new president. But they also reckon the new president may not be able to solve the two most important problems in the country: federal budget deficit and drug abuse. Most people do not believe Bush's promise of "no new tax" which was made during his election.<sup>16</sup>

This article also mentioned American people's attitude toward military spending that most people wanted to cut the fee instead of raising it, and their thinking about American economics in the following four years:

Fifty-eight percent of respondents believe that military spending should be reduced and only 14 percent of respondents think the military spending should be raised. About American economics in the following four years, most people think it won't change much. Twenty-two percent reckon it will be better more or less. And 12 percent of respondents consider it will worsen.<sup>17</sup>

This article almost contained all the topics China concerned about America at that time: the new president and his new policies, military issues, and economic development. And it had the same frame as the report on Bush's inauguration ceremony: a few positive reports followed by a series of negative information, and always the latter being put at the end of the article. By doing so, the editors in *People's Daily* tried to establish a fair image of their report, but meanwhile deliberately influenced readers' ideas and emotions in accordance with the official state policy.

One of the biggest differences between the reports in *China Daily* and *People's Daily* in 1989 was the report on sports. *People's Daily* did not publish any sports news, but in *China Daily*, sports became a popular topic. The reports covered football,<sup>18</sup> college basketball,<sup>19</sup> tennis,<sup>20</sup> and skiing.<sup>21</sup> Two reasons

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<sup>16</sup> "What are American people thinking?" *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.23, 1989, 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> "Super Bowl," *China Daiy* [Beijing] Jan. 13, 1989, 7.

<sup>19</sup> "College basketball," *China Daiy* [Beijing] Jan. 15, 1989, 7.

<sup>20</sup> "Tennis," *China Daiy* [Beijing] Jan. 2, 1989, 7.

<sup>21</sup> "Skiing," *China Daiy* [Beijing] Jan. 3, 1989, 7.

caused *China Daily*'s emphasis on sports news: 1) this was a safe topic and will not cause any aversion. 2) it represented the continuation of Ping pong diplomacy from 1970s.<sup>22</sup> Besides sports news, one entertainment report about Golden Globe Awards even appeared in *China Daily*. Such news not only aimed to meet the foreign readers' needs for entertainment, but also conveyed a message that China became more open and modern than ever.

#### 4.1.4 Visual Components Use

One of the biggest differences between the reports in *China Daily* and *People's Daily* in 1989 was the use of visual components. *People's Daily* did not publish any visual components, but *China Daily* published seven photographs. Even though it held a small perception in the reports, those photographs could convey much more amply meanings than words.

The majority of the photo illustrations were on sports and entertainment, including American football,<sup>23</sup> skiing,<sup>24</sup> women tennis,<sup>25</sup> and Golden Globe awards.<sup>26</sup> All these photographs showed a happy winning moment in the competition, and gave vivid portrays of the athletes. The description texts briefly introduced the triumphs. For example, the description of the woman tennis photograph said:

Steffi Graf was the biggest tennis story in 1988, capturing all four majors plus the Olympic Gold medal – a first in tennis history.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ping pong diplomacy refers to the exchange of ping pong players between the United States and People's Republic of China in the 1970s. The event marked a thaw in the U.S.-China relations that paved the way to a visit to Beijing by President Richard Nixon. Ping pang diplomacy proved to be the uniting link between two countries with vastly different cultures and political ideologies. The Chinese motto for the game was "Friendship first. Competition second."

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> "Golden Glove awards," *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 31, 1989, 8.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

However, some other photographs on politics presented opposite situation. Figure1 showed a serious riot in Miami after a white police officer shot and killed a black motorcyclist (See Figure1). This article depicted the whole scary process of the affair in brutal details:

The disturbances broke out on Monday after a white police officer shot and killed a black motorcyclist in the cities over town district and on Tuesday spread to adjacent Liberty City where 18 people were killed in riots in 1980. The motorcycle passenger, also a black man, died of massive head injuries suffered when the driver lost control and crashed. Throughout poor black neighborhoods just north of downtown Miami several hundred demonstrators' hurled rocks and bottles at police, burned several cars and looted stores. Nearly 100 police officers in riot gear cordoned off 50-square blocks and battled demonstrators with tear gas and sporadic sniper fire. Miami police chief Perry Anderson said officers sweeping the streets for troublemakers had made 20 arrests.<sup>28</sup>

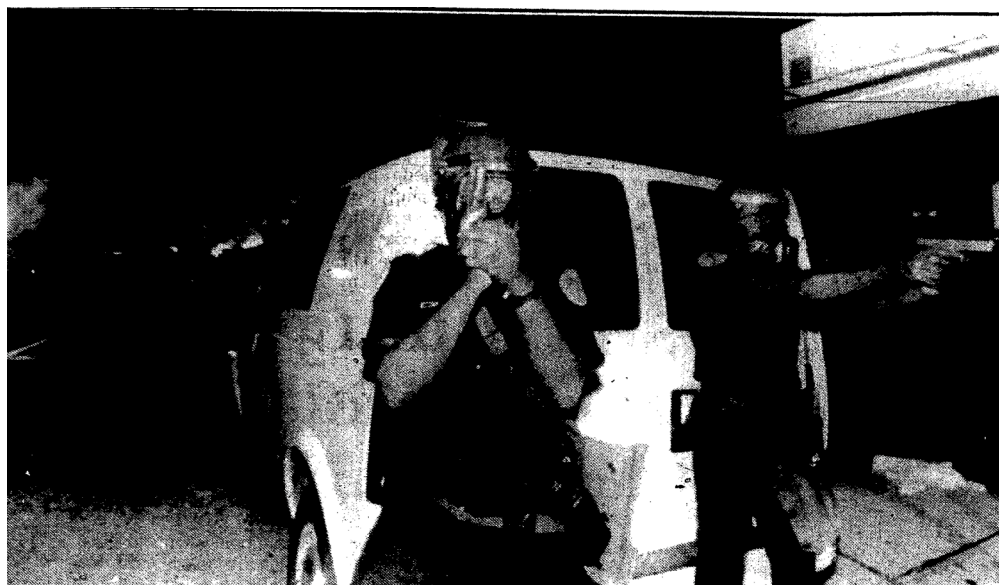


Figure1 “Riots follow deaths of blacks in Miami,” *China Daily*, Jan.19, 1989, 4.

