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The Media Mirror: The Coverage of the NATO Bombing of the Chinese Embassy in the China Daily and USA Today

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The Media Mirror:
The Coverage of the NATO Bombing of the Chinese Embassy in the
*China Daily* and *USA Today*

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College of St. Benedict/St. John's University

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by
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The Media Mirror: The Coverage of the NATO Bombing of the Chinese Embassy in the China Daily and USA Today

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Introduction

May 7, 1999 – A U.S.-supported NATO mission bombs the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. Within hours the two countries are in the midst of political strife and cultural misunderstanding. The Chinese government instantly states that a “U.S.-led NATO aircraft wantonly used missiles to attack the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia,” and furthermore condemns “the barbarous act of the U.S.-led NATO” (“People Agonized” 1). On the other hand, the U.S. government describes the bombing as a “terrible accident,” a “case of mistaken target identification early on in the process” (Komarow, “U.S. Tries to Explain” 12A). As Chinese and U.S. media illustrate, there is one bombing and two very different stories. Consequently, the bombing becomes a journalistic story underscored in cold black and white colors. *How correct is the media picture?* The question lies at the heart of this research. However, before this question can be accurately examined, some fundamental points must first be addressed.

For many Americans the media are the vehicle by which one views China. The media are the medium charged with the duty of communicating the intricacies of one culture to another. For many, the media are the intercultural bridge by which we come to understand one another. Regarding reports on China, as with most other coverage, U.S. journalists maintain that they provide the American audience with an objective mirror of the foreign country. At a recent conference on “U.S. Media Coverage of China” at American University in Washington, D.C., it was reported that, “U.S. journalist view their highest obligation as independent reporting that is truthful and accurate. They do not conceive of themselves as obliged to promote any government policy, or U.S.-China relations” (Lawson 4). Furthermore, the Western conferees insisted their “mandate,” is to
“‘report what we see,’ and their responsibility is to their audience - not to any government or to friendship between countries” (Lawson 4-5).

Yet, how objective is the objective mirror of media? Is the American audience truly receiving a consistently accurate representation of China? Edward Farmer notes an inconsistency in the pattern of U.S. reports on China as he claims that, “Studies of the perception of China by Americans have noted the tendency to stereotyping, a natural function of cultural difference, but also a shifting currency of the images from more or less benign to more or less threatening, a function of changing political conditions” (Farmer 248). Contrary to the objective claims of many U.S. journalists, Farmer, along with other communication scholars, have noted that U.S. media perceptions are often closely linked to U.S. political opinion. The result is a scattered, disorientated, and contradictory picture of China.

James Mann, foreign affairs correspondent for the Los Angeles Times, critiques the problem of sporadic reporting on China. He writes that, “The problem for media coverage is that China itself changes far less than do the one-dimensional American frames of it” (Mann 104). Furthermore, Mann states that, “Indeed, over time the American images of China sometimes blatantly contradict one another” (Mann 104). Farmer takes the critique one step further as he claims, “One could argue that the rise and fall of American enthusiasm for China has more to do with what is happening in the United States than it does with what is happening in China” (Farmer 250). Thus, how is one to gain a clear understanding for the complexity of another country if the images presented by the American media not only contradict one another, but are merely the projection of our own situation and perception?
Furthermore, scholars note inadequate research concerning the role the U.S. media plays in providing an understanding of China. Stephen MacKinnon writes that, "So far, serious historical analysis of the political role of either country's media has been lacking" (MacKinnon 206). Likewise, communication scholar Chin-Chuan Lee states that, "Commentators have paid inadequate attention to the media impact of the global developments on China, just as their role in helping undo the Soviet empire and autocratic regimes in Eastern Europe as well as in easing democratic transitions elsewhere (including Taiwan) has been largely overlooked" (Lee 3). Moreover, Lee writes that U.S. media notions of China continue to be laden in a black and white Cold War understanding. Lee questions, "What conceptual framework will arise to inform post-Cold War media accounts of China" (Lee 4)?

The Traditional approach

The current framework for analysis of U.S-China media is partially founded on a type of free press vs. state-controlled press model wherein the free press relates the beliefs of an independent citizenry and the state-controlled press merely echoes the government’s propaganda. In such a way, prior models have held U.S.-China media analysis within a black and white context. In particular, Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm’s book, *Four Theories of the Press*, has had an incredible influence on the analysis of media. J. Herbert Altschull expands on the authors’ findings in *Four Theories of the Press*:

"In the history of humankind, they wrote, there had been no more than two, or four, basic theories of the press. They identified the basic two as 'authoritarian'
and ‘libertarian,’ and said that the remaining two were but developments and modifications of the first two. The authoritarian theory had been modified into the ‘Soviet communist’ doctrine and the libertarian into the ‘social responsibility’ concept” (Altschull 183).

