

A Response to Mr. Nicholas Rostow

Alastair Iain Johnston
Harvard University
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Mr. Nicholas Rostow's list of 50 factual errors in our assessment of the Cox Report deserves a careful response. Any errors of fact or problems of interpretation in our assessment should, of course, be corrected and revised if justified. It would be the intellectually honest thing to do. Since my colleagues and I wrote separate essays, I will let them speak for themselves in response to Mr. Rostow. I have gone through his 50 points and have found 6 that pertain directly to my essay, plus a couple of additional points that are worth a comment. My responses are as follows:

Point 10. Mr. Rostow suggests that, in total, the range of Chinese statements on whether Taiwan is or isn't included in China's no-first use (NFU) pledge lead to ambiguity about China's operational plans vis a vis Taiwan. I agree. As I noted in my essay it unclear whether the official pledge to include Taiwan under the NFU has any effect on operational doctrine since we don't know what China's operational plans are. I thank Mr. Rostow for agreeing with me. But the Cox Report does not really acknowledge this ambiguity. The Cox Report makes the blanket statement that public Chinese policy "pointedly does not include Taiwan" within the NFU formulation. But this is factually wrong, because officially and publicly NFU does include Taiwan as the 1996 statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson indicated and as a more recent statement from the Ministry repeated.

Now, however, Mr. Rostow is admitting the situation is more ambiguous. But he hesitates. He suggests that because a low-level Ministry functionary, below the rank of Ambassador Sha Zukang, stated that NFU does include Taiwan somehow Sha's statement is still official policy. The implication is that we should believe Sha not the official spokesperson. This, however, is not how the Chinese foreign policy process works. For one thing, for a lower level official to correct a higher level official he or she would require authorization from the top level of Ministry leadership. A low level official wouldn't dare do this on his or her own. Thus a clarification by a lower-level official would have to have approval from someone higher in rank than Sha. But in fact in this case that clarification came from Shen Guofang, the official Ministry spokesperson. In 1996 Shen actually ranked higher than Sha (Shen was an deputy Department head and a close advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Qian Qichen; Sha was a division chief and divisions are lower ranked organizations than departments). Does this make the clarification credible? Not necessarily. I don't "believe", as Mr. Rostow states, that the clarification means that the PLA operational plans include Taiwan under NFU. Contrary to Mr. Rostow's statement, I never said I believed this. I made it quite clear that I just don't know what PLA operational plans might be. I doubt whether either Sha or the Foreign Ministry spokesperson knows PLA's operational plans, given the intense secrecy

and compartmentalization that characterize nuclear issues in China. And I am certain Mr. Rostow does not know what China's operational nuclear plans are. So my point stands -- the Cox Report's blanket statement that Taiwan is not officially included in NFU is incorrect.

As for whether the PRC's statements on and after July 15, 1999 about its possession of neutron bombs were aimed at Taiwan in the wake of Lee Teng-hui's comments about 'state to state relations' on July 9, 1999, the situation is much more ambiguous than Mr. Rostow implies. The critique of the Cox Report that the Chinese State Council Information Office (SCIO) released at a press conference a few days after Lee's comments was a detailed, though often hyperbolic and disingenuous, response to the Cox Report's accusations.¹ Based on some knowledge of how other SCIO policy documents have been drafted, and given its technical details, I believe this particular statement would have almost certainly required a long lead time in drafting. The SCIO would have to have put together a drafting team that probably included officials from different ministries and institutions related to China's nuclear and missile programs. This group would have probably consulted with other experts, and consensus on the information released would have been required. In other words, this particular SCIO statement reveals details about Chinese nuclear and missile programs that would require a lot of prior coordination with the nuclear weapons, PLA and missile communities. The State Council Information Office lacks the expertise and authority to do the drafting itself without consulting these other institutions.