At the end of the article, the editor gave background information of the racial conflict in America and told another story of a similar racial unrest after an African-American was shot to death in Virgin Islands:

The latest wave of racial unrest erupted when Clement Lloyd, 33, a resident of the U.S. Virgin Islands, was fatally shot in the head by a white police officer after a high-speed chase.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> “Riots follow deaths of blacks in Miami,” *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 19, 1989, 1.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

This photograph represented two police officers armed to the teeth standing in front of a white police wagon in the night. The police officers were wearing helmets, so their faces were unseen. Shot from an up angle, the police officers looked towering and overthrowing. They pointed their guns to someone or someplace out of the photo to show that they were ready to shoot. The description text behind the photo explained their situation:

Two Miami police officers engage in a brief fire fight with unknown snipers in the Over town section of Miami, Florida, in the United States after a black motorcyclist was killed Monday by a white policeman. A passenger on the motorcycle also later died and violence continued on Tuesday.<sup>30</sup>

Unquestionable, this photo successfully presented an unrest American society with violent racial discrimination and clash between police and civilians. The dark color, the up angle, the magnified guns, and helmets built a tensional and scaring emotion. Along with describing the details, such as “died of massive head injuries”, “the driver lost control and crashed”, “fatally shot in the head”, “high-speed chase”, and giving excess information, such as “where 18 people were killed in riots in 1980” and “the latest wave of racial unrest”, this photo illustration caused readers’ panic and indignation to the racial discrimination and danger in American society.

Figure2 included a group of Vietnamese children who were looking at U.S. Marines after windows. The smile less faces of Vietnamese children crowded in the photo and the window lattice in front of them looked like prison bars. Those in the front row took hold of the window lattice as they were in prison. They all looked through the window upset and curiously. The description text told the background story that the American marine came and tried to find out mines they planted 20 years ago during the war:

Curious Vietnamese children look through the gates of a government guesthouse in Dong Ha. They are trying to catch a glimpse of six former U.S. Marines, who are on an

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

unofficial visit to Viet Nam. The ex-marines will try to help local officials search for mines the Americans planted 20 years ago during the war.<sup>31</sup>



Figure2 “Vietnamese children,” *China Daily*, Jan. 21, 1989, 8.

The news was about American marine who planed to search for mines. However, instead of offering a direct photograph of American marine, *China Daily* gave a picture of Vietnamese children, who were cute, and innocent, contrasting with the frightful and deadly mines the U.S.A planted in this country. In this way, readers were easy to have great sympathy to the children and feel antipathy to American army who brought the danger to children.

In sum, the discourse in the two newspapers represented similar characteristics: focusing on politics. But there was slight difference of their reporting tactics and editorial approaches. *People’s Daily* only emphasized Libya-U.S. military conflict, while *China Daily* also stressed on the trade conflict between America and Europe. This showed *China Daily* aimed to strengthen the relations with America to develop

<sup>31</sup> “No title,” *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 21, 1989, 1.

economy and speed up China's globalization; while *People's Daily* focused more on the ideologies, political systems, different culture and social structures which retarded its opening and caused suspicion and vigilance.

## 4.2 Comparison of the Reports in January, 1999

In January, 1999, *China Daily* published double articles on America than *People's Daily*, showing *China Daily* has implanted the idea of globalization into its guideline and acted more aggressively to take part into this trend. As for the reporting emphasis, the overwhelming majority of *People's Daily* coverage still utilized themes related to America's political issues (See table2). But the emphasis shifted from the relations between America and other countries to the Sino-U.S. relations. Meanwhile, the political theme declined and economic theme dramatically increased in *China Daily*.

### 4.2.1 Analysis of Topic Selection

Table2 represented that, in January 1999, *People's Daily* still focused on political reports; however, it provided more diverse topics, including economics, society, sports, and technology. At the same time, *China Daily* dramatically increased its coverage of economics, especially America's international trade.

Table2 Comparison of Topic Selection in *People's Daily* and *China Daily*, 1999

Topics	People's Daily (36 in total)	China Daily (78 in total)
Politics	80.6%	50.7%
Economics	8.3%	29.5%
Society	2.8%	2.6%
Sports	2.8%	15.6%
Crime	0	0
Environment	0	0

Entertainment	0	1.9%
Technology	2.8%	1.9%

*People's Daily* shifted its focus from the relations between America and other countries to the Sino-U.S. relations. The mainstream of reports was presenting collaboration in both politics and economics. And the occasional criticism aimed at maintaining a good relation with America instead of attacking America on ideology. On the subject of politics, by contrast with 10 years earlier, when *People's Daily* published only one article on Chinese-American relations, now the newspaper printed 14 stories solely on the mutual relationship. As for other stories, *People's Daily* took an interest in presidential politics, American's combat mission in Iraq and, in one special feature, the way Chinese children could excel in American schools.

The reason for *People's Daily* to emphasize the development of the Sino-U.S. relations was the difficult time China experienced from 1997 to the first half of 1999 in caused by the Asian financial crisis. Zhihao Wang contended in "China's economic development towards a power" that "in the second half of 1990s, China's economics was facing the challenge of both international and domestic elements. The export to America and Europe declined and the foreign capital inflow slowed down due to the Asian financial crises. Meanwhile, the reform of state-owned enterprises left millions of unemployed workers. Especially the years 1998 and 1999, China's economics was having difficulty progressing (Wang, 2, 2009)." The Chinese government tried to conceal the hard economic situation by offering fake data of economic growth rate. For example, Rawski found "the economic growth rate in 1998 and 1999 was not more than 2 percent instead of 7.8 percent published by official media. The reason for such inaccuracy was the local government reported economic data higher than the actual in order to meet the requirement of 8 percent growth rate from the central government (Wang, 2, 2009)."



The economic difficulty made *People's Daily* provide positive reports in other fields, such as China's international relations. So, unlike the political report in 1989 which focused on the relationship between America and Middle East, the articles in 1999 had an emphasis on the Sino-U.S. relations (14 of 25). The increase of the reporting number also reflected a more in-depth and comprehensive cooperating stage the two countries had entered. The active business activities provided the newspaper rich materials to present. Among them, the 20th anniversary of the Sino-U.S. relations became the most popular topic. Eleven related articles hugely out numbered the report on 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1989 (only one report). To show their enthusiasm, editors put most reports (9 of 11) on the first page to draw readers' attention. The topics covered celebrating parties,<sup>32</sup> frequent meetings between Chinese leaders and American guests, and the celebrating activities of Chinese embassy in America.<sup>33</sup>

However, when *People's Daily* was publishing more celebratory reports, it still held a cautious and conservative attitude, which could be seen in how it framed the positive news. For example, instead of giving emotional review articles or vivid story-telling, nearly half-related articles (4 of 9) published on the first page was only brief news on Chinese leaders meeting with American visitors. The editors did not want to omit any important persons as well as they did not want to go to any details, so they briefly covered all the top leaders' meetings with similar narrative and structure, including the chair,<sup>34</sup> deputy chair,<sup>35</sup> prime minister,<sup>36</sup> and deputy prime minister.<sup>37</sup> Other reports emphasized some minor topics, such as the trip of national symphony orchestra of America in China,<sup>38</sup> the Chairman Jiang Zeming's visit in their perform-

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<sup>32</sup> "Commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Sino-U.S. relations," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.14, 1999, 1.

