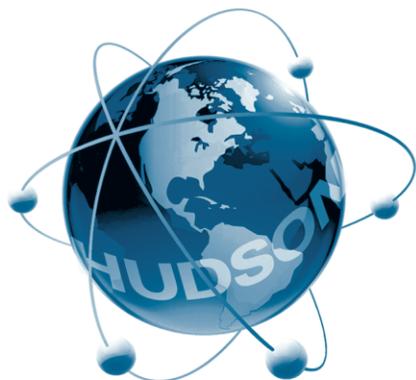


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Hudson Institute

China's Century after the Last Emperor: Yesterday's Dynasty and Today's Republics

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**China's Century after the Last Emperor:
Yesterday's Dynasty and Today's Republics**

Welcome:

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Speakers:

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Pamela Crossley,

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(Part of this transcript has been edited for clarity)

ERIC BROWN: My name is Eric Brown. I work here at Hudson Institute. And I'm pleased to welcome all of you here, to introduce what promises to be a truly exceptional panel.

This year, Chinese people around the world are commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Xinhai Revolution—a string of popular uprisings that coalesced to force the abdication of the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty, and which ultimately brought to an end the Asian mainland's millennia-old imperial system.

The Chinese revolution of 1911 and all that it unleashed has had far-reaching—I'd say, epoch-shaping—repercussions for the Chinese-speaking world, and for Asia more generally, the implications of which are still working themselves out today. Indeed, the revolution still exercises an undeniable sway over the geopolitics of the future, for it was the 1911 revolution that set in motion what we call today—in that oft-repeated, yet somewhat clumsy phrase—the “Rise of China.”

That's because, with the abdication of the Qing, “Historical China”—or what Sinologists of a previous generation were accustomed to calling “China Proper”—was freed from the Empire of the Manchus, and this meant that for the first time in almost three centuries the Chinese people were independent of foreign rule, and left to determine their own political future.

Of course, the polity that emerged from the Qing, the “Republic of China,” was very much an empty vessel, and this left a great deal open to further interpretation and revision. In announcing its arrival, the new republic staked its claim to the entirety of the Qing-Manchu realm, and therefore to a territory over two times the size of the China as it once existed during the Ming, which had been the last empire on the Asian mainland ruled by ethnic Chinese.

This was a bold and fateful act, to say the very least. The difficulties of actually accomplishing all of this—of incorporating all of this territory, with its hundreds of millions of peoples, with their staggering diversity and complexity—into a single Chinese polity has been a defining problem that Chinese republicanism has grappled with since its inception.

Especially since 1949, with the ascendancy of the People's Republic, the very Imperatives of Empire, of actually holding it all together, led the Beijing regime to self-imposed backwardness, violence and depravity on an unprecedented scale.

Despite how things ended up under Mao, it would be wrong not to acknowledge the essentially modern and progressive spirit of the 1911 revolution. The revolution, in fact, was an inaugural event in a process of decolonization that swept across the globe, and which brought previously submerged peoples and nations to the fore. As such, the inhabitants of the Chinese-speaking world preceded the subject populations of other great empires in Asia and in Europe, into the new, modern era of republicanism. The revolution also set in motion a far subtler, yet even more profound process within the Chinese speaking-world, which in the last 100 years has only been

realized in certain corners, but which is still a powerful force agitating in Chinese politics. That is the transformation of a subject peoples into citizens engaged in Self-Government.

The sources of the Xinhai Revolution were many, but they were generated in large part by the sweeping “self-strengthening” reforms of the late nineteenth century. Those reforms were encouraged, albeit in the face of stiff internal resistance, by the Qing Court out of necessity for the exclusive purpose of “Saving the Empire.” In retrospect, we can say the Qing were certainly right to fear these reforms, for they ultimately accelerated the Manchu Empire’s own demise.

Not only did the reforms effect a massive transfer of power to local institutions, and thus, to the non-Manchu peoples, but they re-connected the Chinese on the mainland to the outside world, including to Overseas Chinese, who supplied not only money and other things to the revolutionaries, but new ideas which came to be reflected in the vibrant civil society and spirited debates of the late Qing era. As a consequence of this, ordinary people came to think not simply that they were against the venerable imperial system, but rather that it couldn’t and shouldn’t be saved: it was too inefficient, an antique, an anachronism unable to cope in the modern world.

Today, as we know, there are two main claimants to the Xinhai Revolution, as well as to the Qing succession itself—the Republic of China, which was founded on the mainland in 1912, but which is now based on Taiwan, and the People’s Republic of China, which was established in 1949.

Both countries have held spectacular celebrations to commemorate the 1911 Revolution, but as many have observed, the public’s attitudes toward and the official recollections of 1911 on the opposite sides of the Straits have been strikingly different.

On Taiwan, the 1911 revolution has been celebrated for its nationalism, for its affirmation of social and ethnic equality, and above all, for its embrace of constitutional democracy. As we know, these principles have not always been those of the Guomindang. But they are today. Indeed, Taiwan’s political parties have all internalized these principles, and through their leadership and example, the people of Taiwan have opened a new phase in the history of republicanism in the Chinese-speaking world.

On the mainland, public enthusiasm for the Xinhai revolution has been muted by comparison. Confronting the revolution and its legacy is quite a thorny issue for the PRC, not least because its own imperial rule is bedeviled by the very republicanism and unfulfilled potentials of 1911. As Chan Ping noted in a recent column in the Hong Kong press, officially-sanctioned celebrations of the Xinhai Revolution have become something of an embarrassment for the central government because for anyone with even a smidgeon of historical knowledge, it is glaringly evident that the heroes of 1911 clearly had more freedom to shape their political futures under the late Qing than the Chinese who live on the mainland today.

PRC's problems are compounded by the fact that their republic was the creation of another revolution that was supposed to have superseded the Xinhai Revolution and its republican principles. In fact, I would argue that 1949, with its total and violent rejection of parliamentary government among other things, could best be understood as the counter-revolution to 1911: The Maoists believed they belonged to a Higher History, and in the Communist Party's own governing mythology, the People's Republic represented the best, the most advanced, the most authoritative, and the final expression of modern Chinese politics.

Indeed, when the Chinese mainland began to awake from the Maoist nightmare in the late 1970s and began its so-called "Rise", it seemed to many around the world that the future of "Chinese republicanism" would be defined largely, if not entirely, by the PRC. In this context, it was Taiwan which very much appeared to be the political oddity in the Chinese-speaking world. This, we should acknowledge, has been reflected in Taiwan's growing isolation since the late 1970s, as well as the sense of doom that frequently accompanies many of contemporary discussions over Taiwan's future. It has most certainly contributed to other shameful arguments which have gained new acceptability here in Washington in recent years.

But all of this helps illustrate why the "Rise of China" is such a clumsy phrase—or something that conceals much more than it reveals. The fact of the matter is, there are multiple Rising Chinas, and it was the Chinese societies of the periphery—Taiwan, but also Hong Kong and Singapore, and elsewhere—that began their Rise at least a generation before the Chinese mainland.

Indeed, much like the Aixin Gioro, the ruling clan of the Manchu Empire, the Communist Party in the late 1970s looked to the outside—and specifically, to Overseas Chinese—out of necessity and out of desperation for new ideas, new ways of doing things, which might permit the Communist Party to Save the Empire—and itself. But, as Charles Horner and I have argued recently in an essay in the *China Heritage Quarterly*, the more the PRC has opened itself up to the outside, the more it has exposed the mainland populations to a societal, structural and attitudinal Transformation that have generated new wrinkles in the PRC's governing mythology—and by extension, new problems for the Party in its ongoing struggle to justify its continued rule.