Thus the SCIO report was almost certainly completed before Lee Teng-hui's comments about 'state-to-state relations' on July 9, 1999. According to a dispatch from Agence France Press, the announcement for the SCIO press conference at which the information about the neutron bomb was first issued came a day BEFORE Lee's comments.² By all indications, then, the PRC was prepared to announce its possession of a neutron bomb BEFORE it knew about Lee's 'state to state' formulation. The neutron bomb information was probably already deeply embedded in the Information Office rejoinder. So before Lee made his comments, the Information Office knew that it would be making an announcement that contained the information about the neutron bomb and other nuclear and missile capabilities. They had to expect some Western press attention to these sections. Indeed they probably wanted attention to these sections, particularly to the neutron bomb discussion, because the Cox report makes so much of the W-70/neutron bomb/enhanced radiation issue. The wording of the discussion of the neutron bomb in the rejoinder suggests that the Chinese wanted to make the point that it is NOT a huge technological leap forward. Rather the political point was that China could develop neutron bomb technology without US help. The import of the comment is that the neutron bomb was a modification of H-bomb technology, something the Chinese could do by themselves. It is unlikely the State Council Information Office could have slipped in an integrated discussion of the neutron bomb in the few days after Lee's comments. While the item about the neutron bomb could certainly have been played up or played down after Lee's comments (we don't know which was the case since we don't know

¹ "Facts Speak Louder Than Words and Lies Will Collapse by Themselves --Further Refutation of the Cox Report", Information Office of the State Council, (July 15, 1999)

² See Robert J. Saiget , "China says it mastered neutron bomb technology without need to spy" Agence France Press, July 15, 1999

what the Information Office was prepared to say about the neutron bomb initially), the drafting and timing of the White Paper suggests that *initially* the decision to release information about the neutron bomb was probably unrelated to Lee's comments. Rather it was more likely aimed at challenging the Cox Report's arguments that Chinese nuclear weapons designs relied heavily on US technology.

Point 14. Mr. Rostow erroneously attributes mentions of the W70, 79, and 66 to me. The only mention of these weapons in my essay is a quote from one of the Cox committee members, John Spratt. Spratt says that the Cox Report is wrong when it stated the US had never deployed a neutron weapon. If Mr. Rostow disagrees with Spratt's facts, then he should take the issue up with him. My use of Spratt's quote was simply to underscore the point that such an important and influential document as the Cox Report should not be replete with the kinds of errors that I, my colleagues, and a number of other experts have found.

Point 44. My name is not mentioned specifically in Mr. Rostow's point, but he addresses all of us collectively here, so I thought I should comment here as well. Basically Mr. Rostow's charge here is that our critique of the Cox Report is biased because "the authors" refer to the Tiananmen Massacre as the Tiananmen "event". This term, Mr. Rostow claims, is the preferred term of the PRC government. The only possible reading of Mr. Rostow's comment is that our entire assessment is somehow tainted by sympathies for a communist dictatorship in Beijing, and therefore is illegitimate. This is a serious charge. Let me respond systemically.

1. Only one author (Di Capua) refers to the Tiananmen at all. No one else does. So the all-inclusive nature of Mr. Rostow's statement is unfounded.

2. "Event" is not the "preferred" term used by the PRC. Mr. Rostow is simply wrong. The official term used originally to describe the democracy movement in 1989 was "turmoil" (*dongluan*) or "counterrevolutionary rebellion" (*fan geming baoluan*). The official terms used to describe the crackdown on and after June 4th roughly translate as "suppression" (*ping xi*), or the "putting an end to" (*zhi zhi*).³ Later in the 1990s the regime dropped the term 'turmoil' and 'counterrevolutionary rebellion' in public discourse. More recently, during his trip to the United States in the fall of 1997, Jiang Zemin used the term

³ See, for example, Deng Xiaoping's speech to PLA soldiers and leading cadres on June 9, 1989, "*Deng Xiaoping tongzhi jiejian jieyan budui yishang ganbu shi de jianghua*" and former Beijing mayor, Chen Xitong's report "Report on the situation of putting an end to the disturbances and the settling down of the counterrevolutionary rebellion" (*Guanyu zhizhi dongluan he pingxi fan geming baoluan de qingkuang baogao*) (June 30, 1989) in Theory Bureau of the Propaganda Department of the Beijing City Communist Party Committee, eds., *Questions and Answers Regarding Studying Deng Xiaoping's Important Talk on Thoroughly Suppressing Counterrevolutionary Violence* (*Xuexi Deng Xiaoping zhongyao jianhua chedi pingxi fan geming baoluan, wenti jieda*) (Beijing: Beijing Publishing House, 1989). These terms are also used in an internal circulation (*neibu*) day-by-day account of the the democracy movement and crackdown compiled by the State Education Commission; see State Education Commission Ideology and Political Work Department ed., *Profoundly-Affecting 56 Days: Record of Events from May 15-June 9 1989* (*Jingxin dongpo de 51 tian*) (Beijing: Tian Di Press, 1989)