<sup>33</sup> "Chinese Embassy in Washingto opened the ceremony of painting donation," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.18, 1999, 1.

<sup>34</sup> "Jiang Zeming had a meeting with American guests," *People's Daily* [Beijing], Jan.13, 1999, 1.

<sup>35</sup> "Li Lanqing had a meeting with American guests," *People's Daily* [Beijing], Jan.6, 1999, 1.

<sup>36</sup> "Li Peng had a meeting with American representatives," *People's Daily* [Beijing], Jan.6, 1999, 1.

<sup>37</sup> "Zhu Rongji had a meeting with American guests," *People's Daily* [Beijing], Jan.13, 1999, 1.

<sup>38</sup> "The national symphony orchestra of the United States made their first visit in China," *People's Daily* [Beijing], Jan.12, 1999, 1.

ance<sup>39</sup> and some celebrating activities<sup>40</sup> held by Chinese embassy in Washington. The monotone of reporting form was a strong contrast with the greatly increased reporting number, which revealed the self-contradiction rooted in the attitudes of this Chinese official media toward America. On the one hand, it aimed to send a positive message to its readers that the Sino-U.S. constructive relationship could be a strong foundation for the development of China's economy; on the other hand, the ideological differences kept reminding that it could not be taken lightly.

On the other hand, the reports on America's international diplomacy still occupied an important position in *China Daily*, with a big shift of the countries the reports emphasized. In January 1989, *China Daily* paid most attention to the relations between America and Europe. In 1999, it turned to the relations between America and the countries around China, like Russia, Japan, Korea, and India. It published a total of eight reports on these countries but no reports on Europe. This shift was caused by the more intense competition between China and the neighboring countries in American market, and China's increasing awareness of being the regional power after 10 years' rapid economic development.

The reports on America's relationship with Middle East substantially reduced too. This was because China had shifted its international policy emphasis from ideology to economics. Thus, *China Daily* also paid much less attention to the Third World. In the whole January, it did not mention any interactions between America and developing countries, except Iraq War.

*China Daily's* focus on economics and sports revealed its intention to undermine ideology and to send a more neutral and more open message to foreign readers. This was the requirement of economic development. In 1999, the foreign direct investment (FDI) has become a major power to promote China's

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<sup>39</sup> "Jiang Zeming watched the first performance of American symphony orchestra (with picture)," *People's Daily* [Beijing], Jan.28, 1999, 1.

<sup>40</sup> "Chinese Embassy in Washington opened the ceremony of painting donation," *People's Daily* [Beijing], Jan.18, 1999, 1.

economics and China's "export oriented" economy began to take shape. Zheng stated that "through gearing itself up to integrate with the world economic system, China has, since the early 1990s, become one of the world's most favored destinations for FDI. Driven by these investments, China had fast become the world's foremost manufacturing base. Its exports had increased at an average rate of 16 percent in the past two decades. The country has become one of the most successful 'export oriented' economies in East Asia (Zheng, 2008, 9)." This condition made *China Daily* occupied a much faster de-ideological trend than *People's Daily*.

#### 4.2.2 Analysis of Headline Design

##### Political Topics

In the reports on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sino-U.S. relations, Chinese leaders' names were the most frequently appeared words in the headlines. The sentences had a fixed format as "The leader received (Chinese: 接见) American guests/visitors." For example, from January 6<sup>th</sup> to January 15<sup>th</sup>, they published four articles with similar headlines: "Li Lanqing received American guests,"<sup>41</sup> "Jiang Zeming received American guests," "Zhu Rongji received American guests,"<sup>42</sup> and "Li Lanqing received American representatives." These were all brief news with around one hundred words. The reason for *People's Daily* to repeatedly use the same headline format was rooted in Chinese tradition. C. Ford discussed in *the mind of empire: China's history and modern foreign relations* (2010) that "China's ancient history exerts a powerful force on its foreign policy. Despite its exposure to and experience of the modern world, China is still strongly influenced by a hierarchical view of political order and is only comfortable with foreign relationships that reinforce its self-perception of political and moral supremacy." One way to show China's

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<sup>41</sup> Li Lanqing is Chinese Vice Premier at that time.

<sup>42</sup> Zhu Rongji is Chinese Premier at that time.

supremacy was other countries' worship. In Chinese, it is called “万朝来拜 (Wan Chao Lai Bai),” which means other countries have the obligation to regularly send representatives to China with presents to show their respect and dedication. In another words, by exaggeratedly publishing Chinese leaders' meetings with American visitors, *People's Daily* implied its Chinese readers that America was worshiping China and thus ignited Chinese people's national pride and acclaim to the Party. The limited reports on the anniversary in *China Daily* further showed such intention of *People's Daily*. Facing foreign readers, *China Daily* could not make such enthusiastic reports and did not have the intention either.

On the contrary, *China Daily* did not publish any reports on Chinese leaders' meetings. It made coverage from different perspectives and provided substantive content, such as “China calls for efforts to better Sino-U.S. ties” and “Presidents pledge to enhance the Sino-U.S. relations.” Moreover it also provided some interesting news about the civic interactions between China and America, such as “New York's calligraphy contest.” This showed *China Daily* was much more pragmatic than *People's Daily*, which was cause by two reasons: first, It did not take the responsibility as *People's Daily* to inspire Chinese people's patriotism and nationalism by overstating the achievement the Communist Party made; second, in order to expand its influence in the world, *China Daily* began to employ foreign journalists from 1990s, who brought some Western principles of news reporting.

Besides the anniversary, the two newspapers also paid attention to America's domestic politics, especially President Clinton's scandal. But *People's Daily* only four brief reports, without any commentaries. The headlines were mainly neutral, such as “Clinton requested the withdrawal of the impeachment charges” and “The U.S. Congress began to examine the Clinton impeachment.” Meanwhile, *China Daily* published 13 detailed articles on it. The headlines included more information from various perspectives and represented more flexibility, which made the reports more attractive to readers, such as “Clinton will survive,”

“Clinton’s address aimed at the people,” “U.S. Senate launches impeachment hearing,” “Senate prepares for Clinton trial,” and “Senators want trial free from partisanship.”

### 4.2.3 Analysis of Writing Tactics

#### Political Topics

*People’s Daily* used the same format when reporting Chinese leaders’ meetings with American visitors. In the first half of the article, the Chinese leader gave some comments on the Sino-U.S. relations and the great achievement China had made; in the second half, the American visitor gave positive feedback to Chinese leader’ speech. And they highlighted Chinese government’s contribution in every article. For example, the article on President Jiang Zeming’s meeting with Franklin Zarbon, the CEO in American Securities and Exchange Association employed such format:

President Jiang Zeming said, China was influenced by the Asian Finance Crisis, but the economy kept developing because Chinese government insisted on reform and opening and took effective measures. Zarbon introduced the policy of American exchange market and highly praised the development of China’s exchange market in Shanghai and Shenzhen.<sup>43</sup>

Another report on Premier Zhu Rongji’s meeting with Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve Board Chairman, used the same format again:

Zhu Rongji introduced China’s economic development in last year to Greenspan. He said, Chinese government took active fiscal policy and appropriate monetary policy to keep Renminbi stable and to stimulate domestic demand. Greenspan expressed his admiration to China’s great economic development. He introduced America’s finance market policy and urged further cooperation between America and China.<sup>44</sup>

However, in *People’s Daily* the “happy” celebrating reports were frequently interrupted by harsh criticism on serious confrontation on political issues or human rights issues between these two countries.