*The Four Theories of the Press* model sets up a fundamental clash between the “authoritarian” press and “libertarian press.” Furthermore, a limitation in approaching a media analysis via the *Four Theories of the Press* model is that each perspective approaches the other with presupposed bias and assumptions. For example, to approach Chinese media through a Western liberal press model we would assume automatic superiority to the “controls” of the authoritarian model. In her book, *Media, Market, and Democracy in China*, Yuezhi Zhao acknowledges the relevance of discussions “on the struggle of press freedom against state control,” yet she states that, “While this narrative holds much explanatory power, it tends to oversimplify the complicated process of transformation in the Chinese media” (Zhao 8). In such a way, the dichotomous approach of authoritarian vs. libertarian press places the analysis of Chinese media in a single black and white frame leaving very little room for intercultural understanding and development. Zhao states that issues of complexity and nuances are lost in such a frame. Nonetheless, Lee writes that, “U.S. scholars, journalists, and policymakers have only recently begun to treat the PRC outside the confines of the superpower contest between the United States and the former Soviet Union” (Lee 16).

Thus, in a sense we have been led to view the complex, changing, and colorful puzzle of China through a dusty lens of media analysis. A lens, which void of context, often reports China in sporadic and contradictory settings. “So instead of the mad,
conformist China of Mao Zedong’s epoch, or the lovable panda-like China of the early Deng Xiaoping’s reign,” writes Jianying Zha, “we now have a China with a totalitarian government on the one hand and a runaway free market on the other. A new puzzle, to be sure, but seen through a pair of old lenses” (Zha 3). Zha expands that, “A closer look at China from multiple angles would yield a more complex, more ambiguous picture” (Zha 3).

The media coverage of the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade is an example of a time when an otherwise dynamic picture is tainted by dichotomous frames of understanding. Indeed, if one looks at the event through a more constructive frame of media analysis, the picture, as Jianying Zha states, is much more “complex” and “ambiguous.” In an attempt to shed light upon black and white journalistic frames of China, this study applies ideological analysis to the China Daily and USA Today coverage of the NATO Chinese Embassy bombing. Admittedly, the China Daily is a state-supported newspaper and the USA Today is a privately owned newspaper. One may wonder if this is a just comparison, yet it is precisely the difference which is key to this study and this particular ideological analysis. The goal of this comparative project is to gain a better understanding of the ideological frames motivating the reporting in each country, whether the newspaper be state-supported or a private media source. Hopefully, an understanding of difference will lead to a greater appreciation for intercultural connections. That is to say, that difference (and the dynamics of difference) must be admitted and respected before true connections can be established.
This study is divided into several sections. The first section provides a background on ideological analysis, as well as foundations of Chinese and American ideology. The second section will analyze themes exhibited in the *China Daily* and *USA Today*. Final conclusions will be drawn following the textual analysis.
Ideological Analysis

A new lens is needed for viewing China’s complex picture. A new lens is needed which will place singular media events into a larger pattern and context of communication. Additionally, a lens is needed which will approach U.S.-China relations through a frame of intercultural understanding rather than dichotomous comparisons. Chin-Chuan Lee urges that, “The outdated Cold War perspective should not be replaced by another set of abstract and grossly reductive generalities; needed are richly contextualized and concrete modes of understanding” (Lee 16). In unison with Lee’s concern, Zhao, along with other communication scholars, suggest that a broader concept of ideology be applied to the study of the Chinese media (Zhao 5).

To begin with, in discussing a broader concept of ideological analysis, one must be careful to separate the term from that of its early Marxist origins. Mimi White writes that, “Classical Marxists tend to regard ideology as false consciousness or mere illusion. The ruling class promulgates systems of ideas and beliefs to promote its own interests that are mistakenly adopted by oppressed and subservient classes as their own” (White 137). Within such a structure, the communication system is used by the elite to directly manipulate and control the masses. However, current ideological analysis, while considering struggles of those in power to control the communication system, suggest that a society’s communication is far more complex than a dominant group’s formulation and the masses’ acceptance of the message.

Communication scholars David Croteau and William Hoynes write the following of ideological analysis:
“When scholars examine media products to uncover their ‘ideology,’ they are interested in the underlying images of society they provide. In this context, an ideology is basically a system of meaning that helps define and explain the world and that makes value judgments about the world. Ideology is related to concepts such as ‘worldview,’ ‘belief system,’ and ‘values,’ but it is broader than those terms. It refers not only to the beliefs held about the world, but also to the basic way in which the world is defined. Ideology, then, is not just about politics; it has a broader and more fundamental connection” (Croteau and Hoynes 157-158).

The Ideological Frame

In many ways, ideology is a hopelessly small frame applied to the much larger and dynamic picture of reality. Suffice to say, a 3 x 5 frame does not do justice to an 8 x 10 picture. While a 3 x 5 frame illustrates aspects of the picture, it must by design, leave aspects of the picture outside its boundaries. Such is true of ideology. Ideology serves as a complex frame constructed through belief systems, worldviews, and values. Consequently, such systems create a frame for one’s interpretation of reality – placing an event (or picture) within a “common sense” context of understanding. Ideology essentially provides one with the tools for coping with the vast amounts of information and messages continually communicated in society. Thus, when a person encounters a message, their particular ideology helps them to interpret the situation, while ultimately leaving aspects of the “real picture” outside the constructed frame of “common sense” understanding. Ideological analysis questions the frames that one employs for
understanding an event, and furthermore, how and why specific ideological frames are constructed.