The PRC once confidently boasted to own the Chinese Future. But right now, that regime finds itself in the unsettling predicament of being after a future which has failed. We see this, most obviously, in the search within contemporary China for political alternatives to the anachronism that PRC increasingly is in light of everything that the Chinese-speaking world itself has become in the 21st Century. Despite the regime's efforts to control it, this discussion persists with enormous vigor and dynamism. In one trend, we may see an effort to create a new basis for Chinese politics, one that harkens back before 1949, to the unrealized promise and potentials of 1911. We can see other intellectual trends—which are equally as powerful, if not more so—that seek to go back even further—to before the Xinhai Revolution itself—in order to secure the

Chinese politics of the future on a more “authentic” basis rooted in “classical” Chinese ideas about government. Indeed, some intellectuals on the mainland have gone so far as to argue that Greater China would’ve been better off had it not been permitted to slip into the era of modern republicanism.

Despite the fundamental indeterminacy of this discussion right now, what it undeniably reflects is the significant degree to which the PRC’s ruling myth—that it is the best and final expression of Chinese politics—has lost its luster and, indeed, unraveled. This is precisely the dilemma that is defining the future of Chinese republicanism on the mainland in our present era.

Meanwhile, the Republic of China on Taiwan has transformed itself into a successful multiparty democracy, and is showing itself to be far more robust politically, economically more sophisticated—and more capable of coping with the topsy-turvy nature of modern life. Given Taiwan’s—and the Chinese-speaking Periphery’s—enormously important role as a source of new ideas and new ways that has helped to enable the modern Rise of the Chinese speaking world, it is appropriate to ask now: what role, if any, might Taiwanese republicanism play in shaping and enlightening the future politics on the Asian mainland?

Let me add that this and related questions will be the subject of ongoing Hudson Institute research concerning U.S. strategic policy and the Chinese-speaking world, a project which Charles and I call the “Strategic Sinosphere,” and I hope that you will stay tuned, and become part of that conversation.

Right now, however, there’s no better place to start this initiative other than at the very beginning, with the Xinhai Revolution itself.

Our first panelist, Anne Louise Antonoff, will speak about the late Qing period in global context and especially how the great powers were thinking, and not thinking, about the Manchu empire on the eve of its collapse. Ann Louise lectures on history and international relations at the University of Pennsylvania. She also runs a seminar series in strategic studies. She’s been working on two books – one on the worldwide process of decolonization and another on the Bosnian crisis – the global context of the Bosnian crisis – both of which I think help us to understand what was happening in China roughly at the same time.

After Anne Louise we’ll have two of the finest historians, I’d say, writing on China from the early 19th century to the present in the English language. First we’ll have William Rowe who teaches modern Eastern – East Asian history at the Johns Hopkins University. Rowe is author most recently of “China’s Last Empire: The Great Qing” a work of history that is really a pleasure to read as well as extremely insightful, which also acknowledges our third speaker, Pamela Crossley, for her path-breaking scholarship in Qing studies.

Dr. Crossley is a professor of history at Dartmouth University and a specialist in on the Qing Empire, as well as global history and Central and Inner Asian history. Her most recent book is the “The Wobbling Pivot: China Since 1800: An Interpretive History” which examines the

sources of unrest in China from the perspective of – and the various challenges that the various Chinese governments have faced in governing China.

After Pamela, we'll have my Hudson colleague, Senior Fellow Charles Horner who will comment about everything that's been said, and will try to tell us what all of this means, especially as it relates to the future of republicanism within the Chinese-speaking world. Thank you.

ANNE LOUISE ANTONOFF: Well, this is probably a good place for me to start because I'm actually going to be talking about events well before 1911. In fact, the idea of the collapse of the Qing Dynasty proved to be powerful force in pre-war great power affairs – arguable more so than the actual event. But I would say one can best understand its implications not by focusing on the developments of 1911 to 1912, but rather by exploring the moment four years earlier, when the empress dowager's long anticipated death was expected to produce mayhem and trigger foreign intervention in China's affairs.

In fact, the chaos occurred elsewhere all together, for reasons worth examining. Now, in May, 1907, the Japan Daily Mail reprinted, with great approval, an article in the Asahi Shimbun that catalogued Chinese – China's troubles. The English paper joined its Japanese counterpart in proclaiming the entire awakening of China to be something of a nightmare. "Her great scheme of administrative reform, thought it has proved comparatively abortive, is responsible for much domestic disturbance and for creating a dangerous state of political unrest." China's rights recovery campaign, waged in the provinces against foreign concessions, "Is now openly avowed by every section of the nation, and has already more or less alienated the sympathies of several foreign powers".

To complete the picture, the article continued, "Add to this state of affairs the fact that not many years can elapse before the strong hand of the empress dowager is withdrawn from the control of the administration to be replaced by one of the weakest sovereigns that has ever sat on the throne of the Middle Kingdom." In short, China posed, what the newspaper called, the main source of danger to the peace of Asia. Now, many historians dismiss the Far East as a factor in great power affairs after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. Yet, Chinese trade grew steadily, while improved railway communications facilitated further expansions of the China market. With rising fortunes came increased rivalry.

During this time, an uneasy accord among the great powers kept them more or less committed to The Open Door Notes, which pledged respect for China's territorial integrity and independence, while ensuring equal access for the trade of all nations in each power's sphere of influence. But no one entirely trusted anyone else to respect that pledge, nor did anyone entirely trust China to respect the persons of foreign nationals. The Boxer Rebellion, from 1899 to 1901, had been a scarring experience for Europeans and led to disputes over troop deployments that ultimately triggered the Russo-Japanese War.

So underneath the surface of peaceful trade, there lurked the ever-present danger in European minds of, on the one hand, anti-foreign violence and on the other hand, war among the foreigners themselves. Both possibilities cast a long shadow over the Far-Eastern question from 1905

onward. Attempted reforms, anticipated revolution and rights recovering only exacerbated these tensions. The core dynamic of the Far-Eastern question, I believe, was Sino-Japanese antagonism – as it has been since the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 to 95.

Now, the Manchurian Incident, as we know it, in retrospect, didn't happen until the 1930s. However, something like it was expected almost from the moment Japan defeated Russia in 1905—this is, of course, among the great powers. The weaker China became, the stronger the suspicions that Japan coveted it. Despite her post-war exhaustion, some diplomats believe that Japan's very lack of money might induce her to go to war to extract an indemnity from China.

In the spring of 1908, the British and German ambassadors reported this view from the State Department in Washington, D.C. At the same time, General Aleksey Kuropatkin, former Russian commander in chief during the Russo-Japanese War—now retired, expressed the same idea to the British military attaché. More credible, perhaps, were the fears that widespread and anti-dynastic unrests in China, fueled by Japanese-educated student revolutionaries, would induce Japan to seize control in the event of collapse, and perhaps in advance.

The Germans in particular, suspected Tokyo had secured a railway treaty from China by promising the court to provide armed support in the event of revolution. Now, Japan herself did nothing to deflate this belief in her intentions. As the British ambassador in Peking—I use the term Peking because it's used in the documents that I'm reading—reported in the closing months of 1907 that inspired press reports from Japan were talking of China's fate as the burning question for 1908. The analogy of Korea was frequently invoked, much to Chinese distress.

