

**INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION
2011 Conference**

*Communication Theory
Western Representation of China*

*How China is Perceived by the World
and
How such Perceptions can be Improved*

Andrew K P Leung, SBS, FRSA

A presentation at the Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts

Friday, 27 May, 2011

2007 European turned negative

TRADE FRICTIONS, GEOPOLICAL SUSPICIONS, NEW LEADERS

PEW 2007 - More negatives in Western Europe

- 2005-7 No. less favourable (9), more (1), same (5)
- **More favourable > US due to LDCs** - 27/46 decidedly favourable (Asia + Africa + Venezuela/Chile/Bolivia/Peru) towards China v 25/46 towards US
- While 33/46 regard **China's rise favourable** 32/46 **worried about military build-up** – e.g. S Korea (89%), Japan (80%), Russia (70%), India (59%)
- **Negatives** – Japan (67%), Italy (61%), Czech Rep (58%), Germany (54%), Turkey (53%), France (51%)

David Shambaugh, 26.11.2007

- **'Honeymoon over'** – Changed mood in Europe
- **Drop in perceptions** 15-20% in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK
- EU **trade** deficits, **jobs** outsourced, alleged **industrial espionage**, alleged attempted **hacking** of German Chancellor's computer
- Harsh criticisms from ex-Soviet **bloc e.g. Czech, Poland, Baltics** re **IPR**, alleged **protective trade barriers**
- European Commission **'China Strategy Paper'** targets trade (inc **IPR, RMB**), **investment, energy and environment, human rights, military transparency**, non-proliferation (**Iran, N Korea**), **Africa, Taiwan, Global Governance**
- **Brown** (v Blair), **Merkel** (v Schroder), **Sarkozy** (Chirac) = Bush Administration – **China hedging**



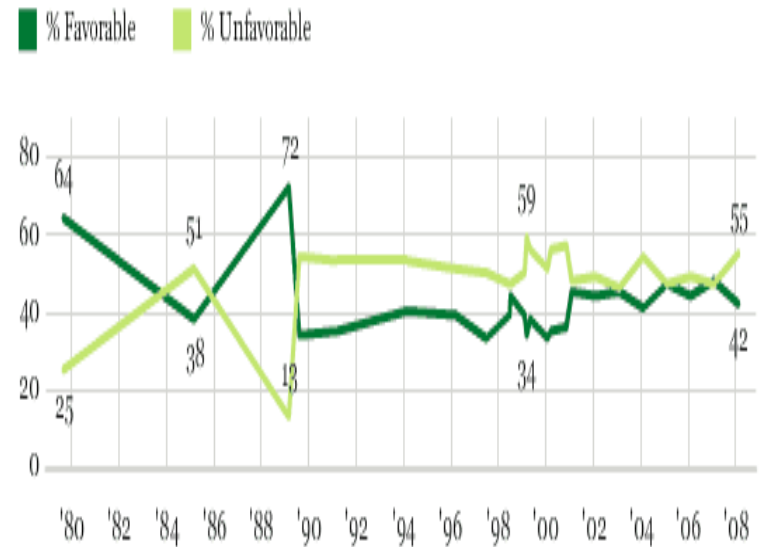
So did the US – Gallup Poll March 2008

Gallup, Linda Saad, March 2008 –

‘Just a year ago, Americans were evenly divided 48% ... had a favorable view and 47% ... unfavorable. But after a *year of unsettling news about the safety of imported Chinese food, toys, and other products*, 55% of Americans now feel unfavorably about China.’

‘Except for a couple of high points in modern U.S.-Chinese relations -- formal recognition of China by President Jimmy Carter in 1979 and visit to China by President George H.W. Bush ... before June 1989, today's *mostly negative attitudes are closer to the historical norm.*’

What is your overall opinion of China -- is it very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?



GALLUP POLL

Bias reporting?