In an ideological analysis of media, one must realize that the media, as a communication system of society, helps to construct the ideological frame. The media are a communicator of the worldviews, beliefs, and values of the larger society. Accordingly, it constructs and reiterates frames of understanding. Thus, it is also important to remember that the media’s messages are not constructed in a vacuous state. Wo Ho Chang writes that, “A nation’s press or mass media system is closely related to its political system. The media is largely determined by its politico-social context, and in turn its functions are compatible with its national political ideology” (Chang 272). Furthermore, the media as an agent in “the initiation and circulation of society’s communication system” serves as “the building blocks of the ‘symbolic environment’” (Lynch 2). Additionally, John Thompson suggests to, “conceptualize ideology in terms of the ways in which the meaning mobilized by symbolic forms serves to establish and sustain relations of domination” (Thompson 58). Thus, ideology can be construed as a frame constructed of various “symbolic forms.” The media then, as society’s communication system, provides the pieces or building blocks of this symbolic environment. As Thompson points out, however, the symbolic forms (messages) can be “mobilized” to the benefit of those in power. Thus, a society’s ideological frame is not objective; rather it is malleable and can be arranged to create a variety of interpretations of pictures.
Effects of Hegemony on Ideological Frame

Thus people in turn "derive their worldviews, values, and action strategies" from the symbolic environment constructed through the communication system (Lynch 2). Consequently, as Croteau and Hoynes state, "ruling groups in a society actively seek to have their worldview accepted by all members of society as the universal way of thinking" (Croteau and Hoynes 164). The ideological frame then can be a forum of contention in society with dominant groups maneuvering for "their piece of the picture," attempting to arrange and control the framing of the picture. The dominant group(s), which controls the arrangement of the frame, exercise hegemonic control over the interpretation of the picture. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist from the 1920’s, contributed greatly to the understanding of hegemony. Croteau and Hoynes, writing on Gramsci’s notion of hegemony state that, "hegemony connects questions of culture, power, and ideology. In short, Gramsci argued that ruling groups can maintain their power through either force or consent, or a combination of the two" (Croteau and Hoynes 163).

Furthermore, ruling groups control and maintain power by having people accept their symbolic environment, their "interpretation of the picture." Moreover, Daniel Lynch writes that, "Legitimacy is rooted in ideational culture, which is constituted by communication and is identical to the symbolic environment" (Lynch 2). Therefore, the degree of a ruling group’s legitimacy correlates to people’s acceptance of their constructed symbolic environment; the people’s acceptance of the dominant group’s worldview, beliefs, and values. Since a society’s symbolic environment is created via the
communication system, the media (as makers of the symbolic blocks/frames) can’t help but be affected by politics - whether they be communist or capitalist.

However, the communication process is far more complex than the simple formulation and acceptance of messages. Croteau and Hoynes explain that, “Hegemony operates at the level of common sense in the assumptions we make about social life and on the terrain of things that we accept as ‘natural’ or ‘the way things are’” (Croteau and Hoynes 164). Thus, hegemony is not simply the powerful arranging ideological frames at their fancy; rather hegemony operates when one never thinks to question the positioning of a symbolic block. Hegemony exercises its control when one considers the arrangement of a frame natural and never thinks to consider a picture outside the boundaries of the frame. Rather than the puppet master simply pulling the strings of the puppet, hegemonic control is an enculturation process, where power rests on the acceptance of a defined meaning.

Thus, the media is a reflection of this process. Croteau and Hoynes state: “We prefer to think of media texts as sites where cultural contests over meaning are waged rather than as providers of some univocal articulation of ideology. In other words, different ideological perspectives, representing different interests with unequal power, engage in a kind of struggle within media texts” (Croteau and Hoynes 159). Consequently, the media become a ground of larger cultural debate rather than simple indoctrination. Zhao writes that current critical concepts of ideology can then be used to extend, “the analysis of ideology from the intentional to the unintentional, making ideology a function of the social processes. Viewed from this perspective, the ideological function of the news media goes beyond the explicit promotion of ideological doctrines
to the seemingly independent and autonomous codes and conventions of news
production...” (Zhao 5). As Croteau and Hoynes state, “At its best, ideological analysis
provides a window onto the broader ideological debates going on in society” (Croteau
and Hoynes 160-161).
Beyond Propaganda – China’s Emerging Ideology

Mao Zedong, the founder of the People’s Republic of China, recognized how the circulation and control of information affects a population. Mao’s theories on information control are in keeping with those of the “Leninist state.” Su Shaozhi writes that, “In a Leninist state, public opinion is thus an essential instrument of political struggle. Its rigid control is indispensable” (Su 77). Moreover, the Chinese Communist Party’s rise to power was due in large part to its ability to use information and public opinion to rally the population and rise against the opposing Nationalist Party. “Before the CCP attained power,” states Su Shaozi, “it used ideological control to mobilize public support for the goals of socialism” (Su 77). Daniel Lynch labels the state’s attempt to control communication as “thought work.” Lynch writes that, “The term ‘thought work’ (sixiang gongzuo) refers precisely to this struggle to control communications flows and thus ‘structuration’ of the symbolic environment.” Furthermore, Lynch states that, “If a state can control society’s communication process, it can structure the symbolic environment in such a way that citizens will be more likely to accept the state’s political order as legitimate” (Lynch 2).