Late in 1907, the Japanese government expressed great concern over the situation in China. It blamed not the failure of Chinese reforms, but what it considered to be the reckless pace at which they were being pursued. Japanese statesmen, led by Prince Ito who had taken Korea in hand as the first resident general of that protectorate in 1905, proposed a mission to Peking to instruct their Chinese counterparts.

They sought British collaboration in pressing their tutelage upon the crumbling Manchu regime. British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey gave a more positive reply than might have been expected. We should be glad, he wrote, to keep in touch and cooperate with Prince Ito's policy as regards China. But it would be necessary to know first what are the lines on which he wishes to proceed, and what would be the points he desires to discuss.

Now, the thinking behind Grey's response is unclear, as I think it was perhaps meant to be. A January 1908 foreign office memorandum on British policy in China under "certain eventualities"—which the ambassador in Peking had defined as: the death of the empress dowager, revolutionary movements, and other possible disorders in the country—seems to have disappeared from the British archive, much to my frustration.

As Ambassador Sir John Jordan warned, however, "Prince Ito would soon find, as he has found in Korea, that advice, to be effective, must eventually be backed by force. And for this, he is apparently prepared if he can obtain the moral support of Great Britain." Jordan strongly advised against giving such explicit support, yet even he admitted it was "Quite conceivable that a

situation might arise in China when it would be wiser to accept Japanese intervention than allow the country to be plunged into anarchy.”

He referred to the Boxer Rebellion that has broken out during the Boer War. The war, in itself in South Africa, has strained Britain’s military logistical capability, and the China crisis could not conceivably have been handled by Britain alone at the same time. In addition, amid the rights recovery campaign, Britain sought repeatedly to compel the government to honor treaties guaranteeing railway and mining concessions.

Thus, the struggle of the moment, as Jordan put it, was between the central government and the provinces. “And we may possibly have to intervene occasionally to bring the later,” the provinces, “to a sense of their duty.” Thus, Britain’s answer to Japan’s invitation might well be, yes, when the time came for action. Until then, however, it would be prudent to remain to refrain from giving a plain answer.

Belief in the possible need for intervention also inspired the Far-Eastern ententes of 1907 between Japan on the one hand and Russia and France on the other—which, again, pledged respect for each other’s spheres of influence and maintenance of the status quo. There were, however, suspicions, especially in China, of deeper plans and secret protocols. The fear of Far-Eastern interventionism also contributed in no small part to the intensity of Near Eastern crises during this same period, with fateful results for Europe and, I would say, the world.

We simply have not seen China behind the screen of the Balkans. To understand why, one must first realize that just as the Ottoman Empire, or Turkey, was the sick man of Europe, China was the sick man of Asia. And the two were in a race to death. But which one would collapse first? This is the question that the great powers were asking themselves. That was the key question. While respecting each empire’s integrity in public, the powers were already haggling over the carcass in private. By 1908, either collapse—both of which were expected—might trigger a global crisis.

Now, when British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey decided, in December of 1907, to “bring the Macedonian question a head,” he had in mind so-called coercion – gunboat diplomacy – of the sultan in the name of Balkan reforms.

In Macedonia, ethnic cleansing between Christian populations had produced appalling atrocities. The British public demanded an end to the bloodshed. But Grey had an ulterior agenda as well. He swung the spotlight from east to west, deflecting the great powers away from Asia, where British imperial interests were at risk.

It was not simply a matter of the Anglo-Russian convention on Central Asia being disregarded, or even of India being disturbed. The danger was also one of alliance duty becoming required to Japan. Despite the Russian foreign ministry’s new entente with Japan, the Russian military favored a Christian alliance, as they put it, against the so-called yellow peril. Powerful pro-German circles in St. Petersburg shared their sympathies. And, indeed, the concept, the phrase “the yellow peril” was taken from the Kaiser.

Britain could not fight such a Russo-German combination. Kaleidoscopic visions of conflict filled the air. Now, the potential for war seemed—and it's important to remember, it's what it seems to be, what was expected to happen—the potential for war seemed only to be growing, for reasons now overlooked by historians, but well-known to the statesmen of the day. In fact, in their view, the China question was about to go global.

Just the day before Grey's decision on Macedonia, the American great white fleet had set off for the Pacific, cruising into the heart of the Far Eastern question. Triggered by an immigration dispute with Japan, the U.S. move soon morphed into an alleged bid to counter Japanese ambitions in China, or so it was presented by the China lobby press, itself in league with the German embassy in Washington. In fact, the Germans were funding the Herald-Tribune.

The German-American connection proved provocative. From the moment Japan had defeated Russia in 1905, Berlin had anticipated a general scramble for China led by the Japanese. The Kaiser, working with Theodore Roosevelt during the negotiations of the Russo-Japanese War, which, of course, Roosevelt had mediated, and for which he won the Nobel Prize, invited the president to cooperate afterward in raising the Moroccan question by way of diversion.

He was convinced that now that Japan had beat Russia, the next thing that would happen would be an all-out scramble for China. In 1907, when Russia and France were negotiating their Far Eastern ententes with Japan, German worries became intense and led to new overtures.

The Kaiser proposed the creation of a Sino-German-American entente to counter what he saw as a four-way conspiracy against China—between Japan and Britain, already allied, and France and Russia, not only allied but also now linked to both of the others with their ententes. John White calls it a quadruple entente.

In Asia, Germany and America stood out as having no local partners. China allegedly trusted them more than any of the other powers. As we have seen, Britain, too, had ample reason for concern that Japan might intervene in China's unrest. By the end of the year, this was what the burning question was supposed to be in the Japanese press.

America's naval action only heightened the resulting dangers, in Britain's eyes. The great white fleet had the effect, I would say, of a rather large pebble dropped in a pond, or in this case, an ocean, with the ripples carried worldwide by the magic of cable. Talk of the tripartite entente quickly spread through the U.S. press.

As the Germans, meanwhile, urged their protection on Roosevelt—the departure of the fleet having stripped the Atlantic coast of its battleships—the press also picked up that story. Soon, German newspapers had eye-catching maps covered with angry arrows. The Russians, too, followed the fleet obsessively. In fact, the chief of the general staff was calculating the odds of war at every stage and driving the French bananas.

And they continued, despite their defeat, to focus their military attention on the East, much to the outrage of their friends in Britain and France. In August of 1907, after a boisterous fleet week in Australia, Japan took offense, they had enough and sent the ambassador in D.C. up to Oyster Bay

to quash plans for a German-American naval rendezvous in Samoa, where the cruisers of both sides were supposed to get together in the Pacific and then head northward to the Philippines.

Meanwhile, even if peace held for the moment, both the British and the Hapsburg foreign ministries anticipated trouble in the future. Japan, they thought, would have to launch a war with the U.S. for supremacy in the Pacific, and by extension, in the China question, before the opening of the Panama Canal.

Britain being Japan's ally, and Austria-Hungary being Germany's, they both also perceived the possibility that a German-American combination might extend well beyond the China question. For their part, Germany and America both feared British intervention on Japan's behalf.

Chinese unrest thus seeped into great power politics in unexpected ways. What Germans would call the *Weltlage*, the world situation, fell under the shadow of global war. With the rise of a quadruple entente between Japan, Britain, France, and Russia, in mid-1907, the German powers—Germany and Austria-Hungary—expected that any Anglo-German clash over China would generate a continental conflagration in Europe.