Richard Spenser, Daily Telegraph 23.3.2006

- Tries to debunk '*biased reporting*' fixated on Chairman Mao, Cultural Revolution, and Tiananmen Square
- *No* general perception of Chinese being '*reserved*' and '*subservient*'
- Chinese *impression of bias fails to take into account*
 - Western democratic traditions
 - China's hostility to Western free press
 - Western sense of solidarity with the suppressed
 - China's official line often bland and unconvincing
 - Western misgivings/fear about China's Rise

Traditionally weak country brand

- Landor (Strategic brand consultancy) – **8 Key Dimensions** – *Reputable, Dominant* (Haier, but down-market), *Cutting Edge* (Lenovo), *One-of-a-Kind*, *Bon Vivant*, *Hospitable*, *Posh*, *Charismatic*

The Daily Telegraph



Sichuan Earthquake, Olympics and Financial Crisis

- ***Sichuan Earthquake (12.5.08)*** exemplary leadership and civil society response v Hurricane Katrina
- **PEW 2008 (just before the Olympics)**
- China's own ***Satisfaction index*** 48% (2002), 72% (2005), 86% (2008), highest since PEW Global Attitudes Project 2001
- Chinese considered ***economic situation favourable*** 82% (GDP x 40 since 1978) v Australia (69%), Germany (53%), Russia (52%), Brazil (41%), US (20%)
- ***Less happy*** over jobs, income, family, inflation, pollution, corruption
- ***Even after Tibetan riots***, 77% viewed China positively > 68% in 2005
- Late 2008. first to launch ***massive stimulus package v Financial Crisis***
- China showing signs of emerging from financial crisis, ***Goldman Sachs forecast (2027 overtaking US)*** began to resonate
- Martin Jacques, '***When China Rules the World***', Allen Lane, 2009
- Fig 41 '***Believed/Not in 'China economy will > US'***' - Peru (76/17), Israel (75/14), France (69/26), Iran (64/21), Russia (62/20), Argentina (61/15), S. Korea (61/37), China (50/38), Poland (43/26), Thailand (39/16), Philippines (38/42), India (22/36)
- Fig 42 '***If China's economy = US – Positive?'***' – Iran (60/12), Thailand (34/10), Philippines (26/17), Mexico (38/33), Ukraine (30/12); ***Negative*** – US (9/33), France (20/29), India (28/31), Russia (24/22)



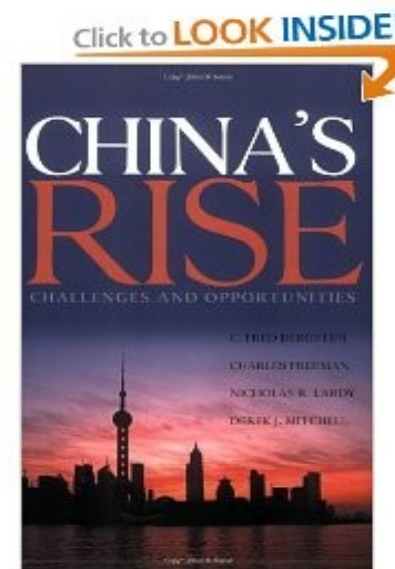
China becoming more confident or assertive?

Assertive China, Michael D Swaine, China Leadership Monitor, No. 32, 2010: Da Wei, Roger Irvine, World Security Institute, 2010