Thus, the success of the Communist party was due largely in part to their ability to persuade the Chinese population (in particular the Chinese peasantry) to accept the Communist’s structuration of the symbolic environment. That is, Mao and his regime effectively impassioned the Chinese population to accept their “worldviews, values, and action strategies” (Lynch 2) which led to the eventual establishment of the People’s Republic of China on October 1, 1949.
A Society in Transition

While Mao was beyond a doubt a brilliant revolutionary, he proved to be a poor leader of national reconstruction. Consequently, by the 1970s, revolutionary ideology was wearing thin and the country was once again in the midst of turmoil. Carol Lee Hamrin writes that, “Bitterness resulting from the Maoist political campaigns and an alienation arising from revelations of economic advances outside China made ideological promises of Communist utopia through infallible Party leadership untenable even before the death of Mao Zedong” (Hamrin 59). When Mao died in 1976, “the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had to replace its charismatic claim to legitimacy as the leader of national revolution by performance criteria better suited to the modern age – economic development and international status” (Hamrin 59). Thus, a conservative and pragmatic group of the Communist Party transitioned into power replacing the aging revolutionaries. Deng Xiaoping, returning from exile, marshaled the pragmatists’ cause. Deng and his colleagues believed, that in order to survive, China needed to open itself to economic development. In 1978 Deng began, “an assault on ideological strictures on thought and information,” as consequently, “The old propaganda system, which functioned as a self-legitimation process, was dependent on limiting sources of information and modes of thinking to those endorsed by the state. The resulting intellectual stagnation denied the regime itself key resources for economic development – ideas and skills for economic planning and implementation” (Hamrin 60). Thus, in order to implement the necessary economic development and open itself to outside information and technology, the CCP had to dismantle its traditional “thought work” structure.
Lowell Dittmer writes that, "Inasmuch as the cult had formed the fountainhead of ideology, the almost magical efficacy attributed to Mao Zedong Thought, demolition of the cult resulted in a derogation of the almost sacrosanct status of ideology, making more room for pragmatic flexibility and innovation" (Dittmer 100). However, while Deng’s reforms paved the road for economic development, they also eroded the Party’s base of control. "The powerful but unplanned and unexpected corrosive effect of information on regime legitimacy was the natural consequence of the necessary means forced on the CCP to accomplish its economic performance goals – exposure of the elite to new ideas and skills and their inclusion in decision-making," states Hamrin. "These steps amounted to an undeclared but profound political reform in the relationship between state and society" (Hamrin 60). Furthermore, Dittmer states that, "By secularizing ideology the leadership inadvertently divested itself of what had been a powerful instrument for legitimizing its rule and enforcing conformity with its policies" (Dittmer 102).

Consequently, the information revolution feeding China’s economic development also catalyzed demands for greater social freedoms. Nonetheless, the transitioning regime was not equipped to handle such demands as, "loosening of internal Party discipline and social control without the institution of a new constitutional – legal framework, however, undermined regime legitimacy and authority in a number of complex ways" (Hamrin 69). In effect, the information revolution needed to spur economic development also eroded the Party’s base of legitimacy. Economic development was a chemotherapy treatment for China. The Party needed to introduce economic reform to survive, and yet in the process, the economic revolution slowly destroyed the ideological life cells of the Party.
Hamrin notes that this is not a disease or a treatment unique to China. "Failed Leninist reform in China in the 1980s was symptomatic of a global shift from the industrial era to a new socioeconomic era shaped by the forces of new technology in information processing and communication," states Hamrin (Hamrin 71). In order to spark the necessary economic development, the Communist leaders were forced by necessity to open their borders to new forms of information and technology. China was stuck in a paradox – in order to regain legitimacy it had to introduce a system that would challenge its legitimacy. The country had little choice. Daniel Lynch states, "reform and opening were necessary to develop the economy and restore the legitimacy to the political system. Loss of control over thought work was a major, unanticipated consequence" (Lynch 7).

Thus, due in part to increased communication networks and the loss of thought work; the CCP did not have the means to sustain their legitimacy. Consequently, the ensuing variables of economic development created a major legitimation crisis for the CCP in the late 1980s. No longer did the Party have the traditional means of thought work to control or respond to the increased expectations of freedom. Daniel Lynch states that, "Conversely, states that are perceived as illegitimate must increasingly rely on physical coercion and the satisfaction of material wants to maintain control" (Lynch 2)\(^1\). The CCP, perceived by the population as illegitimate, could no longer rely on their economic reforms or the satisfaction of material wants to maintain control. The depictions of physical coercion were dramatically played out in the streets and the alleys of Tiananmen Square in June 1989.
“To get rich is glorious!”