The Hapsburg empire appeared at risk of being dragged into a war of absolutely no consequence to its own interests. Yet, it wanted to achieve its own Balkan goals, most notably the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina from the Ottoman Empire, without having to earn them through alliance duty in such a war.

Reasoning backward from the opening of the Panama Canal, which he erroneously expected in 1911, the Hapsburg foreign minister therefore discerned a closing window of opportunity in 1908—he makes this calculation in late 1907—to seize Bosnia prior to the outbreak of war, and he settles on 1908 as the time for action.

Now, this might all seem very far afield from China. Yet just as the annexation occurred in early October of '08, a Chinese envoy was setting out for Washington, D.C. and Berlin, supposedly with the intent of finalizing a Sino-German-American entente. When Tokyo warned against any rash steps, the trip took a different turn, focused solely on remission of the Boxer Rebellion indemnity.

But the German chancellor, aware of the departure, didn't know about that change of heart, not yet. At such a critical time, he dared not cast doubt on his country's so-called alliance-worthiness, a critical concept for German diplomats at the time. Had Germany betrayed Austria, the chancellor later reasoned, she would have, "won no new friends," but only lost old ones. Surely this logic applied to Asia as much as to Europe.

Despite private misgivings, he resolved to maintain public support for the annexation, backing Vienna against Russo-Serb demands for compensation. Then as now, the Serbs claimed that Bosnia was there. A six-month crisis over Bosnia ensued. In the bitter aftermath, Balkan and great power affairs steadily deteriorated into war by 1914.

And I can explain more how Bosnia becomes the pebble rolling down the hill, and becomes a stone by 1914. Thus one can say the idea of the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, whether as a pretext for partition, intervention, or entente, played a not inconsiderable part in the origins of the First World War. Historians have not seen it that way because the Near Eastern question, soon in flames, masked the Far Eastern question in the background.

In fact, while the Bosnia crisis itself raged in November of 1908, the empress-dowager died. No one was paying attention. No immediate repercussions, at least in terms of foreign affairs. Yet the potential ramifications of anticipated trouble in China helped drive the powers into the Bosnia crisis in the first place, and thus toward World War I.

In turn, war in Europe allowed Japan to pursue its agenda in Asia. The Kaiser had foreseen the danger of Japanese intervention, but now Germany's Asia and Pacific holdings became the first victims of Japan's expanding empire in the East. The burning question of China's future, i.e., who would control it, seemingly had been answered.

MR. ROWE: Thank you. I'm grateful to the organizers for allowing me to spend my time on this panel talking about the 1911 revolution only in a most tangential way. There are plenty of people in this room far more expert on that subject than I am. Instead, I want to adopt a much longer time frame and look at the relationship of state and society in China.

Briefly, I'd argue that the late imperial Chinese state, though of course very large in absolute terms, was very small relative to the society it governed. The percentage of state employees relative to population was very low, as was the percentage of state budgets relative to the overall economy.

This was not merely a question of practical capacity and of the well-grounded fear that raising taxes threatened dynastic survival, but it was more basically a defining ideology of late imperial Chinese statecraft. Benevolent government, *renzheng*, meant, in practice, less government. The 1911 revolution occurred at a critical moment when this venerable ideology was being reversed, when state, wealth and power came to be prized as the good in itself.

The decisive and lasting affirmation of the small-state ideology came in the late 11th century with the implementation of Wang Anshi's new policy, *Xin Fa*, and their subsequent repudiation and dismantling under Sima Guang two decades later.

Through such new institutions as his "green sprouts" agricultural loan agency, a highly progressive tax system, the government monopolization of tea production so as to directly manage foreign trade—that is, tea for horses with Central Asia—a new educational system, Wang Anshi sought a radical repudiation of private interests, the redistribution of private wealth, full state control over the economy as the best engine to produce wealth from inside, restructuring of social hierarchies, and in effect, a dramatic expansion of the state so as to merge with and subsume the society as a whole.

Sima Guang countered by defending the institutions of private, elite social leadership, the sanctity of private property, and the protection of private wealth as the best means of

safeguarding the provisioning of all—in short, a dramatically delimited role for the state in the economy and society.

Sima not only won the day in the 1080s, but especially with the rise of Neo-Confucianism in the Southern Song, it was his vision of the proper relationship of state and society that passed into orthodoxy, while Wang Anshi and his competing vision became increasingly vilified as despotic or tyrannical.

In consequence, as Bill Skinner demonstrated, there was a clear long-term decline in state activism, as measured by the density of officials on the ground, over the last millennium of Chinese Empire. Here are the numbers that Skinner provided for total county-level units in the empire at the height of successive dynasties: Hong, 1235; Song, 1230; Ming, 1385; Qing, 1360.

In other words, the number was virtually unchanged. But over the same period, the empire's population grew from around 60 million to around 300 million; that is to say, it quintupled. More narrowly, over the course of early Qing, the number of counties grew from 1235 in 1644 to 1360 in 1730—that is, there was modest growth. But over the same period, both population and geographic area of the empire considerably more than doubled.

Throughout this period, there was—to oversimplify a bit—only a single centrally appointed administrator per county. Thus, over both the long term and the short term, the size and population of individual counties grew dramatically, and the ratio of administrators to population and territory, likewise, declined dramatically. And third, the presence of the state in local society contracted or withdrew.

Late imperial administrators were well aware of problems of governance caused by its small administrative presence on the ground. Around 1730, during the reign of the unusually activist Yongzheng emperor—as Pamela knows, one of my favorites—a debate at court considered subdividing counties into four or five smaller jurisdictions and assigning a centrally appointed bureaucrat, the Chongwang, to each of these, multiplying many times over the density of territorial officials on the ground.

But considering the problems of financing this new finer level of administration and of maintaining discipline over the multiplying number of bureaucrats and sub-bureaucrats, even Yongzheng decided that it didn't justify the cost.

Yongzheng was, as I have said, highly activist and something of a state-maker. During his brief reign of 13 years, he mandated and largely implemented a wide range of new state institutions in every county of the empire—elementary schools, orphanages, poor houses, and most dramatically, a network of county-level government granaries designed to normalize and standardize the price of grain over time and over space throughout the empire.

However, Yongzheng's son and successor, the Qianlong emperor, who had a very different conception of rulership, either let these institutions atrophy or abolished them altogether. In 1748, most famously, he radically slashed the holdings of the state's local granaries on the stated

argument that allowing more grain to remain in private commercial hands would better serve the purposes of empire-wide provisioning that the granaries had been designed to address.

Qianlong was also a compulsive tax cutter, restoring exemptions for officials and gentry that had been abolished by his father, repeatedly declaring tax holidays during the first several decades of his reign. The unfinished experiment of the Yongzheng reign remained just that.

On the fiscal side, the Kangxi emperor, in 1713, famously declared the intention of the Qing regime never to raise the land tax. There were certainly ways for the state to honor this commitment in theory while getting around it in practice. Nevertheless, the real per capita tax burden in China remained unchanged between the 18th century and 1908, the land tax burden being cut in half as commercial and other taxes were correspondingly raised.

And it was significantly lower than that in Europe. Qing total government revenue in 1908 has been estimated by Albert Feuerwerker as roughly 7.5 percent of GDP, comparable to what it had been in the 16th century, but only around half of what it had been in the Northern Song in the 11th century. In sum, late imperial China was likely undertaxed.