The highly used words to condemn America included “nonsense,” “ridiculous,” “haphazard,” and “noise.”

<sup>43</sup> “Jiang Zeming received American guests,” *People’s Daily* [Beijing] Jan.13, 1999, 6.

<sup>44</sup> “Zhu Rongji received American guests,” *People’s Daily* [Beijing] Jan.13, 1999, 6.

For example, on January 9, the editors spurted out harsh words in the article “It is nonsense to say China threatening the U.S. security” as a severe reaction to a report made by some American congressman and journalists, saying China was threatening the U.S. by buying the satellite technology:

These irresponsible and strange rhetoric risks the relationship between China and America. There is no ground for the conclusion in the security report. People who are trying to make big noise in America congress and media are either ignorant or ulterior.<sup>45</sup>

Besides such worry that China was a threat to America, another dark shadow in the Sino-U.S. relations was America’s criticism on China democracy or other internal affairs. Take other two articles as an example, in which *People’s Daily* also used pointy words to express the anger of Chinese government for America’s interference into China’s internal affairs. The articles condemned American Consul General in Hong Kong for his comment about the weakening freedom and democratic atmosphere in Hong Kong. The articles did not quote his words but only claimed those comments were “haphazard, thoughtless, and without rhyme or reason.”<sup>46</sup>

Instead of focusing on the anniversary and conflict between China and America, China Daily emphasized Bill Clinton’s scandal. The basic tone of the reports was showing support and sympathy to Clinton by providing a positive image of Clinton throughout the whole process. For example, on January 14, it cited a senator’s address to imply the trial was an exaggeration:

The hallmark of a weak case is hyperbole and overblown rhetoric. It reads like a cheap mystery.<sup>47</sup>

In the next day’s report, it cited Clinton’s address that he trusted the right thing would be done,<sup>48</sup> which implied he was innocent. Another report published a quotation of the declaration of White House

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<sup>45</sup> “It’s nonsense to say China threat to U.S. security,” *People’s Daily* [Beijing], 6, Jan.9, 1999.

<sup>46</sup> “Chinese government criticizes the Consul General of the U.S. for interfering in China's internal affairs,” *People’s Daily* [Beijing] Jan.29, 1999, 2. & “Hong Kong media criticizes the Consul General of the U.S. for interfering in China's internal affairs,” *People’s Daily* [Beijing] Jan.29, 1999, 2.

<sup>47</sup> “Senate prepares for Clinton trial,” *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 14, 1999, 12.

<sup>48</sup> “Opening arguments in Clinton trial to start,” *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 15, 1999, 12.

that the president “promised a strong, vigorous defense, based on the facts, the law, and the Constitution.”<sup>49</sup>

It did not forget to report Clinton’s new plan of making an overhaul of the Social Security system.<sup>50</sup> On January 21, *China Daily* published a photograph, in which Clinton was shaking hands with White House speaker and both of them were in a sincere and serious mood. The description text cited Clinton’s words that he urged Americans to “aim higher”:

Americans should aim higher, despite being a strong nation, and proposed dealing with a looming crisis facing the social security system, beefing up defense spending and increasing a federal tax on cigarettes.<sup>51</sup>

This photo along with its description text was a successful framing to present a positive image of Clinton. Those reports sent messages that Clinton still received support and respect from colleagues, and earnestly served his duty. In its last report on this case in January, *China Daily* gave a prediction from Clinton’s allies that “Clinton’s impeachment trial all-but dead” and the president would “survive.”

From this series of reports, *China Daily* could be seen as a strong ally with Clinton too. It portrayed a responsible and modest President Clinton by employing citations and pictures. In my opinion, *China Daily* gave such supportive reports out of Clinton’s relatively friendly international policy, especially the positive Sino-U.S. relation promoted by Clinton administration. From this we can see, *China Daily* made its reports and opinions not from morality, or justice, or even ideology, but from economic needs. When Clinton was widely criticized by his sexual and cheating scandal, *China Daily* published a series of supporting articles just because of his positive policy of China and America relationship.<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile, *People’s Daily* made brief reports on the impeachment charges of President Clinton, without any commentaries or judgment. This scandal could have been an opportunity for *People’s Daily* to make severe critique against capitalism or American political system; however, it only gave a brief and neutral report on the process of the event in four articles, from Clinton’s request for withdrawal<sup>53</sup> to the

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<sup>49</sup> “HoU.S.e team says Clinton guilty of ‘high crimes’,” *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 18, 1999, 12.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> “Clinton shakes hands with HoU.S.e Speaker,” *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 21, 1999, 12.

<sup>52</sup> “Clinton will survive, allies say,” *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 29, 1999, 12.

<sup>53</sup> “Clinton requested the withdrawal of the impeachment charges,” *People’s Daily* [Beijing] Jan.13, 1999, 6.

congress' denial.<sup>54</sup> Compared to the vivid report on George H. Bush in 1989, which employed commentaries, features, and interviews with American people, the reports on Bill Clinton were blank and flat. It was not merely because the different characteristics of these two events -- the former was inauguration and the latter was impeachment – but also because, in 1999, Chinese government was more eager to strengthen the cooperation between China and America, which made it reluctant to mention too much about the negative news about American domestic politics. Besides, the scariest thing to Chinese government was the impeachment of a president in America might cause Chinese people to think about the similar situation in their own country.

#### 4.2.4 Analysis of Visual Components Use

In January, 1999, *People's Daily* used two photographs in reports on politics and society; meanwhile, *China Daily* imported caricatures to satirize America's international and economic policies. *People's Daily* used two photographs: one was “Children who live in America,” and the other was “President Jiang Zeming watched the first performance of American symphony orchestra.” The former-photograph showed a Chinese family in America, including serious parents and their son. They stood behind a desk full of books. The boy was wearing a pair of thick glasses, and not smiling. He was 13 years-old and was living in America. This photo was used to prove the authenticity of the boy's article about the American educational system. The article contained two parts. In the first half, the boy compared the educational mode in America and China:

People all say America is children's heaven, where kids can play most of time. But, please think again, is it true? Only we Chinese children who are living in America know the truth.

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<sup>54</sup> “The U.S. senate voted down to terminate the impeachment process,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.29, 1999, 6.