“political disturbance” (*zhengzhi fengbo*) to refer to June 4th.⁴ On the rare occasions that officials in the regime do refer to June 4th they often use a term that is usually translated as ‘incident’. ‘Incident’ and ‘event’ are interchangeable translations of the Chinese term ‘*shijian*’. But ‘*shijian*’ is also the term that many intellectual critics of the regime and citizens of Beijing alike use, as well as many in Western media. When an ordinary Chinese person uses the term ‘Tiananmen incident’ (or more commonly the ‘June 4th event/incident -- *liu si shijian*) it rarely has any political meaning one way or the other. In reference to the killings of demonstrators by the PLA, one could just as easily state “The Tiananmen event/incident was an outrageous abuse of human rights” as one could say “The Tiananmen event/incident was a necessary action to restore order”.⁵ Since both opponents and proponents of the regime use the term ‘event/incident’ to preface opposite comments about the crackdown, the term itself has no particular political meaning.

3. If using the term ‘event’ or ‘incident’ to describe the crackdown is a sign of being biased and too soft on Chinese communism, then by Mr. Rostow’s Orwellian logic the following people are also biased since they all at some point used the term ‘event’ or ‘incident’ to refer to June 4th.

1. Senator John McCain⁶

3. Hon. Douglas Bereuter⁷

4. Shue Ke-sheng, deputy chairman of Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council⁸

⁴ See the transcripts of the Clinton-Jiang press conference on October 29, 1997 as reported by CNN, transcript # 97102901V54.

⁵ See Senator John McCain’s comments in footnote 6 below.

⁶ In reference to Clinton’s trip to China McCain stated in remarks to the Senate on July 8, 1998: “He further deserves gratitude for his denunciation of the **Tiananmen** Square massacre, an **event** of singular importance for post-Cold War relations between the two countries. The **events** of May and June 1989, occurring as they did while the central front of the Cold War was undergoing dramatic transformations that would reshape most of the world, were a sad reminder of the extremes to which governments that do not rule with the consent of the people will go to maintain their hold on power. By conveying the message directly to the Chinese people that the leader of what has historically been known as the ‘Free World’ condemns the **events** of 4 June 1989, President Clinton communicated to pro-democracy elements in China the vital message that the United States supports their efforts.” (emphasis mine).

⁷ In his presentation of a report on the Hong Kong transition to the House in April 1998 Bereuter stated, “During this quarter, we find again that the people of Hong Kong largely continue to express themselves without restraint. On June 4, for example, more than 16,000 protesters held the first commemoration of the **Tiananmen Incident** since reversion. While the crowd was lower in number than in 1997, the high turnout belied skeptics who had predicted interference” (emphasis mine). See “The Fourth Quarterly Report of the Speaker’s Task Force on the Hong Kong Transition” August 04, 1998.

⁸ “Taiwan on Friday mourned victims of the bloody crackdown on student-led demonstrations at Tiananmen Square 10 years ago and urged Beijing to allow greater democracy. Taiwan’s parliament observed a minute of silence before it opened Friday’s session. “We express our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the victims of the **Tiananmen event**,” said Sheu Ke-sheng, deputy chairman of the cabinet-level Mainland Affairs Council” (emphasis mine). See Agence France Presse June 04, 1999, “Taiwan mourns Tiananmen victims”. The press on Taiwan routinely uses the term ‘event’ or ‘incident’ to refer to Tiananmen. See the excerpts from an editorial in the English language Taiwan daily, The China Post. “Whether America’s democratic culture will have an impact on Jiang will be able to be seen from the way he addresses the matters regarding the 1989 Tiananmen Square **massacre**, Tibet and Taiwan in the months ahead. It is highly unlikely for Beijing to reassess the Tiananmen **event**, at least not in the foreseeable future” (emphasis mine). See “Taiwan: Local Press Comments on Jiang’s US Trip “ FBIS-CHI-97-311, 7