Adopting a relatively successful approach of doing the most with the least, state fiscal revenues were more or less sufficient to undertake the modest range of functions that the administration assumed for itself. Indeed, it might be argued that this was the most effective way to govern an empire of China's vastness under the limitations of premodern technology. But they were wholly inadequate for coping with the new domestic and international pressures of the late 19th and early 20th century.

As Philip Fouin, Mary Rankin, and others have shown in detail, the inadequacy of state functions was increasingly offset, over the 19th century, by a corresponding growth of community activism on the part of nongovernmental local elite. And indeed, over the latter part of that century, provision of public services—such as sanitation, street lighting, medical care and so on—on the part of such elites, greatly expanded beyond levels ever undertaken by any imperial administration.

While this elite activism was legitimated in the name of the public, boon, rather than the imperial administration, *quan*, it is perhaps not too far-fetched to see this as a form of disguised state expansion, since these were clearly governmental functions that were being performed, in nearly every case, with the tacit approval of the administration, though not by it directly. In modern terms, it was a case of third-party governance.

Sparked by the very deep shock of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, and after a brief false start in 1898, a dramatic turning point came in the first decade of the 20th century, with another series of new policies, *ting jong*, that we customarily refer to as the late Qing reforms.

Though they ultimately led to the fall of the dynasty, these reforms were real, far-reaching, and unprecedentedly costly. The creeping expansion of quasi-state functions that had been going on over the course of the preceding half century was now suddenly declared to be the prerogative of the formal state apparatus itself.

And a great many more new projects were added—Western-style schools, police forces, military modernization, improvements to the transport infrastructure and so on. The per capita fiscal burden was suddenly, dramatically, and irreversibly raised through the imposition of a wide range of new consumer taxes, and most importantly, by the issue of new, unbacked inflationary currency.

Where does the 1911 revolution fit into this? One might have suspected that it would represent a repudiation of this last gasp of imperial power-grabbing and a reaffirmation of the old ideal of low-tax, benevolent government. This, indeed, would have been precisely the opportunity to do so, given the near-universal discreditation of the Qing ruling house and of the imperial institution as a whole.

In fact, however, precisely the opposite took place. The real engine of the revolution was what Joseph Esherick has called the urban reformist elite, the one group in society that had most clearly benefited from the new policy. They were the ones who pursued the new government and professional careers, who sent their children to the new, Western-style schools, and whose property and businesses the new police forces primarily protected.

Unsurprisingly, they were committed to safeguarding and even expanding the state-building enterprise begun by these reforms, now without the detritus of an imperial son of heaven to hold them back. Sun Yat-sen himself may have epitomized himself with his grandiose national railroad-building plan drawn up for the new republican regime.

In one province after another, new governmental entities, like the provincial assemblies and new armies, pushed plebeians out of the revolution and kept the modernizing project on track. It was often not pretty. In Hunan, for example, the interim republican military governor, Jao Duafong, a long-time revolutionary with a strong secret society base and decidedly anti-elite policies, was assassinated with some of his supporters on October 31st by agents of his successor as governor general, Tan Yankai, a jinchu, son of a prominent Qing official and champion of what he called, quote, a civilized revolution, better in line with progressive elite agenda.

Jiangsu, which had had a lively history of populist attacks on symbols of the reforms, such as schools and local self-government offices, before the revolution, experienced a great wave of urban and rural resistance movements throughout the immediate post-1911 years, which were suppressed with great brutality by the reformist former Qing and now republican governor, Hyun Dechan and his agent, the salt smuggler turned underworld boss, Haigechu Daoson.

Even after the death of the autocratic first president, Yuan Shikai, the early republic remained an era of sustained and vigorous statemaking. As Keith Schoppa has convincingly demonstrated, the conception of warlord-dominated China as a nation in disintegration is off parte. A better description would be decentralization. Even as the central government collapsed into irrelevance, at the local level, very impressive processes of political development and local statemaking continued under way with the establishment of county assemblies and a wide range of government sanctions associations to represent and regulate new professions, such as lawyers, doctors and engineering organizations called quan pan.

Certainly, certain local elites also panned out into more peripheral counties to engage in political entrepreneurship, bringing with them models of local statebuilding initiative, worked out on their—in their own, more developed native places. And, as Philip Kuhn has shown, Yen Sishan and, following him, the Kuomintang finally realized the Yoonjung emperor's old notion of creating a finer mesh of bureaucratized field administration and installing centrally-appointed officials at the subcounty, the tsian level, even as the Nationalists abandoned as unworkable their initial goal of nurturing more genuine local self-governance, difan siju.

The Kuomintang era, of course, despite the regime's many weaknesses, was one of radical statebuilding on the central government level. A generation of scholarship, that of Lloyd Eastman, Marie-Claire Bergère, Parks Cobol, Joe Fusment, among others has now disabused us of the vision of the Nationalists as liberal democrats hostile to organized labor, but in the pockets of the big Shanghai capitalists. This was a vision initially promoted for their own reasons, both by the Kuomintang itself in its quest for Western support and, convenient to the Kuomintang, by its anti-capitalist communist rivals.

We now understand the Nationalist regime to have been equally antagonistic to private interest of any sort, including both capital and labor. It was a thoroughly statist regime imbued with certain elements of Mussolini-style fascism and Peronist state corporatism, but very far from liberal.

Bill Kirby has persuasively described Nationalist China as from its inception, a quote, developmental state, and after 1932, becoming as well a national security state. With the blueprint provided by Sun Yat-sen's 1924 outline of national reconstruction, and directed by a wide range of new central poonyang and national woli agencies, the National Reconstruction Commission, National Economic Council and National Resources Commission, Military Affairs Commission among others, the Kuomintang sought in unprecedented ways to intervene into the economy and society in the interest of jengwua, that is, centralized statemaking.

The whole new categories of fiscal extraction were devised, five-year plans were drawn up and the entire resources of the nation were mobilized in the interest of centralized resource management – national infrastructural development, that is, a road building and hydraulic management and other things, and bureaucratic capitalism. The technocrats, coordinated in part via the Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan, the Academia Sinica, took firm control. A Leninist party organization directed the organs of government and industry at all level.

The record of the Nationalists' success in this unprecedented project was very mixed, but they clearly laid the groundwork for the Communists' own social engineering of the 1950s. In this regard, at least, the significance of 1949 as a temporal watershed may be somewhat less than we once assumed.

I don't need here to rehearse in detail how the People's Republic yet further contributed to the unprecedented expansion of the state and its penetration into the lives of individual citizens. I'd point simply to the replacement of the private market by the state provisioning apparatus and the institution of the dangwey system to holistically individuals and households' private lives as two key manifestations of it.

Other, more expert scholars here may choose to see the death of Mao in 1976, or even some date after that, as the final moment in this gargantuan growth of the Chinese state. But I myself tend to see the failed radical attack on the nuclear family under the Great Leap Forward as the apex of that process and the post-Leap retrenchment of the early '60s as the first significant sign of pullback.

To sum up, then, I see China's entire 20th century history as in large part the quest to reverse centuries of minimalist benevolent government and grow the larger and more effective state, central state—clearly demand international survival in a fiercely competitive social Darwinist world, and then, in that century's final decades, to backtrack and seek a more workable middle ground regarding proper state ties and function.

This was a process—still under way today, I would add—in which the 1911 revolution represented a pivotal moment. I would not claim that statebuilding was what the 1911 revolution was about. One of the nice things about that event, from a historian's point of view, is its deep complexity. It was about many different things to many different sets of participants. For some, it was genuinely about the realization of individual human rights; for others, about Han nationalist liberation; for perhaps most others, about any number of distinctly local issues. And for yet others, it was unclear that it was about anything at all.