Yes, America has a different educational mode from China. But this does not mean America's is better or China's is harder. They are just different, with their own advantages and disadvantages.<sup>55</sup>

Then the young author used a long paragraph to make comparison of the education between America and China. This part countered a popular idea in China in the second half of the 1990s, that the American educational system was better than China's, and that Chinese children had a hard childhood. In the second half of this article, the tone of the article changed as the boy emphasized his parents' views that shaped his own issues of identity, racial discrimination, nationality, and patriotism:

In America, my parents always tell me: "You are an Asian. You have a yellow face. American people will never treat you as a member of their team. You are forever a descendant of the dragon (metaphor for the Chinese nation). Only when you work hard and make some achievement, the society will accept you. You must win glory for Chinese people. Never lose face." So, we are not playing in America. We don't have an easier life than children in China do. And this, only we Chinese children who live in America know about it.<sup>56</sup>

Readers of *People's Daily*, mainly in China's officialdom, could draw from the family's story that American society still discriminated against Chinese. The mention of the color of the face strengthened any insult. The article seemed innocent – focusing on educational mode and written by a boy; however, the implication it contained was beyond the education. The story exemplifies how, when the development of a market economy required Chinese official media not to mention ideology, they turned to patriotism and nationalism.

Meanwhile, *China Daily* made a big change, adopting a Western technique of illustration through the use of caricatures and cartoons that implied meanings that could impress readers more than written news. They published several caricatures to satirize America. Most such drawings focused on American international policies and economic activities (See figure3-5). For example, in a cartoon about America's conflict

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<sup>55</sup> "Children who live in America," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.20, 1999, 6.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

with Iraq (See figure3),<sup>57</sup> a group of officials held the flag of UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission) and walked to Iraq to do weapon inspections. In the middle of the group, a fat businessperson was holding his business package. Evidently, this caricature satirized America's motivation to invade Iraq—for money not for weapons. This implied meaning conveyed by this cartoon could impress reader's more than written news.

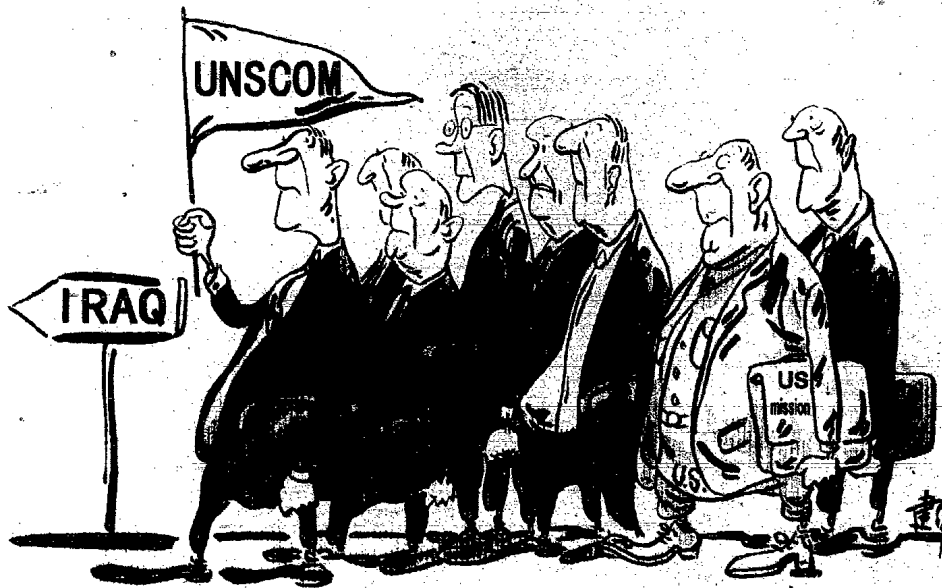


Figure3 "Caricature1," *China Daily*, Jan.12, 1999, 4.

The caricatures were also used to imply trade conflicts. For instance, in an untitled cartoon (See figure4),<sup>58</sup> the Statue of Liberty, standing for American dollar, and a tall man in Tuxedo, standing for the Euro, were holding aloft the earth, which represented the international finance. A small and worried little man, representing the Chinese currency, the *Renminbi*, fails to touch the globe even though he has stood on tiptoe and raised his arms. This cartoon implied the imbalance between the *Renminbi* and the other two currencies.

<sup>57</sup> "Cartoon," *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 12, 1999, 4.

<sup>58</sup> "International finance," *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 13, 1999, 4.



Figure4 “Caricature2,” *China Daily*, Jan.13, 1999, 4.

Some caricatures even implied the political and military conflict between America and China. For instance, in figure5,<sup>59</sup> a little boy, standing for China, was lightening candles on his birthday cake with his mother in their home. A strong man, standing for America, with upper body probing into the house from the window, yelled to the boy: “Put the fire out for our common safety!” But when the man pointed his finger to the boy, audience could see he was holding a big firebrand in another hand hiding behind his back. This cartoon referred to America’s interference in China’s internal affairs without noticing its own bigger problems.

<sup>59</sup> “Put the fire out for our common safety,” *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 27, 1999, 4.



Figure5 “Caricature3,” *China Daily*, Jan.28, 1999, 4.

These caricatures conveyed opposite messages from the written reports, and such split could bring confusion to readers. For example, on January 22, *China Daily* published the article, “The Sino- U.S. partnership helps favour common interests,”<sup>60</sup> which showed ample evidences in various fields to persuade audience that the cooperation was benefiting both countries. It cited a statement of an American scholar, Robert Ross, who addressed that “China poses no threat to the United States because it needs a peaceful environment to improve its economy and people’s lives.”<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, the cartoons showed the unfriendly attitude America held towards China, which was totally opposite to China’s enthusiasm and warm hope, like the “international finance” cartoon we discussed above, which implied that America and Europe controlled the global finance while China was kept out of the financial game. Since the visual components could always be more impressive than written words, *China Daily* was using such tactics to express its dissatisfaction about America and tried to effectively influence readers.

<sup>60</sup> “China, U.S. partnership helps favour common interests,” *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan. 22, 1999, 4.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

### 4.3 Comparison of the Reports in January, 2009

In January, 2009, *People's Daily* published overwhelming reports on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sino-U.S. relations. They used various reporting formats, including interviews, commentaries, meeting reports, and picture news. The titles frequently quoted interviewees' words to attract readers. Meanwhile, *China Daily* focused on economic news, most of which meet the American journalism "ABC" criteria: accurate, brief, and clear.

#### 4.3.1 Analysis of Topic Selection

The two newspapers represented large discrepancy in topic selection. More than 80 percent of reports on America in *People's Daily* focused on political topic. Meanwhile, in *China Daily*, three topics shared the emphasis of the reports: the coverage of political events kept declining from 60.3 percent in 1989, to 50.7 percent in 1999, and finally to 34.7 percent in 2009, and the coverage of economics and sports respectively increased to 34.4 percent and 20.4 percent.