- ***Confident, Proud, Triumphant, Nationalistic, Merchantalist, Hubris, Insecure***
- ***Economic success*** overcoming financial crisis
- Premier Wen's ***Adam Smith lecture at Davos***, Jan 2009
- PBoC Governor Zhou Xiaochuan ***raised need for secure international currency***, March 2009
- ***President Obama's first state visit*** to China November 2009
- Beijing ***cautioned Washington on monetary policy*** – QEs
- Beijing strong reaction over meeting with the ***Dalai Lama***
- China alleged to slight US and Obama at ***Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change***, December 2009
- Beijing threatened to sanction Boeing over US ***arms sale to Taiwan*** under the Taiwan Relations Act
- ***Territorial sovereignty*** – concern over Taiwan, with Japan over Diaoyutai, India (Arunachal Pradesh)+ other Asian countries e.g. Paracels with Vietnam and Spratly Islands (Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei)
- Not singing from the same hymn book over ***Iran and North Korea***
- Refused to budge over ***RMB appreciation*** despite repeated entreaties and pressures
- ***'Beijing Consensus'*** gaining upper hand over Washington Consensus
- July 2010 Hilary Clinton's Hanoi ***renewal of US interests in Asia-Pacific, including territorial disputes***
- Backdrop of China's internal ***debate over TGYH*** (Tao Guang Yang Hui 韬光养晦) – 'US hegemony much weakened', 'Post-America Era', 'defending core interests with dignity', 'marching to the centre of world stage', 'China's 4 new roles – Largest developing country; Largest emerging market; World-class influence; 'Quasi Superpower'; avoid 'being made a scapegoat for West's failings', fear of 'Containing China'
- More attention by ***Chinese media and bloggers*** to foreign policy
- ***'China has grown up fast and the World not yet used to it?'***

Specific worries sharpened by perceived power shift

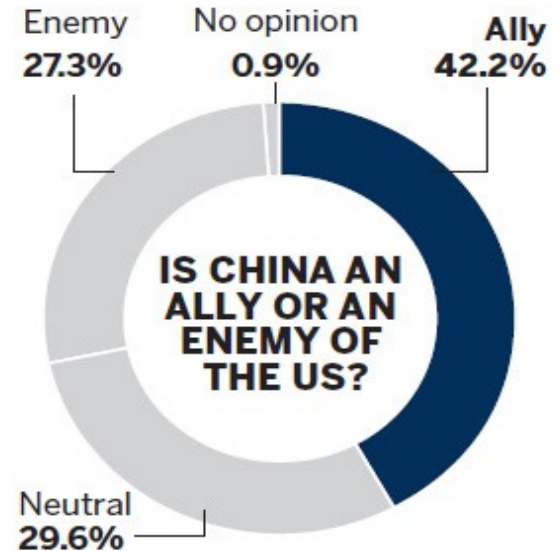
- **National Intelligence Council Report Project 2025** – November 2008
- **Financial Crisis and China's stellar performance**
- **Impressions of unfair mercantilism**
- **RMB valuation** gaining attention - *The Future of China's Exchange Rate Policy*, Morris Goldstein and Nicholas Lardy, Petersen Institute for International Economics, Washington D.C, July 2009
- **Indigenous Innovation** (response of shell-shocked China) 70% domestic content requirement - **Gamesa** (Spanish wind turbine giant) 33% of China market (2005) now 3%; Jeffrey Immelt, Chairman and CEO, GE, 'wondered if China really welcomed FDI'
- **IPR and product safety (toys, baby milk etc) issues persist**
- **AmCham Survey March, 2010** (203 firms) *Losing business* 28% (I/T 37%); *Negative* 43% (I/T 57%)
- **China bubble – 'Next Dubai?'**
- **Liu Xiaobo, Ai Weiwei, Jasmine Revolution**
- 'Strategic' added in *US/China Strategic & Economic Dialogue*, established April 2009, **May 2011** - more **positive, cooperative and comprehensive**, including 'security' – 'strategic mutual reassurance', trust, mutual respect on equal footing, narrowing/widening differences/cooperation



From 2010 US citizens more positive views

Survey on US Citizens' Impressions of China (first such) by Shanghai Jiao Tong University in collaboration with Duke University in North Carolina and Indiana University, June-November 2010

- 64.3 % acknowledged China's *economic achievement*
- **42.1 % not agreed (28.9% neutral) with "China manipulates currency"**
- **61 % agreed "China has been influential in world politics" and 77% expected China's influence to increase over the next 10 years.**
- Most attached great *importance to US-Sino relationship*
- 60 % agreed *US economy would suffer if trade relations were severed* with China.
- **71.8 % saw China as ally** or maintained neutral attitude toward it, while 27.3 % viewed China as an enemy of the United States.
- **But 62.7 % thought Obama Administration not "tough enough" on issues** concerning China
- **72.5 % disagreed "China has an appealing popular culture", while only 40.6 % agreed that China has a rich cultural heritage**
- People with *higher educational backgrounds have more knowledge about and understanding* of China