But from the single but very important perspective I have chosen to adopt here today, it was a major step along the way towards creating a larger and more penetrating Chinese national state. Thank you. (Applause.)

PAMELA CROSSLEY: I'm very happy to be here today. It's a real pleasure to see Charles and Eric again, and I'm delighted to meet Anne and hear about her work. And it's an honor to be here with Bill who, in my considered opinion, is the single finest historian of China since 1700 working in this country now.

I have to say, when I got my copy of his latest book, "The Great Qing," my book, "The Wobbling Pivot," was in press. And so I open up this book and it starts out with the idea that's the big idea in "The Wobbling Pivot," which is this tiny traditional state and this very large society, and then how this affects our understanding of development of modern China. It just shows you that we fell into the same rut. It was psychic. We did completely different aspects of that, but how did we come up with that?

MR. ROWE: Maybe we're just both right. Maybe we're just both right.

MS. CROSSLEY: Yeah – you know, but there it was.

Today—actually, I want to elaborate a little bit on some of the things that Bill said. But I mostly am building the talk today around an editorial of mine that was published recently. Some of you actually saw the text before it was published. And if you saw it afterwards, I have to apologize for one thing that happened. This was not me; it was the editor putting in the word "non-Chinese" in a very unfortunate place. I've never used this word. Not a single time. I did not use it in the context it appeared there. It would never occur to me to suggest that political concepts

correspond in any way to pseudo-racial designations. It just would not happen. This is going to be my thing now for years and years. I'm going to have to apologize for this—it really goes against everything I've been working on.

But the two main ideas there of what I want to really elaborate on today – and that was that the Xinhai revolution was distinguished by two features, one of which is openness to international influence and communication, and the other was openness to popular participation, both of which the current government of the PRC has some difficulties with, and, I think, as a consequence, has been made a little bit uncomfortable by the centennial coming round.

I first of all want to start with this point which is underlying all this that nationalism and sovereignty, as we normally talk about them in our current environment here, are really two sides of the same thing. They come out of this period in European history. You can call it the Westphalian period or whatever you want. But the whole thing is that in the process of being able to define national actors in some kind of a legal and discursive framework, you also have to move the seat of sovereignty, you know, the engine of legitimacy, away from a monarch towards the public in some form. Now, those could be aristocrats, right? Those could be a representative body. Those could be self-appointed elites. But somehow or other, it has to be shifted off of this idea of the sort of late medieval, early modern monarch. That has to happen.

If those two things are really not going along, then, in my view, you can sort of exploit nationalism rhetorically by going through and pick out a few phrases and things as you would out of the phone book or something and saying, well, now we're going to have a nationalist movement; it'll be about, we love our country and nobody should criticize us and we're great, we've always been great and all; but that isn't nationalism in any historically meaningful sense.

So the whole idea here is that the understanding of a real nationalizing process is one in which there is a transformation in the placement of sovereignty and the way in which this works in the generation of policy and national rhetoric the and international relations and everything else.

What does it have to do with this? Well, Xinhai Geming, I think—that is, the Xinhai Revolution—as an event is famous to all of us for its unrealized ambitions in these areas of defining a nation generating nationalism and establishing sovereignty. But why this should have been is a little more complex than it may seem on the surface. Bill had made a reference to the fact that it is an extremely complex event. The energies behind it come from various parts of society, including, you know, the countryside, secret societies, the new armies that were part of these reforms at the end of the Qing, people who were involved in scholarly lecturing, publishing. I mean, the range is very broad, which is something I'll actually come back to in a moment.

But for the elites who are participating, the people who are establishing the lexicon, right, who are doing a lot of the advocacy internationally, I think it is important that they are consciously not claiming the legacy of the Qing. They go to not extreme lengths, but they are distinctly making an effort to show that we are not the Qing, and in fact, there's no point that I'm aware of, let's say, in the 10 years after the revolution, in which there's a statement that this, that, or the other – that is, whether it's territorial domination or a political mission in the world, or even

different kinds of cultural curatorship – that we are continuing the mission of the Qing. It doesn't say that anywhere. So that even their name, Zhonghua Minguo, they're actually—instead of Da Qing Diguo, you've got—instead of a dynastic name, we have actually a racial designation. It's not a place, it's not Zhonghuo, it's Zhunghua—it's a race. And it's a Minguo; it's a national polity, right, not an empire.

And so as a consequence, when we're looking at these processes that Bill's talking about, statebuilding, what's really outstanding in so many ways is this aspect of internationalism that was just very big, very amorphous.

What I was thinking in the editorial was basically, the roots of, in the late Qing, of movements in the government and outside to make the Qing Empire, first of all, as a kind of a true predecessor to make the Qing Empire visible in terms of international law and policy.

Now, there are very well-marked sort of phases of this—this establishment of the Zongli Yamen in 1861 to be able to handle diplomatic discourse in a way that was acceptable to the signatories of the unequal treaties. Yes, this is imposed upon the Qing. The Qing have decided, it's better this than another war; let's just agree with this.

But there are less visible markers, too. Outstanding to me would be the creation of the two provinces of Xinjiang and Taiwan in 1884 and 1885. This is a decision on the part of the—of the empire to finally make it clear, make it internationally legible, these are Qing territories. The empire, of course, traditionally, like all the empires outside of Europe—nothing unique about the Qing—had been working on this graduated sovereignty thing. We've got some places we will rule directly; we've got some places we rule indirectly; we've got other places we dominate but they have their own sort of king and so on. You know, no. In the current modern system as it prevails at the end of the 19th century, you really don't have any of this; it's a dichotomy. Yes or no. It is yours or it is not yours. So making these places provinces for the first time is a way of, in this case, the advisers to the Qing state, of taking their own steps to make this legible.

There are other things around about the same time—actually, 1880s—a very sort of interesting time—the 1870s and the period in which the Burlingame treaty is still sort of alive. Anson Burlingame had suggested to them, OK, first of all, OK, we got to make this all—people, when we go to the United States and we advocate for better trade, better relations with China, the equal provisions of the Burlingame treaty—remember, the Burlingame treaty here is a possibility that U.S.-China relations will be put outside the unequal treaty system that was prevailing at that time, controlling of China's relations with Europe and the United States. In the Burlingame treaty, there is a departure; they will be equal on each side: Whatever the United States gets to do and China, China gets to do in the United States. And Burlingame was very clear: You got to be called China. No nothing, not great Qing, any of this; you know, just got to be called China. Have to have a national anthem which will be played by a brass band when your officials come in. You need a flag. You need both a battle flag and you've got to have, you know, your state flag. You need to have all these things.

And so this—as we come into the latter part of the 19th century, we begin to have some of these little trappings and things. People are getting used to the idea that we don't have to call that the

Qing Empire; we can just think of this as China; this is going to be a nation. So there's a little bit of preparatory work being done in an international way in the later part of the 19th century.

Now, you know, in the United States, the big fuss is 1905, when Kang Youwei comes to the United States. Others had been here already, the Liang Qichao; Sun Yat-sen was coming and going. But Kang Youwei, this tried to get so much attention. All of these pictures—here's this man in his traditional robe and all the translators and everything. And he's a representative of the hallowed tradition of Confucian scholarship. But, you know, here's his daughter is going to Radcliffe. He's advocating all kinds of widespread political reforms. He's traveling Latin America, the United States, getting money, sympathy, but not only speaking to the Chinese audience; the other side of this is, we're seeking to enlist the sympathy of a foreign government to support this here – not just Japan, right, which has these sort of very complicated motives for getting involved, but other places that will really be good partners.