In hopes of a quick recovery following Tiananmen Square, Deng Xiaoping and the CCP made an “unspoken bargain” with the people: “We, the party, will raise living standards, allow unprecedented economic freedom, and retreat from all fronts but one – politics. In return, we expected the masses, well-fed and comparatively well-clothed, to be acquiescent” (Jernow). It is important to note that the CCP’s claim to power was extremely substantial as it echoed as a singular voice among the dwindling number of Communist countries. Remarking on the changing face of politics, Jianying Zha states that, “Profound cultural differences aside, though, China’s post-Cold War social transition is marked by a singularly important factor that sets it apart from all others: the revolution failed in 1989, and the Communist Party stays on to guide and control the reform process” (Zha 10). Consequently, Deng in 1992, in a second attempt to bolster the legitimacy of the Communist Party, resolutely grasped the market economy and established a new mandate with the people: “I rule, you prosper, and let’s forget all else” (Zha 13). Thus, offering major material incentive and promising a bright future, the Party asked the people to accept their rule and forget past offenses. Money, rather than politics, became the new incentive of the Party. Gone were the days of Mao’s self-criticisms and in came the days of economic prosperity. As Allison Liu Jernow writes, “Ever since Deng Xiaoping’s 1992 call for renewed economic reform, making money has been a patriotic imperative. ‘Money worshipping’ is what the newspapers call it” (Jernow).

Deng thus attempted to combine Party logic with market logic calling it “socialism with Chinese characteristics” (Pei 179). Zha describes this “unprecedented
transition” as “ridden with contradictions, ambiguities, and often impossible dilemmas” (Zha 3). Furthermore, she refers to the current change in China, “as ‘the Whopper effect’: there is an impure, junky, hybrid quality in nearly all spheres of the present Chinese life – culture, politics, attitudes, ideology” (Zha 11). Daniel Lynch labels the current confusing and complex situation in China as, “‘public-sphere praetorianism,’ a condition in which neither that state nor any other political force can impose order and purpose upon the initiation and circulation of society’s communication messages – the building blocks of the ‘symbolic environment’ from which people derive their worldviews, values, and action strategies” (Lynch 2). Furthermore, Lynch writes that, “In China, public-sphere praetorianism – the cacophonous and unstructured circulation of communications messages – is manifested in three specific processes: commercialization, globalization, and pluralization” (Lynch 6). Consequently, the influx of communication networks are “polluting the symbolic environment” (Lynch 6) and, furthermore, the plethora of communication messages are, “reducing the states overall relevance in the construction of the symbolic environment” (Lynch 7). Lynch concludes that, “This situation is sharply different from that which prevailed under Mao, when control over communications flows was highly centralized. Now, millions of individuals and organizations contribute to the construction of the symbolic environment, and the central state wages a constant struggle to maintain its pertinence” (Lynch 7).

The Chinese media

Consequently, the contradictions and ambiguities inherent to “public-sphere praetorianism” have seeped into the Chinese media, a traditional agent in the construction
of the symbolic environment. Referring to the affects of the market economy, Yuezhi Zhao writes that, “The developments produced the current mix of party logic and market logic – the defining feature of the news media system. It is a scene full of contradictions, tensions, and ambiguities” (Zhao 2). The communication networks have absorbed China’s cultural complexity and consequently, “The power to initiate communication messages has become scattered into a complex mosaic, with all manner of individuals and groups circulating in enormous variety of messages in a confusing and patternless cacophony” (Lynch 5).

And yet, in the midst of this cacophony of messages, the CCP officially holds the reigns of the media. “Despite the breathtaking speed of commercialization, journalism remains static in many respects,” states Zhao. “The Chinese Communist Party still insists that the media are its mouthpiece and it continues to exercise blunt forms of media censorship” (Zhao 2). The press is not autonomous from the Chinese public sphere and is, “viewed as an agency of the government with the task not just to inform, but also to indoctrinate” (Farmer 249). Lee writes, “The mass media in China, in sum, serve dual functions as an instrument of ideological control over the masses and a site of struggle among power elites” (Lee 8). Nonetheless it is crucial to note the CCP control of the media is not equivalent to that of the Maoist era. Since ideological control is connected to the ability of the state to construct the symbolic environment and the current symbolic environment is a cacophony of messages (“the Whopper effect”), the state consequently lacks the ability and the legitimacy to directly affect public opinion. Lynch states, “The problem is that its effectiveness [propaganda] has crumbled dramatically; as a result, China’s leaders can no longer rely on thought work to manage a rapidly changing
society” (Lynch 3). Thus, caught between the forces of market logic and party logic, “News media in post-Mao China, in short, are in the paradoxical situation of at once being changed and remaining the same” (Zhao 2).