Table3 Comparison of Topic Selection in *People's Daily* and *China Daily*, 2009

Topics	People's Daily (52 in total)	China Daily (93 in total)
Politics	80.8%	34.7%
Economics	7.7%	34.4%
Society	9.6%	8.6%
Sports	5.8%	20.4%
Crime	0	0
Environment	0	0
Entertainment	1.9%	3.8%
Technology	2.8%	1.9%

The emphasis of political reports in *People's Daily* was the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sino-U.S. relations. It aimed to inspire Chinese readers' nationalism by highlighting China's achievement in the interaction with America. In other words, America served as foil to the success of Chinese government in the anniversary reports even though it always appeared in the headlines and seemed like the leading role. In the whole month, *People's Daily* published 25 articles on the anniversary, employing various reporting formats, such as interviews, features, and commentaries. The reports presented a great enthusiasm and reinforced an optimistic outlook. Nine commentaries were published to highly praise the two countries' cooperation. Besides, it also offered nine long review articles focusing on creating a new win-win game for both China and United States.<sup>62</sup> Interviews with both American and Chinese important persons were also frequently used. A total Seven interviews were published, including political celebrities, such as Kissinger (former American foreign minister),<sup>63</sup> Jimmy Carter (former American president),<sup>64</sup> well-known scholars, such as Oulun Si (president of National Committee on the Sino-U.S. Relations),<sup>65</sup> Shambaugh (director of China Policy Program),<sup>66</sup> and Lijuan Bai (vice president of National Committee on the Sino-U.S. Relations).<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile, *China Daily* published ten reports on the anniversary. However, the reports were much more brief than *People's Daily*. It mainly covered Chinese leaders' meetings with American visitors and published pragmatic commentaries. It neither used the reports as a stage to praise Chinese government's achievement in the last thirty years, nor made exaggerated evaluation of the Sino-U.S. relations.

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<sup>62</sup>“Creating a new win-win space,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.16, 2009, 3.

<sup>63</sup>“The establishment of diplomatic relations between China and America has historic significance,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.10, 2009, 3.

<sup>64</sup>“Hu Jintao had a meeting with Cater, the previous American president,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.13, 2009, 1.

<sup>65</sup>“Busy working for the development of the Sino-U.S. relations,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.3, 2009, 3.

<sup>66</sup>“the Sino-U.S. relations are stable and mature: Interview with David Shambaugh, director of China Policy Program, George Washington University,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.4, 2009, 3.

<sup>67</sup>“Witnessed the great development of China-U.S. relations,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.3, 2009, 3.

Both newspapers reported President Barack Obama's inauguration. But *China Daily* paid more attention to Obama and *People's Daily* reported more on the former President Georgia W. Bush. *China Daily* made detailed reports on Obama's activities, including the inauguration speech, his first day in White House, and a series of his new policies. Meanwhile, *People's Daily* did not publish so detailed reports on Obama, instead, it published several articles to evaluate the former President Georgia W. Bush. This was because Bush occupied a friendly China policy in his second term and even went to Beijing to attend the opening ceremony of Olympic Games, which was considered as a proof of Chinese government's success in international relations.

Since the reports focused on the anniversary, economic articles were very limited in *People's Daily*. Most of them were negative news on the trade frictions and reprehensive economic commentaries. *China Daily* focused on the analysis of exporting and importing data. It made defense for China but never published criticism on America.

Moreover, for the first time, *People's Daily* published a series of picture news on how Chinese people celebrated China's New Year in America, implying that Chinese culture had a strong influence in America. And *China Daily* published a large number of photographs on Obama.

### **4.3.2 Analysis of Headline Design**

#### Political Topics

The headlines of political reports in *People's Daily* tended to be long and frequently used adjectives. While *China Daily* published shorter and objective headlines. In the coverage of the anniversary, the mostly used adjectives included "happy," "positive," "celebrate," "benefit," "win-win game," and "great." Seven headlines included people's names and citations of their attitudes towards the Sino-U.S. relations, from

officials, scholars, to politicians in both countries, such as “I feel positive to the future of the Sino-U.S. relationship”: Interview with Fu Limin, president of National Committee on the Sino-U.S. Relations,” “Happily looking back to the thirty years: Interview with American former President Carter,” and “U.S.-China relations are quite stable and mature: Interview with David Shambaugh, director of China Policy Program, George Washington University.” By detailed mentioning people’s names, their positions, and citing their words, these headlines were more convincing and impressive. In 1989 and 1999, *People’s Daily* did not use such tactics to design headlines. This represented the gradually opening and commercializing of this official newspaper. Such changes happened because from late 1990s, media commercialization speeded up in China. Yuezhi Zhao stated in *Media, market, and democracy in China: between the party line and the bottom* (1998) that “Many newly established newspapers and broadcast channels are almost exclusively devoted to business and entertainment. Although political news has become more tightly controlled, it has also become less prominent and less pervasive. Newly established business publications have gained a steady readership, thus effectively challenging Party organs like *People’s Daily* (Zhao, 1998, 68).” In order to fight for market, *People’s Daily* had to design more flexible and attractive headlines.

The headlines of the reports on the Sino-U.S. relations in *China Daily* were not as emotional as those in *People’s Daily*, but they were also conveying positive messages and more focused on expectations and claims for further cooperation, such as “China hopes to keep healthy, stable relations with U.S.,” and “Kissinger foresees brighter future for U.S.-China ties.”

In reporting on America’ domestic politics, *People’s Daily* only published two news reports with objective headlines on Obama, including “Barack Obama determined the Democratic National Committee chairmanship,” and “Hu Jintao had phone call with Obama.” But it published four commentaries on Bush with supportive headlines, such as “Bush made farewell speech: The future will prove my work.” Meanwhile,



*China Daily* published a series of detailed reports on Obama, using direct and short headlines, which always used dynamic verbs to present Obama's activities, such as "Obama hails 'extraordinary' moment with presidents," "Obama moves to reshape U.S. policy by closing Gitmo," "Obama tasks Clinton to step up diplomacy," and "Obama sprints through first full day in office." These headlines gave readers vivid pictures of Obama's work.

In one word, *People's Daily* tended to use emotional adjectives in the headlines of political reports; while *China Daily* tended to use dynamic verbs. The headlines in *China Daily* were mostly shorter and more objective than those in *People's Daily*.

### **4.3.3 Analysis of Writing Tactics**

#### Political Topics

The two newspapers used totally different writing tactics when they reported the anniversary of Sino-U.S. relations and American domestic politics. *People's Daily* used abundant articles and various reporting formats to report the anniversary while *China Daily* only made limited reports on Chinese leaders' meetings with American important visitors. *People's Daily* published more articles on Bush and gave high praise, while *China Daily* published detailed reports on Obama.