Now, you know, not all of this turned out to be the way that people wanted it to be. I mean, one of the interesting things about this internationalism that suffuses this revolution in 1911 or '12 is that so many of the hopes are disappointed, some of them very bitterly. So Japan becomes very predatory militarily and financially; there's this tremendous disappointment at Versailles in which Japan is given sway over the Chinese territories; the Koreans, of course, are even more bitter because Japanese colonization of Korea is confirmed. Many of these things are simply disappointed.

What is interesting to me here is that when you look beyond the revolution, you see, as you get into the May Fourth Movement, that the efforts to maintain this, to keep it growing, make it more mature, make it more creative, continue, even though nobody succeeded in the first 10 years after 1911-12 in finding a way of giving this political expression; the cultural expression that is expected to, again, create some kind of political renaissance continues until finally strangled by the Minguo government, partly due to the qualities that Bill has very, very eloquently described here.

This internationalism, I believe, continues anyway. I mean, there's this problem after 1925, but the CCP itself is a product of the May Fourth Movement. It's also very international in orientation, at least some aspects of the party behavior.

I mean, there's this problem after 1925, but the CCP itself is a product of the May Fourth Movement. It's also very international in orientation, at least some aspects of the party behavior. And with the Comintern in the picture, all of this, I agree with, what Bill was suggesting, that 1949 is not a disjuncture.

This is one of the continuities I'm pointing to here. When you look at the history of the PRC, in the 1950s, all the way through the 1950s, there is a very, very strong international tinge to this. Americans of my age tend to miss this because we were educated to think that China was closed, closed, closed. No one could get in there. They're inward-looking. They're Sinocentric. This is the word we were taught. They just look at themselves.

This isn't at all like what the history really is. And even in the 1950s, there were all kinds of

international, committed Communists in China. Mao spent a lot of time with them. He was photographed with them all the time. He kept pointing to this. This just shows what a success we are. We've got this international support.

In 1955, China is openly competing for leadership of the nonaligned nations. It's competing with India. It's working hard to make itself internationally credible. In the 1960s, Zhou Enlai going all over Africa, getting these recently decolonized places to recognize the PRC and initiate relations. Tremendous vigor in this, and I think, all the way.

You know, Nixon's visit—for the United States, I guess, some kind of breakthrough. But when you look at the history of China's foreign relations, this, again, is not—it fits in. It's part of a fairly predictable, organic sort of pattern.

Where I really see the changes here are really post-Mao. I think this is one of these things that Mao did not fear, because he thought he could manipulate it very well. He thought it was one of those resources that he could really use. And, of course, Nixon's visit proved him correct. He did not shrink from this.

Now, the other point that I want to discuss, he didn't shrink from either, I think, for reasons that can be sort of chilling to think about, but that's popular participation; again, going back to this great idea that animated Bill's talk, the smallness of the government—the traditional government in relation to society.

Actually, when it comes to the causes of it, we don't need to have a big debate about it, but this could be interesting. You know, the Wang Anshi, Sima Guang thing—I think this is nice that, as you get to the end of the Song, in terms of policy discussions, and in fact, implementation, you've made the transition, right, towards the kind of smaller, lighter – but it could be a coincidence, I'm only saying, in terms of the long term, the fact that this continues to animate the Yuan, Ming, and Qing.

Because, in fact, when the Mongols come, the Yuan government works on this principle, but so did all their other governments across Eurasia. And what you find is that other governments are still animated by this in Russia, in the Ottoman Empire. Even the Moghuls, eventually, are working on this same principle, right, in which you're privileging the military and everything else is, kind of, catch as catch can.

I think this is a larger sort of pattern that may really have to do with this period of Mongol domination. Anyway, whatever it is, what I had emphasized was that in the Qing period, as in the Ming, the government is actually depending upon this idea that the local communities are coherent. They are extremely good at managing their resources, at dealing with problems, even at managing money.

This takes a lot of pressure off of the state. You can delegate a lot of things. And when necessary, you know, you want to have, sort of, an informal extension of the power, then you can get into the things that actually appear in the records as corruption, but are truly privatization of government – well, they're not truly – in many instances, it's privatization of government

activity.

But that will be—still, you're leaving that to the initiative of the magistrates and the local people. And when things are going well, this is a tremendous way to do it. The taxes are low, people are happy. The government can concentrate on the few little plans that it has. But if a problem occurs, right, problems can very quickly morph from difficulties to disasters in the space of weeks—maybe months.

And the government, being as small as it is, really does not have a whole lot of tools to respond – often cannot respond quickly at all, because it takes months to walk across China. But even those kinds of logistics aside, the government is often just without the kind of staffing, the kind of preparation that would make all of this possible. And so this idea that people, locally, are able to not only manage themselves, but they become active in times of trouble. And they can appeal to the government.

Even in the traditional state, individuals could petition—even up to the top of government, if they wanted to. But communities could collectively just make difficulties, you know? We can have strikes. We're not going to pay our rent. We're not going to pay our taxes. We're not going to get out of the road until somebody comes down here and listens to what we have to say.

So the government techniques, here, for dealing with this—this continues in modern China, of course. On the one hand, you use the fist and you try to pound down the people whom you think are the main troublemakers.

But on the other hand, you're compromising, right? You're showing your compassion. You're happy to find a miscreant here or there—the official that can be blamed, right? The local today, it would, maybe, a businessman, scapegoating is a very, very fine art in this kind of political management.

Now, these are the kind of resources that, when you get to the end of the 19th century, and you can put this together with the motivation of the elites, particularly after the Treaty of Shimonoseki, to be able to create long statements—public statements of popular dissatisfaction with the events as they occur. You can back that up with present bodies. People will congregate. People will show banners, they'll present petitions. They can get unruly, and the government knows that. And that's actually a bit of an advantage for the people who are organizing this. This kind of participation—this most traditional—is there.

In addition, you have these other forms, like the provincial assemblies, that are being introduced through this process of the new reforms that, as Bill said, were so problematic for the old state, and probably led to its demise. So creating more and more venues through which people can speak, they can participate, they can make themselves present in political transformation, as well as daily administration—this is very much part of the phenomenon of the Xinhai Revolution.

And I think, again, this is something that is very problematic for the government today. There's still enormous—you know, there are still very, very frequent manifestations of this in China. In my book, I had this book from Cheng Qili who was one of these security guys, who said, well,

30,000 a year. We have 30,000 riots a year. It's nothing. Think about how many villages we have, all of this. So there are 30,000. That isn't anything.

And yet when you look at the details of these as Americans, right, you're amazed? Angry people will overturn police cars, beat the police up, kick them around, besiege police stations over fairly, sort of, trivial things. It's almost a way of negotiation. When you look at the history of it, it's almost a constitutional element in Chinese political history. And it does, in real terms—now, as in the past, it does create limits on what the state can do. And these limits are well-understood.

So I'm just going to wrap it up here by, sort of, saying this. When I look at all that—I mean, first of all, this chronological picture that Bill has sketched out, I agree with totally—that what's happened is that China, over the course of the 19th century, experiences a degree of decentralization, which had been accelerated by the suppression of the Taiping Uprising but continues beyond the period of the Xinhai Revolution because of the inability to create any kind of united stratum above this, sort of, provincial level.