Source: Shanghai Jiao Tong University

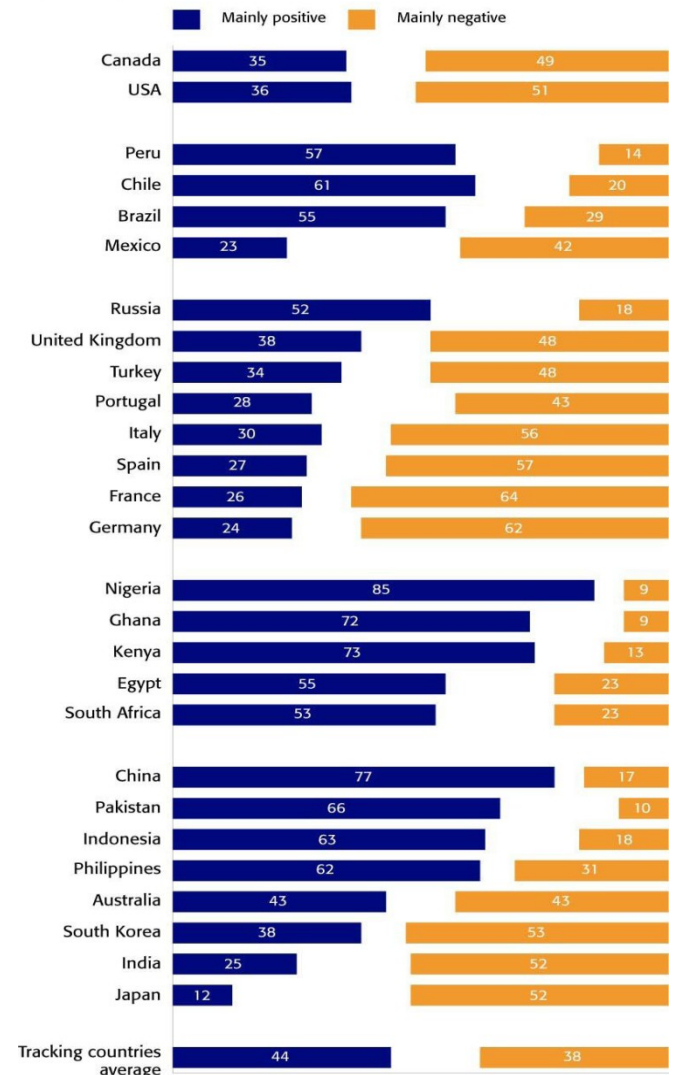
In a Gallup's phone poll in early February 2011, 52% of Americans thought mistakenly China is the leading economy, compared with 32% who chose the U.S. The last time Gallup asked the question, in 2009, China and the U.S. finished in a virtual tie.

BBC World Service Poll, 7 March 2011

- **Global views on China improved** over 2010 (increased to 44% positive v 40%) – May have been somewhat buoyed by good impressions of *super-efficient evacuation of citizens from Libya* (since February 2011) (After this Poll - decisive act to call immediate halt to nuclear energy program to review safety)
- **Evenly split** – 13 Positive v 13 Negative ; One divided
- **Most favourable** –
 - Africa -Nigeria (85% + 12%) ; Ghana (72% + 9%); Kenya (73%)
 - Latin America - Chile (61%); Peru (57%); Brazil (55%)
 - Asia - Indonesia (63% + 20%); Pakistan (66% + 10%); Philippines (62% + 7%)
 - Russia (52% + 10%)
 - Australia (increased to 43% from 36% in 2010)
 - US (Negative still 51% but Positive increased to 36% + 7%)
 - Europe - Italy (still Negative 56%, but Positive now 30% + 16%); S Korea (still 58% Negative but down 8%)
- **Turned negative** –
 - Mexico (positive dropped from 32% to 23%); Canada (negative 49% + 8%); UK (negative 48% + 10%); France (64%); Germany (62%); Spain (57%); Japan (Negative from 38% to 52%); India (Negative 52% + 14%)