First, *People's Daily* widely published features and commentaries to report the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The feature reports offered in-depth interviews and retrospect of the history of the establishment of Sino-U.S. relations. The commentaries gave high praise the relations from different perspectives. Among all these reporting formats, interviews were most vivid and attractive, and the interviews with different persons had different emphases according to their positions. For example, in the interview with Kissinger, the former American foreign minister, who greatly contributed to the establishment of Sino-U.S. relations, it

focused on talking about the future of the relationship. In the interview, Kissinger mentioned the word “new” four times:

I think it is important to promote the Sino-U.S. relation to a new level. We are facing a common task of building a new international financial and political system. We need to establish a new concept for Chinese and American relations. In a short term, we need to quickly recover from the financial crisis; in a long term, China, and America need to make new policies for environment, resources, safety, and world peace.<sup>68</sup>

Such prospect stated by Kissinger was more powerful than by other people, because Kissinger played a vital role in building the mode of the Sino-U.S. relations in 1970s and had authority to talk about its development in the future. These words were spoken by Kissinger, but exactly expressed Chinese government’s interest: to play a more active role in the mutual relations and to occupy more rights in the fields, including “environment, resources, safety and world peace.”

In the interview with Jimmy Carter, *People’s Daily* focused on the importance of Taiwan issue in Chinese-American relationship. It was weighty to highlight this topic in the interview with Jimmy Carter because he is the former American president. Different from the reports in 1989 and 1999, in which Taiwan issue was considered an obstacle in the relations, became a proof for the good relations in reports in 2009:

Carter emphasized that there is only one China in the world, and Taiwan is part of China. The fact that the relationship between mainland China and Taiwan improved is consistent with America’s interest.<sup>69</sup>

By using the word “emphasize,” *People’s Daily* sent a confident message to Chinese readers that the previous obstacle on the way of Chinese and American cooperation was no longer a potential bomb and thus, the Sino-U.S. relations would have a bright future.

The interviews also included abundant interesting stories of the establishment of Sino-U.S. relations, which always showed the friendship between leaders and common people in the two countries, especially

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<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*

children. For instance, Jimmy Carter recalled the moment Deng Xiaoping visited America in 1979 and kissed American children:

I still clearly remember the feeling American people had at that time. The feelings were spontaneous. The moment impressed me most was Deng sang with American children in Kennedy Center. The children sang in Chinese. Deng kissed my nine years old daughter and another girl. Many people were moved to tears with the rhyme of the song.<sup>70</sup>

Li Zhaoxing, the former Chinese foreign minister also mentioned children in his retrospect. It was a casual chatting with Rader, the former U.S Ambassador to China, and his children about learning Chinese:

Two weeks ago I happened to meet two sons of Mr. Rader's. Their pronunciation of mandarin is better than mine. I praised them, but they said their sister's Chinese was far better than theirs was. One son even said he would take care of his parent when they were getting old. Mrs. Rader was so happy to hear this. She said: "Kids not only learn Chinese language in China, but also learn the Chinese tradition of taking care of parents. That's most valuable!" At that moment, Mrs. Rader was the happiest mother in the world to me.<sup>71</sup>

In the interview with Bai Lijuan, the vice president of National Committee on the Sino-U.S. Relations, she recalled the early time of establishment of Chinese and American relations, which she called as "an exciting period to everyone,"<sup>72</sup> and talked about how this historical event changed common people's lives:

Many Chinese delegations went to visit America, like Pin Pang Team, Shenyang Acrobatic Troupe. That was the first time in history. American people were also curious about China. Every time I called and said we were organizing delegation to visit China, the phone receiver, no matter governor, mayor, teacher, or volleyball player, would immediately lay down the work of their hands and join the delegation. In the last thirty years, many things have changed in the Sino-U.S. relations, but one thing never changes. That is people in both countries. Chinese people and American people can get along very well because they have similar characters and humor. They are both easy going. Based on the people, I feel confident about the future.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*

Therefore, the characteristic of interviews was not only providing authoritative persons' praise of the relations, but also providing personal emotional stories about how American people showed interest and good intentions to China. Apparently, such reporting formats were much more interesting than the brief news on Chinese leaders' meetings.

On the other hand, the commentaries used an incontrovertible tone to send readers a message that China had become a great power in the world. They provided a series of opinions about the mutual benefit by creating a win-win game based on rational thoughts and data analysis. They mainly discussed the world peace,<sup>74</sup> the trading profits,<sup>75</sup> and creating a new global political system.<sup>76</sup> In these articles, China was not only put upon the equal status with the United States in all global issues, like War on Terror, recovery from the financial crisis, and "reshaping the world pattern"□

The Sino-U.S. relations will have a dramatic change in the next thirty years, as what dramatically happened in the last thirty years. It will become a creative force in reshaping the world format.<sup>77</sup>

Besides, *People's Daily* gave a new definition of Chinese and American relations, called "Global Partnerships," which meant "in today's world, the two countries have a close mutual interest in broad global fields that they never had before." However, their true emphasis was the rise of China. Because of China's great development, the global format has been changed and the relation between China and America would be changed too:

According to the fast development of China, the relations between China and the world have had a historic change. China is having more influence on global affairs and having stronger ability to take part in global affairs. According to China's growing power and growing responsibility, the Sino-U.S. relations are presenting increasing influence in the world.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> "the Sino-U.S. collaboration will promote the peace of the world," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.13, 2009, 3.

<sup>75</sup> "the Sino-U.S. mutual interests are increasing," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.14, 2009, 3.

<sup>76</sup> "Seeking for cooperation in the context of globalization," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.14, 2009, 3.

<sup>77</sup> "Seeking for cooperation in the context of globalization," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.14, 2009, 3.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

The aim of these interviews and commentaries was more than showing a good relationship between China and America. They were stressing on the rise of China. For example, in all the interviews, the emphasis was how American people showed respect and interest to China. They mentioned very limited Chinese people's attitudes towards America. The stories talked about how American children sang Chinese songs, learned Chinese traditions, and American common people showed great interest to China, and thus brought Chinese readers great national pride and satisfaction about the achievement of Chinese government.