5. the Dalai Lama⁹

6. Wang Dan¹⁰

7. A Senate Resolution (103, May 18, 1999) proposed by left-wing Democrats and right-wing Republicans, such as Senators Wellstone and Kyl, and a concurrent House Resolution (H. Res 178) presented by Republican Representative Gilman¹¹

No one doubts that all these people agree that the use of force against the democracy movement demonstrators in June 1989 was deplorable. How does Mr. Rostow know what Dr. Di Capua's views of June 1989 are? Does he have any evidence that any of the authors of the Stanford report were not just as appalled by the crackdown as this list of people? No. He has none. Mr. Rostow's smear reflects an ideological narrowness that is regrettably creeping into debates over China policy in Washington and which threatens to limit the range of legitimate discussion. I agree with Mr. Rostow that it is important there be a lively serious debate in Congress about China policy. But if this kind of rhetorical bullying is at all indicative of how dissenting views towards Congressional orthodoxy are going to be treated, then it is hard to see much hope for a nuanced, sophisticated rational discussion of US-China relations. Indeed, we should be prepared for a narrowing of debate rather than an expansion of constructive dialogue.

Point 45. I agree with Mr. Rostow here: The Cox Report doesn't state that PRC leaders see the United States as their primary adversary. But I never said there was such a statement in the Cox Report. What I did suggest, given my assessment of Mr. Cox's ideological preferences, of others on the Cox Committee, and of those most supportive of its findings, was that this is a reasonable inference about the assumptions behind the Cox Report. I do accept Mr. Rostow's basic point, however, that I should have provided a citation to buttress such an inference.

Point 46. Mr. Rostow misinterprets my point -- namely, as most experts on the Chinese economy would agree, a wider proportion of commercial economic activity in China is governed by market forces than ever before, distorted to be sure by informational

Nov 1997, Taiwan Central News Agency WWW in English 07 Nov 97. Clearly the editorial uses both 'massacre' and 'event', suggesting that the use of 'event' is not a term used only by people supportive of or sympathetic to the PRC crackdown on the democracy movement. See also the report from the Taiwan Central News Agency on the arrest of a Chinese dissident in 1995: "...Chen Lantao is still imprisoned, because he was sentenced to 18 years after he was arrested for making a speech on the street during the Tiananmen **incident**." (emphasis mine) "Taiwan: Dissident Chen Sentenced to Seven Years in Prison" FBIS-CHI-98-296, 23 Oct 1998, Taiwan Central News Agency, 23 Oct 98.

⁹ In reference to Jiang Zemin, the Dalai Lama was quoted as saying, "Judging during the **Tiananmen event**, when he was mayor of Shanghai...he handled the demonstrations quite gently, and in a positive way. And that is an indication," the Dalai Lama told Reuters Television at his Indian headquarters in Dharamsala." See Gregory Beitchman, "Dalai Lama pins hopes on 'gentle' Jiang over Tibet" (Reuters) World Tibet Network News (Saturday, February 23, 1997) (emphasis mine).

¹⁰ "Wang Dan said though that Chen's downfall was the result of a 'power struggle that has nothing to do with any revision of the **Tiananmen events**. I can see no sign of any such change by the government.'" Cited in "Reportage on Petition Sent to Jiang Zemin -- Rights Abuses Viewed" FBIS-CHI-95-095, 17 May 1995, Hong Kong AFP in English, 0836 GMT 17 May 95 (emphasis mine)

¹¹ The resolutions asked that the US Government call on the PRC to..."(A) reevaluate the official verdict on the June 4, 1989, **Tiananmen** prodemocracy activities and order relevant procuratorial organs to open formal investigations on the June fourth **event** with the goal of bringing those responsible to justice".

problems, arbitrary central and local government regulations, and corruption. In an exceptionally detailed study of price-setting in Shanghai industrial enterprises economist Doug Guthrie found, for example, that as of 1995 less than 10% of electronics firms, just under 30% of garments firms, and just over 30% of food and chemical firms were under state control when it came to price-setting.¹² As he concludes “Firms at the upper levels of China’s industrial hierarchy are operating under governance structures that increasingly resemble those of market economies.”¹³ The traditional managers of the state economy in economic and industrial bureaus have themselves acknowledged their declining authority over the economy. In a 1995 survey about 50-60% of those bureaus surveyed reported “that their authority had decreased over the previous year”.¹⁴ My point here was simply that the blanket statements in the Cox Report that that Communist Party “controls” all commercial activity are so vague as to be meaningless.