While the CCP can no longer depend on the media for direct indoctrination, Zhao suggests that the process could be far subtler. “Moreover, an argument can be made that while Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought have lost their grip on the population, the ideology of national and personal development through the market has replaced them. While this powerful ideology is more implicit, its grip on the people is no less totalistic” (Zhao 6). That is to say that rather than political propaganda (which flooded China during Mao’s era) the current messages are tied to the emerging ideology of the market. Moreover, Zhao writes that:

“…although the Party has not relinquished Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought, it is counting on ‘delivering the goods’ rather than on ideological doctrines alone for its legitimacy. Within this context, symbolic forms that sustain Party domination, even though they do not explicitly promote political doctrines, are also serving an ideological function” (Zhao 5).
Role of the U.S. Media

Simply stated, democracy is assumed to be the bedrock principle of the U.S. press. J. Herbert Altschull writes that, “The fundamental role demanded of the press by the Hutchins Commission\(^2\) was rooted in the democratic assumption, which holds that democracy is nurtured and furthered when an informed citizenry makes wise judgments in choosing those who will represent them in the government” (Altschull 182). The Hutchins Commission, concerned with the increasing power and reach of the U.S. press, strongly encouraged the media to be “socially responsible” to the American principle of democracy. Moreover, “To work towards this end is to be responsible. And in carrying out this role, the press must be accountable to the public, to the society that it serves” (Altschull 182). Thus, the U.S. press is to be the transmitter, moderator, and defender of democracy. It is the instrument that keeps Americans informed of their government and the instrument through which the government can feel the pulse of the citizenry.

Furthermore, while the press serves as a national bridge between Americans and their government, it is also important to note that the media also serve as an international link – a communicative bridge between countries and cultures. Altschull notes that, “The assumption of prodigious power on the part of the press is derived largely from the visibility of newspapers, magazines, and especially television; it is drawn also from the perception of the majority of the population that it receives its information about the world from the news media” (Altschull 188). With the explosion of technology and information systems, people now have the ability to reach the furthest corners of the world via the media. Consequently, the media are the way that the majority of the population learns to visualize its international neighbors. Thus, it becomes increasingly
important to understand the media in the role of an international ambassador and communicator.

Specifically speaking, how accurately does the U.S. media portray China? A conference on the “U.S. Media Coverage of China” seems to reiterate that U.S. journalists carry over their democratic assumption to international reporting. The conference report notes that, “The Western journalistic ideal was described by one Western participant as that of ‘integrity, truthfulness, getting to the bottom of things, having no ideological binders, not harboring grudges.’” Thus the underlying notion of journalism is that of an investigator deciphering the situation and reporting the facts to keep the citizenry informed. The Western participant further stated that, “Friendship and cooperation between nations is certainly desirable, ‘but it is not what journalists are about.’” He argued that Western journalists ‘should not be criticized for trying to be truthful. That is the underlying assumption that animates all journalism. It does not mean unfriendliness or hostility, but that we are trying to see things clearly’” (Lawson 5). In the case of China, how “clearly” is the information being collected and disseminated?

Objectiveless Objectioness

In 1979, after nearly thirty years of mutual isolation, the United States established diplomatic relationships with the People’s Republic of China. Edward Farmer writes that, “opportunities for reportorial access to China advanced steadily,” (Farmer 252) since the development of diplomatic relationships. Previous to this time, reporters could only catch glimpses of the great Middle Kingdom from Hong Kong. When China eventually opened its borders, the media were overwhelmed with information. Farmer
states that, "The new media access to China that followed the establishment of diplomatic relations has both facilitated and greatly complicated the reporter's job. Instead of too little information suddenly there was too much" (Farmer 257). Thus China reporters, previously at a loss for information, now had to "get to the bottom of things" without having "ideological binders."

Nonetheless, many media critics attack the belief that journalists have the ability to objectively sort through information. Chin-Chuan Lee writes that, "media professionalism – defined as a commitment to claims of objectivity, balance, and ideological neutrality – has also been severely assaulted. Epistemologically questioning media professionalism as the last bastion of raw empiricism, critics maintain that news is socially constructed and bears little correspondence to the external reality" (Lee 4). Furthermore, James Carey notes how closely journalism is tied to the norms of its society. Carey states that, "American journalism is deeply embedded in American culture. Its faults and its triumphs are pretty much characteristic of the culture as a whole" (Carey, "The Dark Continent" 194). Thus, while American journalists may stand resolutely by claims of objectivity, media critics claim they are nonetheless subject to the "common sense" ideology of their society.

Consequently, examination of the U.S. media coverage of China represents the tension between "objective" reporting versus interpretation via American values. Chin-Chuan Lee writes, "One hopes that U.S. journalists will approach the coverage of China with more balance and detachment, and not fall prey to the various spikes of romanticism and cynicism which marked earlier times. But let us be reminded that their journalistic canons have been – and always will be – embedded in the mainstream values of the home
country and its shifting foreign policy concerns” (Lee 17). Farmer reiterates Lee, stating that, “Reporting on China does not take place in a vacuum. I believe it is still the case that for most Americans China is surrounded by strong emotional and ideological associations” (Farmer 249). Presumably, if journalists thus operate out of the ideology or “common sense” of their culture; their gathering, filtering, and communication of messages is affected by a cultural bias.

Save China for Democracy

As stated earlier, the belief in democracy is a cultural assumption of U.S. media. In theory, the media operate in the United States to sustain and strengthen the democratic process. James Carey supports this stance when he boldly states the “controversial assumption” that, “journalism and democracy share a common fate. No journalism, no democracy.” Furthermore, Carey writes that, “It [the ‘controversial assumption’] claims that journalists can be independent or objective about everything but democracy, for to do so is to abandon the craft. About democratic institutions, about the way of life of democracy, journalists are not permitted to be indifferent, nonpartisan, or objective” (Carey, “Lawyers” 16-17). Indeed, Carey’s statement is a controversial commentary concerning the role of U.S. media. While most journalists claim objectivity, Carey states that due to the designated role of the U.S. media, journalists are naturally biased to democracy. Consequently, the U.S. journalists’ “democratic assumption” is particularly brought to light in the coverage of China.