There's a nadir, you know, that's reached somewhere—I would say, the '30s or something? But where it begins to come up—I do agree. The late 50s is very, very important. I think the assault on nuclear families is an essential thing to understand in terms of reconstitution of centralized power in China.

I would say there's probably yet another step added in the Cultural Revolution because that is where you begin to attempt to eradicate the cultural and psychological diversity that has also been threatening to the traditional government and to Mingoa government. But overall, what it presents is that there's an organic relationship from Xinhai to the 1949 revolution.

I'm afraid I would not agree with you, Eric, that 1949 is a counterrevolution. I don't see it – I'm not saying that it's a predictable organic outgrowth of Xinhai, but I say it's an organic outgrowth anyway, and that these particular two attributes I'm speaking of today—the openness to international dialogue, let's say, and openness to popular participation, continue to kind of bedevil the present government as they deal not only with the legacy of the Xinhai Revolution but the legacy of the 1949 revolution as well. (Applause.)

CHARLES HORNER: I'm going to talk briefly about three different things.

The first is our discussion today itself, why we're having it, and why we've convened what is unusual think-tank fare in Washington, D.C., especially so far as the study of China is concerned. Washington, DC, is focused on the federal government, which is focused on the evanescent topic of China policy, in which everyone who's based at a Washington think-tank thinks he should be involved, and not merely involved, but in charge.

Here at Hudson, where we try to understand what's going on in China, we've become increasingly dissatisfied with some of the work of our sister think tanks and so we're trying to develop an approach that's different. We try to draw attention away from what we think are superficial controversies of the moment and instead pay more attention to what the underlying

issues really are, where they come from, and what they are about.

That's why we're happy to have these fine historians with us today. In the richness of Chinese history, as Bill Rowe and Pamela Crossley show us, some of these debates and arguments of today go back many centuries. Some of them have a peculiar resonance here in the United States, for example, the competing big government/small government traditions. These arguments remind us of the power of these ideas over time. Accordingly, we keep reminding ourselves—to paraphrase a famous line from Alexander Pope-- that “the proper study of China is China,” not the study of intra-Washington factionalism or competitive careerism.

Now, when we look at this way, we realize how much more we need to know, how much we simply don't know about what influential Chinese in China are really thinking. Put another way, they know a lot about themselves that we don't know about them. After all, they come from China. They live there. They grow up knowing things which they don't have to go to college to learn. Some of the Chinese names which you've just heard are known to some of us who do China studies either for a living or for fun, but they aren't known to you. However, they're well-known in China for who they were, for what they stood for, and for what they still stand for.

Of course, we can't replicate the education that that people in China have had about their own country, about their own intellectual tradition, about their own debate, about the history of their own philosophy. But it's wrong to assume that an adequate substitute for that is for us to send to Beijing a group DC think-tankers to meet with people at some Chinese think tank that's been created solely for the purpose of chatting up American visitors. So Chinese and Americans with American Ph.D.'s get together in Beijing and speak English and talk about what's been going on at their respective alma maters, especially how the football team has been doing and so on. However, at some point, one of the Chinese interlocutors, who's been advertised as a close adviser to Hu Jintao about this or that, will lean forward and say archly “we're concerned about the future direction of China-US relation.” This sends the Americans scurrying back to Washington in greatly agitated, convinced they've made a discovery which needs to be reported immediately to someone in high authority in the White House.

We're trying to get beyond that and we keep trying to remind ourselves that the proper study of China is indeed, China itself, and not the study of ourselves. In particular, the presence of Bill Rowe and Pamela Crossley is a reminder that our growing understanding Chinese strategic culture, that is, the Chinese approach to the issues and problems and conflicts of the world, derive from some very powerful work that Bill and Pamela have done in developing new ways of understanding China. They help us get out from under the political underbrush and out from under decades of political controversy—both here and in China—which have blocked our understanding.

It is, I suppose, like the difference in the sciences between basic and applied research. History is basic research; it's worthy of very close attention. That is why I think you've been treated to three wonderful talks of the sort that you wouldn't have heard in some other places here in Washington.

I will also say something about the past hundred years. Just to remind ourselves: in January of 1912 when the Republic of China was declared, the structure of world affairs was built on a group of great empires—Romanov, Hapsburg, Ottoman, Hohenzollern and of course, the Qing. The Qing was the first to crumble, and within 10 years all the rest of them would be gone too. It's remarkable how rapidly they all went. They had been the pillars of the world but even as people realized the dynasties were crumbling, people at the time didn't understand at all that the idea of empire was going to crumble along with them. That this could happen all over the world, at more or less at the same time, in many different cultural settings, is a powerful reminder that things which happen in the world are connected to each other.

Moreover, I like to point out that, yes, in 10 years, all of these great empires, pillars of domestic life for hundreds of millions of people, pillars of the world political order, crumbled, but how could this happen without social media? How could these things happen of without smart phones or even dumb phones?

It's now a hundred after these great imperial collapses, but we're still trying to achieve a stable and civilized mode of governance in the territories of each of these former empires. One can argue that the only place this has been achieved is within the territory of the European Union, which is a reasonably civilized place to live. But it's not true for the territories of the Romanov empire nor in the former Ottoman Empire, and certainly not in China either.

In fact, it's been a horrendously bloody business to do this all over the world. It's been worst century in the history of the world for murder and mass murder and millions of deaths caused by dislocations. In particular, China was a place where the violence was horrendous, truly horrendous, the worst in the world actually. In the 1950s alone, tens of millions of people were killed as a result of Mao's policies, and that came after decades of civil war and international wars. But, in the last 30 years, with due allowance for the Tiananmen massacre and wars in Tibet Xinjiang, there's been a kind of peace in China, a 30 years' peace as contrasted with what went before. And we don't really understand the origins of this peace and so we don't know how to keep it going, but it seems to us that this is a central concern

As I said, the empires crumbled and the idea of a republic got loose in the world to step in and replace them. And then, for a little while, some old empires got connected in new unanticipated ways. For example, the heirs to the Romanov empire and the heirs to the Qing empire got together for a while by an odd thing called by Communism.

What about the future? The PRC is really the last great multinational empire of the old kind that still exists. No other regime is trying to do it anymore, that is to say, run a great transnational regime by non-democratic means. In all the other places, the bits and pieces want independence. Kosovo and East Timor are now independent states and Palestine says it wants to become one, but even to raise the idea that Taiwan should or might become one is answered with bloodcurdling threats from Beijing that if Taiwan ever tried it, hundreds of PLA missiles would rain down on the place.

Meanwhile, there is appearing in the PRC a renewed interest in old Chinese imperial ideas, but in a vague way. This is the notion of a modern *tianxia*, that is, all under heaven, meaning an

expanded version of the traditional Chinese empire as a way of creating a new order for the whole world that derives from Chinese principles. A high-minded academic might describe would be to say there's a Chinese wish to contribute something to the discourse of modernity but national security planners in Asia and around the world see it differently.

This search for something “authentically Chinese” as a source of political ideas for the twenty-first century But I myself think that it's the republican idea born in 1911 that really threatens the survival of PRC as a regime run by the Communist Party of China which seeks to hang onto a monopoly on all political power. In any case, the main idea that today's PRC puts forward about itself—that it's the final culmination of all of modern Chinese history and that it's going to last forever—cannot possibly be right.

Thank you. (Applause.)