Meanwhile, *China Daily* published much less reports on the anniversary than *People's Daily*. They only reported important Chinese leaders' meetings with American important visitors and their speeches. For example, on January 12, it covered President Hu Jintao's meeting with former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. It quoted Hu's praise to Carter to show how friendly China and the U.S. had always been:

As old friends of the Chinese people, you played an important role in establishing China-U.S. diplomatic ties and witnessed that historic decision. Thanks to the "ping-pong diplomacy" that melted the ice between the nations, then U.S. President Richard Nixon paid a groundbreaking visit to China in 1972.<sup>79</sup>

Second, in regard to American domestic politics, *People's Daily* published the same number of reports on Bush and Obama. It made relatively positive reviews on Bush and neutral reports on Obama. Some negative opinions American people held toward Bush were mentioned, but *People's Daily* found excuses to explain for him: "it was the transferring moment and happened to meet financial crisis, so people tended to judge him."<sup>80</sup> It remarked Bush as "not without bright spots in his policies,"<sup>81</sup> especially praising his opposition to trade protectionism and his work to enhance the Sino-U.S. relations:

Bush Administration signed free trade agreement with many countries. Another great achievement was in his second term, Bush significantly improved the Sino-U.S. relations,

<sup>79</sup> "Hu, Carter mark 30 years of Sino-U.S. ties," *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan.22, 2009, 1.

<sup>80</sup> "U.S.h: History cannot be judged in short term," *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.20, 2009, 3.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

which benefited the peace of the world, and helped to joint response to the global challenges.<sup>82</sup>

In the reports on Obama, *People's Daily* focused on his “pragmatic diplomacy,”<sup>83</sup> which also closely related to China. In “Obama was sworn in as U.S. president,” The editor specially omitted some words in Obama’s inaugural speech, such as “defeat communism countries” and “fight against corruption”, which might disturb the nerve of Chinese readers. Instead, it emphasized on “responsibility” and “solidification,”<sup>84</sup> which brought positive feelings to Chinese people.

Meanwhile, *China Daily* published 15 articles on Obama, and each article companied with a photograph. The articles and photographs were all provided by its new agency in Washington. The reports were all not more than 200 words but provided a comprehensive observation of Obama’s inauguration and policies. For example, the coverage of Obama’s policy on Gitmo was brief but clear:

President Barack Obama moved quickly Thursday to reshape US national-security policy, ordering the Guantanamo Bay prison camp closed within a year, forbidding the harshest treatment of terror suspects and naming new envoys to the Middle East and Afghanistan-Pakistan.

US President Barack Obama signs a series of executive orders, including one closing of the prison at Guantanamo Bay, January 22, 2009, in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington.<sup>85</sup>

The reports on Obama’s inauguration represented the same writing style, using fewer words to contain more information:

After the flub heard around the world, US President Barack Obama has taken the oath of office. Again. Chief Justice John Roberts delivered the oath to Obama on Wednesday night at the White House, a rare do-over. The surprise moment came in response to Tuesday's much-noticed stumble, when Roberts got the words of the oath a little off, which prompted Obama to do so, too.

In this January 20, 2009 file photo, Barack Obama joined by his wife Michelle and daughters Malia and Sasha, takes the oath of office from Chief Justice John Roberts to become the 44th president of the United States at the US Capitol in Washington. Roberts

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<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup>“Obama plans pragmatic diplomacy,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.20, 2009, 3.

<sup>84</sup>“Obama was sworn in as U.S. president,” *People's Daily* [Beijing] Jan.21, 2009, 3.

<sup>85</sup> “Obama moves to reshape U.S. policy by closing Gitmo,” *China Daily* [Beijing] Jan.23, 2009.

re-administered the oath to Obama Wednesday, January 21, 2009 at the White House because the words spoken by Obama at the Capitol were out of sequence.

Basically, in reporting America's domestic politics, *People's Daily* used more features and commentaries, while *China Daily* mostly published brief news but provided abundant information. And the articles in *People's Daily* were longer than *China Daily*.

#### 4.3.4 Analysis of Visual Components Use

Visual components use became more popular in both newspapers; but they were used in different fields. In *People's Daily*, pictures were used to present how Chinese people celebrated China's New Year in America (See pictures 6-8). While in *China Daily*, pictures are mainly used in the reports on Obama inauguration.

*People's Daily* published pictures to imply how influential Chinese culture was by showing Chinese New Year in America and thus to inspire Chinese readers' nationalism. The same tactics were also used in the reports on the anniversary of Sino-U.S. relations. For example, figure6 was a close-up shot of two American ladies' big smiling faces. They bent down to the Chinese stores along the street and made an exaggerating pose of having a taste of Chinese food. This was catering for a common psychological need of Chinese people that they tended to feel proud and satisfied when foreign people showed interest in Chinese elements, including food, language, and other various cultural forms. Figure7 used a low angle to present a Chinese calligrapher wearing traditional Chinese suit. Low angle showed the subject from below, giving them the impression of being more powerful or dominant. So, in this picture, the calligrapher looked like a momentum. He was writing an ancient Chinese term: "People in the whole world are in one family (四海同家)." This term represented Chinese people's concept of great China and also called people's nationalism. Figure8 shot in wide angle. So, the dragon's head, which was in the middle of the photograph and hung high

above people, seemed extremely huge. While the persons under it looked so small. This contrast could imply the viewers to recognize China's power which the dragon represented.



Figure6 “Mexican ladies are enjoying Chinese dim sum in New York,” *People’s Daily*, Jan.14, 2009, 3.



Figure7 “The whole world is celebrating Chinese New Year,” *People’s Daily*, Jan.18, 2009, 3.





Figure8 “Chinese New Year in Las Vegas,” *People’s Daily*, Jan. 28, 2009, 3.

In *China Daily*, most pictures were used in the reports on American new president Obama (See figure9-11). Among the 15 pictures of Obama, 13 of them showed a smiling and amiable portrayal of him. Moreover, all other American politicians who were taken in the pictures, such as Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, and Jimmy Carter showed big smiles, presenting a harmonious mood. These pictures represented the editorial policy of *China Daily* was friendly to Obama.



Figure9 “Obama takes presidential oath again after stumble,” *China Daily*, Jan. 22, 2009, 3.



Figure10 “Obama sprints through first full day in office,” *China Daily*, Jan. 22, 2009, 3.



Figure11 “Obama hails 'extraordinary' moment with presidents,” *China Daily*, Jan. 8, 2009, 3.

Therefore, in January 2009, both *People's Daily* and *China Daily* were using pictures skillfully. But they had different focus. *People's Daily* published photographs on Chinese New Year in America while *China Daily* published photographs to better report Obama inauguration.

## 5 CONCLUSION

This study compared the coverage on America in two Chinese official newspapers, the Chinese language *People's Daily* and the English language *China Daily* in January, 1989, 1999, and 2009 to investigate how they portrayed America according to their different readerships in the three different periods of China's "Reform and Opening." Through the comparison in topic selection, headline design, writing tactics, and visual components use, this study concluded that *People's Daily* consistently employed a constant editorial preference for political content and a more emotional and provocative reporting tactics. Meanwhile *China Daily* used a more flexible and global editorial approach, increasingly consistent with the Western reporting criteria: accurate, brief, and clear. *People's Daily* tended to propagandize the political opinions and attitudes on behalf of Chinese government and represented more and more nationalism, while *China Daily* became more and more global and increasingly focused on providing diverse information, especially about economics and sports, to attract international readership.

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