The U.S. has a long history of trying to assimilate China to its cultural views. As a result, this history affects the present-day interactions with China as well. Carolyn
Wakeman writes that, “The old expectation that America can save China, if not for Christ but at least for democracy, bolsters evangelism, impassioned human rights advocacy, and determined commercial ventures that still attempt to convert China to the American way” (Wakeman 67). This attempt to “save China for democracy” manifests itself in a number of different ways. Interestingly enough, Carey notes that economics rather than politics is the new battleground in the fight for democracy. He states that, “Whereas the triumph of democracy is everywhere heralded, the commitment to actual democracy everywhere has weakened, or, more precisely, our imagination of democracy has shrunk and is equated solely with a limited aspect of even economic democracy: the existence of free and open markets” (Carey, “Lawyers” 22).

Indeed, it appears that the push of free-market ideology has had an interesting affect on the media. Richard Lambert, editor of the *Financial Times*, writes, “Here’s the paradox. Just as the old model of international news reporting, based on bureaus of general correspondents, has moved into a stage of rapid decline, so the business news organizations have been expanding their networks of specialist correspondents around the world at a hectic pace.” (Lambert 78-79). Thus, business reporting is clearly the growing media forum for the communication of international news. Consequently, this “economic paradigm” affects the way that news is gathered and reported. James Mann comments that:

“The shallow frames that color American news stories go beyond politics to economics. Read *The Economist* or the editorial pages of *The Wall Street Journal* these days, and you will find China pigeonholed into the frame of Western free-market ideology. The Chinese economy is regularly bifurcated into two simplistic
categories: ‘thriving’ private enterprises and ‘failing’ state enterprises” (Mann 106).

However, critics warn that there are dangers in reporting international events solely through an economic lens. Lambert states that, “Business readers are looking for a context to help them understand events in their own marketplace,” and as he later comments, “There are bigger, broader questions that also need reporting from the ground in a way that cannot be done by reporters who are passing through the region on a quick trip” (Lambert 80). Lambert points to China as an “obvious example” of where the reporting must be focused and contextualized. Lambert writes that China, “is a difficult and complex story to report, one that requires an understanding of the subtlety and nuances of politics and culture as well as of the business community” (Lambert 80).

Moreover, one must question the assumption that a free market ideology lays the groundwork for democracy. As Peter Berger “asserts that democracy presupposes capitalism, but not visa versa” (Lee 14). Indeed, some critics agree that economic freedom and democracy are not necessarily synonymous goals. Carey argues that, “when economic values come to dominate politics, liberty is often at risk. One does not have to believe in conspiracies to observe that economic interests can profit from a weakened nation state.” Furthermore, Carey writes, “modern economic developments seem to favor authoritarian rather than democratic regimes” (Carey, “Lawyers” 22). This statement is particularly disheartening to the “common sense” notion that the American free-market, when transplanted into another nation, will bring forth the same fruits of democracy. Carey and Berger seem to indicate that market economy (while the West terms it “free-market”), operates in but is not exclusive to a democracy.
Chin-Chuan Lee centers this "economic democracy" argument on China. He states that, "What is pertinent to our concern here is whether economic development triggers political democracy and press freedom" (Lee 14). Lee cites Taiwan as a case where economic prosperity did eventually lead to a democratic transition, but only after several decades of evolution (Lee 14). Moreover, Lee comments on how economic reforms have made few political inroads in China. Lee states that:

"Domestically, the decade-long marketization of political management has progressively depoliticized the state, economics and culture, thus creating considerable room for media liberalization. This impressive achievement – which has produced winners and losers – does not belie its dark underside: social dislocation has manifested itself in rampant corruption and graft, rising regionalism, bureaucratic inefficiency, and chronic public outcry. Despite liberalization, there is also little indication of sustained democratic ferment. China appears to be decades away from the translation of liberalization into democratization" (Lee 15).

The Simplistic Frame

Consequently, whether economic or political, some critics argue that the U.S. media have a history (rather unintentionally) of framing their coverage of China. As stated earlier, when China re-opened to the media, journalists struggled with how to interpret the situation. Farmer writes that, "Another problem facing the reporter who entered China after 1979 was that the Chinese kept getting out of character in ways that threatened old generalizations, assumptions, and stereotypes." The American reporters
had to find new ways to communicate China to the American audience as, “in the 1980s it became clear that things were changing. Austerity was out, Mao’s thought was out, and mass conformity was on the decline” (Farmer 259). Thus the reporter was forced to decide what information to collect, how to interpret it, and how to communicate it. James Mann states that nearly every American television and newsmagazine story of the 1980’s featured, “Chinese at discos and wearing Western clothes.” Mann also comments that the, “gee-whiz stories back in the United States about how ‘open’ China had become bore only a vague resemblance to economic realities and none at all to politics” (Mann 102-103).