Point 48. Mr. Rostow states: “The Franklin essay (p. 34) inaccurately states that the Select Committee Report described PRC nuclear weapons doctrine as ‘mutual assured destruction (MAD).’ This is false. The report contains no such statement. Moreover, it would be an absurd statement to make, since the PRC’s current nuclear arsenal is incapable of it.”

Actually this “error” isn’t in the Franklin’s essay. The reference to MAD is in my essay. To be honest, I don’t know what Mr. Rostow’s problem is here. Nowhere do I state that the Select Committee believes China’s doctrine is a MAD doctrine. I state that the Select Committee uses the term ‘limited deterrence’ (*you xian he wei she*) to describe Chinese doctrine, but that the Committee gets the definition of limited deterrence wrong. Limited deterrence, to reiterate, does not refer to a doctrine based only on countervalue retaliation. In Chinese sources it tends to refer to a limited warfighting-like doctrine where counterforce targets are included. What the Select Committee describes as being Chinese doctrine is more akin to what Chinese and US strategists will sometimes refer to as minimum deterrence. Minimum deterrence CAN rest on mutually assured destruction, since it assumes that only a handful of warheads need reach an enemy’s cities and that this will inflict unacceptable damage. The enemy, knowing this, therefore should be deterred. Is Mr. Rostow suggesting that after a US first strike China won’t have the capacity to retaliate on even a small number of US cities (that is, is he confident in a US disarming first strike capacity)? Or is he suggesting that EVEN IF a few Chinese warheads survived a US first strike and managed to destroy a small number of US cities that this destruction, in his view, wouldn’t constitute unacceptable damage and assured destruction? Mutually assured destruction is an subjective construct -- whether both sides believe it is possible depends on political and moral judgements about how much damage is acceptable. It is not a function of capability alone.

¹² Doug Guthrie, Dragon in a Three-piece Suit: The Emergence of Capitalism in China (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) p.109

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.111.

¹⁴ See Shuhe Li and Peng Lian “Decentralization and Coordination: China’s Credible Commitment to Preserve the Market Under Authoritarianism” China Economic Review 10 (1999) p176.

Point 50. Mr. Rostow says that I along with Dr. Panovsky disagree with the Cox Report's assessment of security at the weapons labs. I have no idea how Mr. Rostow arrives at this assertion as there is no mention of lab security at all in my essay.

Finally, in his conclusion Mr. Rostow acknowledges that the Cox Report got kilometers and miles mixed up when describing the range of the JL-2. But this is not, as he implies, a minor editing error. The source for the range, the National Air Intelligence Center, makes it clear that whether one uses miles or kilometers the range of the JL-2 when fired from Chinese territorial waters will hit "*portions*" of the US, not targets "*throughout*" the US as the Cox Report states. In other words, even if the Cox Report hadn't mixed up miles and kilometers, and even if it had consistently reported the correct range, this wouldn't change the fact that it still mis-cited its NAIC source.

In sum, none of Mr Rostow's points addresses the thrust of my essay -- namely that through a combination of pressures of time, sloppy research, and worst-case inferences, the Cox Report presents a caricature of Chinese politics, economics and foreign policy. Specifically, none of Mr. Rostow's points addresses that fact that the Cox Report:

- over-simplifies the nature of Chinese politics and foreign policy decisionmaking,
- misunderstands the relationship between economic and military modernization through its misreading of the 16 character policy,
- misreads my essay on nuclear doctrine,
- mis-states China's official policy on whether Taiwan is included or not in its no-first use pledge,
- makes mistaken references to articles in the PRC constitution¹⁵;
- mis-cites references to scholarship on Chinese military industries,
- and attributes a major role in military policy making to an institution that didn't exist when the Cox Report was written, among other errors of fact and inference.

I do not believe these are trivial problems.

¹⁵ The Cox committee researchers must have been looking at the 1978 Constitution rather than the revised 1982 Constitution. Article 19 of the 1978 Constitution mentions the leadership of the CCP over the PLA. Article 29 of the 1982 Constitution does not.