Views of China's Influence

By Country, 2011



The white space in this chart represents "Depends," "Neither/neutral," and "DK/NA." Asked of half of sample

Global Peace Index, 25 May 2011

1	New Zealand	1.188	81	Bolivia Bolivia	2.037	1	Number of external and internal wars fought
2	Iceland	1.212	82	Nepal	2.044	2	Estimated deaths due to external wars
3	Japan	1.247	83	Brazil	2.048	3	Estimated deaths due to internal wars
4	Austria	1.290	83	Macedonia	2.048	4	Level of organized internal conflict
5	Norway	1.322	85	United States	2.056	5	Relations with neighbouring countries
6	Ireland	1.337	86	Angola	2.057	6	Level of distrust in other citizens
7	Luxembourg	1.341	87	Bangladesh	2.058	7	Number of displaced persons % population
7	Denmark	1.341	88	Montenegro	2.060	8	Political instability
9	Finland	1.352	89	Peru	2.067	9	Level of respect for human rights
10	Sweden	1.354	90	Serbia	2.071	10	Potential for terrorist acts
70	Bahrain	1.956	140	Congo	2.925	11	Number of homicides
71	Argentina	1.962	141	Chad	2.964	12	Level of violent crime
72	Cuba	1.964	142	Georgia	2.970	13	Likelihood of violent demonstrations
73	Swaziland	1.966	143	Russian Federation	3.013	14	Number of jailed persons
74	Gabon	1.981	144	Israel	3.019	15	Number of police and security officers
75	Rwanda	2.012	145	Pakistan	3.050	16	Military expenditure as % of GDP
76	Cyprus	2.013	146	Sudan	3.125	17	Number of armed services personnel
77	Madagascar	2.019	147	Afghanistan	3.252	18	Imports of major conventional weapons
77	Paraguay	2.019	148	Somalia	3.390	19	Exports of major conventional weapons
79	Senegal	2.031	149	Iraq	3.406	20	United Nations deployments
80	China	2.034				21	Non-United Nations deployments
						22	Number of heavy weapons
						23	Ease of access to small arms light weapons
						24	Military capability or sophistication

Intellectual, geopolitical, and societal perceptions

Perceptions and Images of China, Assmann, Chan, and Filseck, (Eds), Nomos, 2008

- **State Capitalism from below** (East Asia + China) v Neo-patrimonial/ Political Capitalism - '**Making capitalists without capitalism**' USSR
- **Confucian Capitalism** – Harmony, Solidarity, Meritocracy (Ivan Szelenyi, Yale University)
- **Internationalization of capital** – FDI /FIE technology transfer declining TFP limited value added (Dick Lo, U of London/Renmin U)
- **Changing tale of geopolitics - China in the perceptions of US Presidents from Roosevelt to Carter** (G Kindermann, U of Munich) - Roosevelt (**Nationalist China for UN but sacrificed China's territorial interests in Yalta Conference 1945**); Truman (v **Anti-US Korean War + 7th Fleet to safeguard Taiwan Strait**); Eisenhower (Continued to **support Taiwan for fear of domino effect of Communism**); Kennedy (**Containing Mainland China and restraining Taiwan aggression**); Nixon (with Kissinger started **China rapprochement (Beijing for UN, One China Policy), to confront the Soviet Union**; Carter (**Formal recognition of PRC** – US Ambassador informed Chiang Ching-kuo at 2.30 a.m the day before – institutionalized '**Strategic Ambiguity**' – **Taiwan Relations Act** – Deng visited US – China's punitive war against Vietnam; Post **Tiananmen**, human rights became prominent issue
- With **China's Rise**, Clinton (China as **Strategic Partner**); George H W Bush (**Constructive Strategic Partner**); Spy Plane incident + Rise of Neo-conservatism - George W Bush (**Strategic Competitor**); Deputy S of State Robert Zoellick "**Responsible Stakeholder**"; Bush **Extra S** in Responsible Stakeholders – **Constructive Partner**; Obama ('**Strategic Re-assurance**' with **hedging** - Asia Pacific)
- **Images of South China: Changing policy Perspectives Amongst Emerging Chinese Cities**, P Cheung, U of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Hong Kong (but Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Dalian etc increasingly prominent internationally)
- **China's Search for Cultural and National Identity from the 19th Century to the Present**, W Meissner, Berlin (**Learning from the West v safeguarding Chinese culture** (from Sun Yat-sen's 'Three People's Principles, May 4 Movement, From **Marxism to controlled capitalism** started by Deng; Germany – for state-guided modernization under Bismarck, Russia – for Communism and Socialism, and US for Liberalism and Capitalism; **Renaissance of Neo-Confucianism** (Political Confucianism); rising **Nationalism** (Peter Hays Cries, *China's New Nationalism, Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, U of California Press, 2004; *Unhappy China*, 2009)
- **Civil Society in the PRC from a Legal Perspective – Expectations and Realities**, K Pibler and T von Hippel) – **NGOs** (working with not against Government) , **Charities**, sponsoring organizations, regulations, public benefit definitions, deviations from original intent
- **The Chinese Criminal Law System in a Socio-Cultural Context**, E Hilgendorf, Wurzburg U– **Law as 'social technology' – for social control to protect the State** (Party) (pre-1919 Germany); **Morality > Law** (Financial Crisis?); **Confucian tradition – State > Individual** – 'Mandate of Heaven'

Business Perceptions

- Schwarzman, Head of **Blackstone** – *Super Savers, Polluting Cities*, BBC 29.1.10
- Janet Carosky, CEO, **China Business Network** , warned against Western stereotypes-
 - China has a *malnourished form of Capitalism*
 - Chinese *do business the same way we do*
 - Chinese *don't respect contracts*
 - China *needs American businesses*
 - We can expect the *Chinese to adjust to our way*
 - All you need is *one China Guy*
- **British views**, DW – World.de, 3.5.2010
 - *China not a Threat*
 - *Not overtly concerned* with China's *military build-up*
 - *Human Rights* (Amnesty International born in UK)
 - More focussed on *UK's soft power to influence China*
 - *Lots of China-made goods*, but *quality not so great*
- 'Chinese products still being *cheap*, of *low quality*, *technically antiquated*, *unsophisticated... unattractively designed* andproduced in *breach of intellectual property rights*' (H Assmann, University of Tübingen) 15-20% well-known brands counterfeited = 8% of GDP? (Insufficient public awareness, lack of enforcement coordination, insufficient deterrent, no criminal prosecution, fines based on value of counterfeit goods found, lack of trained lawyers and enforcers, cumbersome procedures, local protection, ineffective customs control)
- **Long March for Brands** beginning to change with Hwawei, Haier, and the latest fashion and gift designs, yet *disconnect with Western values in civil society rubs on the China brand*



Historical Cultural Perceptions

Transformation of the Chinese Dragon, Adrian Hsia, McGill University

- **Marco Polo**'s new Cathay found no collective memory until **Mateo Ricci** settled in Beijing
- Jesuits - morals of **Confucianism as civil rites** x religion but deemed **Buddism and Taoism pagan** religions
- '**Accommodative Perceptivism**' - Enlightenment : Leibniz (1646-1716) in *Novissima Sinica* wanted to prove God's existence by **binary arithmetic linked to** the Chinese canon **Yi Jing (broken lines)**
- Mid-17th C European conquests – **Eurocentric Perceptivism** – **Montesquieu** (1689-1755) China as pagan from the Mongolian steppes ; **Rousseau** (1712-1788) – '**China degenerated culture**'. Christian Wolff (1679-1754) VP of Halle University was banished from Protestant Prussia for praising non-religious natural philosophy of Confucianism
- **Supremacy Perceptivism** - **Kant** (1756-1796) **found Lao Zi (Tao Te Ching) repugnant** as void or infinity belonged to the realm of Christian God. **Hegel** (1770-1831) upheld **Prussian cultural supremacy**, leading later to Max Weber's Protestant Capitalism and Gobineau's racial theory, the progenitor of Nazism.
- **Herder** (1744-1803) – **China state as religion (moral dictatorship)** v India, religion as state - destiny x free-will
- **Transitional Perceptivism**. Schlegel (1772-1829) identified **yin and yang** in Yi Jing as **duality or theory of opposites**, corresponding to **electricity, magnetism**. Proof that China did receive God's revealed word but later **deteriorated through 'Godless' Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism**. *Yi Jing*, translated into Latin 1834 in Stuttgart.
- **Schelling** (1775-1854) saw China as '**empire immobile**', unaltered by the Monguls (13th C) and the Manchus (17th C), but knowledge and scholarship **hardly moved beyond rote learning, fossilized like Chinese monosyllabic language**, a '**cosmocracy**' turning God into the State (**Mandate of 'Heaven'**) China as '**fallen dragon**' (**kang long**) equating to the '**red dragon**' in the *Book of Revelations* (12:3).
- **Karl Jaspers** (1883-1969) recognized the **founders of four original cultures on equal footing- Budda** (560-480 BCE), **Confucius** (551-479 BCE), **Socrates** (470-399 BCE) and **Jesus of Nazareth**.
- **19th Century western imperialism**, China's **failed Boxer Rebellion** did much to reinforce **Western stereotypes** of 'dishonesty, greed, cowardice, and cruelty'.
- **Zheng He** – *Le Dragon de Lumiere*, Dominique Lelievre 1996. '**Europe thrived on wars and commerce while the Ming Dynasty began to withdraw to itself. Advantages of the compass and gunpowder melted like snow in sunshine.**' *1421 The Year China Discovered the World*, Gavin Menzies, 2002 amidst Western scepticism

What impacts on Western perceptions ?

(a) *Divergence of practical interests* –

- **Economic**- trade surpluses, outsourced jobs, RMB, indigenous innovation etc
- **Global issues** – Iran, N Korea, terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation, climate change - ‘Responsible Stakeholder’
- **Territorial integrity** -Taiwan, Tibet, S China Sea
- **Values** – human rights, Lau Xiaobo, Ai Weiwei, Jasmine revolution

(b) *Weaknesses* – Pollution, IPR, food safety, product quality, design, brands

(c) *Power transition dynamics* – security dilemma, suspicions (military), hedging, spheres of influence

(d) *Global headlines* – Sichuan Earthquake, Olympics, response to Financial Crisis, efficient evacuation of civilians from Libya

(e) *Historical biases and prejudices* – meaning of ‘*kang long*’, inadequate understanding of Chinese culture and political-economic realities

(f) *China’s ineffective communication* across English media and communities worldwide



How perceptions can be improved

- *Achieve breakthroughs in known weaknesses* e.g. IPR, pollution, food safety, product quality, innovations, designs, brands
- *Take dynamic role in helping to resolve global issues – seize global moral high grounds* e.g. Poverty, Disease, Climate Change, Doha Round, Iran, N Korea, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, food security, energies, ecology
- *Initiate innovative solutions in international organizations* e.g. UN, World Bank, IMF, WTO, G20, ASEAN + 3, SCO, APEC
- Intensify dialogue and partnership with the *US and other great powers, NGOs and non-government actors* in key areas (e.g. Africa)
- Vastly expand outreach and *overseas presence of Chinese corporate champions and brands*
- Project *more relaxed and less repressive image on high-profile cases involving human rights*
- *Seize English language commanding heights* of opinions worldwide through targeted and convincing communication e.g. leading international TV channels and newspapers, journals, forums and conferences
- Increase understanding and appreciation through *intensified international collaboration and exchanges, and sponsored visits of leading opinion formers and thinkers to China*
- *Promote Chinese cultures, values and lifestyles* in movies, literature, culture and arts
- *Expand the network and scope of Confucius Institutes worldwide*



Thank you

Andrew K P Leung, SBS, FRSA

www.andrewleunginternationalconsultants.com