Edward Farmer reiterates that U.S. media frames of China in the 1980s seemed to miss an underlying reality. As Farmer writes, “What did it mean if 150 young people went to a disco dance at the Friendship Hotel in Beijing? What was the significance of that if 1,000 times as many people in Inner Mongolia were still herding sheep from horseback in traditional ways? Was China changing, was only Beijing changing, or was it just our image of China that was changing” (Farmer 259)? Interestingly enough, Farmer suggests that the perception of change in China was largely determined and defined through an American viewpoint. However, while America watched the discos in Beijing, the force of change throughout the whole of China was less apparent. Moreover, corruption and political decay abounded as China struggled with the economy and political succession. The economic, political, and cultural tension filled Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989. Americans, previously distracted by the discos and golf courses, were left shocked, outraged, and speechless as they witnessed the bloody end to the protests in June.
Consequently, a decade after China opened the door to the media, reporters had to once again find a new method and context for reporting China to the American audience. Now, however, Farmer believes that Tiananmen Square has increased the complexity of the reporter's job. "It [Tiananmen] can be taken as a watershed marking the transition to an era in which social change in China will have a different dynamic, in which popular opinion and social practice will play a larger role and official ideology and political authority a smaller role. As we move beyond that watershed the reporter's need to determine what is really happening promises to be increasingly more difficult" (Farmer 260). Furthermore, it becomes necessary that the reporter place the information within an intercultural context. For example, Farmer writes that there is a difference between the associations the Chinese have with the word "democracy" and the associations that Americans have with the word "democracy." Farmer then raises the question, "But how is the reporter to tell the American reader what the Chinese students meant when they called for democracy" (Farmer 260)?

Clearly, placing news stories within an intercultural context is easier said than done. James Mann indicates that it is very difficult for reporters to escape the stereotypical frames of a story. To begin with, "At news desks in the United States, the natural tendency of editors and producers is to look for stories that involve, in some way, the frame." Moreover, Mann writes that it would be unfair to say that all news organizations conform to the governing frame, "Yet the frame sets the background, the assumed context, which China stories usually must deal with in one form or another. A reporter can challenge and contradict the frame, but can't completely ignore it: he or she is often obliged to give at least a few paragraphs about the frame and then play off his or
her story against the frame” (Mann 104). The frame is thus a routine task of American journalism; possibly so basic that few notice they operate within the boundary of the frame.

Consequently, as China experiences transformations and tensions, the subject of framing is particularly poignant. Mann believes that while China dramatically changes, the U.S. frames remain simplistic and sporadic. He writes, “The Cardinal Sin committed by American news organizations in covering China is to portray it, always, in one overly simplistic frame. The American frames of China change dramatically from decade to decade, but the underlying behavior of news organizations does not” (Mann 103). Furthermore, Farmer argues that U.S. perceptions of China are a reflection of domestic rather than international interpretation. Farmer states, “One could argue that the rise and fall of American enthusiasm for China has more to do with what is happening in the United States than it does with what is happening in China” (Farmer 250).

Vacillating Coverage - Love/Hate Relationship

As Farmer and Mann suggest, the U.S. media view of China is more a reflection of itself than China. The result is that images of China fall victim to America’s political currents. As Mann states, “The problem for media coverage is that China itself changes far less than do the one-dimensional American frames of it.” Moreover, Mann writes that, “over time the American frames of China sometimes blatantly contradict one another” (Mann 104). A number of critics note this vacillating and contradictory attitude that America projects onto China. Issacs writes that, “Studies of the perception of China by Americans have noted not just the tendency to stereotyping, a natural function of
cultural difference, but also a shifting currency of the images from more or less benign to more or less threatening, a function of the changing political conditions” (Farmer 248)⁴. Benson Lee Grayson reiterates the same point. He writes, “It is well understood that American popular attitudes toward China have tended to vacillate between periods of warmth and friendship and periods of suspicion and hostility” (Farmer 249-50)⁵.

Moreover, Carolyn Wakeman claims that, “For more than a century Americans have oscillated between seeing the Chinese as noble peasants and Oriental demons” (Wakeman 62). As Mann states that, “America media tend to be governed at any given time by a single story, image, or concept” (Mann 103), Wakeman claims that, “in the long and complex story of Sino-American relations, contemporary events often collide with enduring patterns” (Wakeman 67). That is to say that America’s contemporary frame of China often is often impacted by historical patterns. For instance, Wakeman cites “determined commercial ventures” which presently “still attempt to convert China to the American way” (Wakeman 67). Moreover, current events will often cause a reporter to draw historical parallels. Thus a present-day protest in China would most likely be compared to Tiananmen Square or the Cultural Revolution. The term “state-controlled media” can be paralleled to the days of Maoist propaganda.

However, historical comparisons void of analysis and vacillating coverage creates a very confusing and unpredictable picture of China. Michel Oksenberg, former president of the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, writes, “I suggest that the major deficiency in American media coverage of China has been its oscillating quality. For generations the United States and China have been locked in a love-hate relationship, including periods of intense friendship during which undue expectations are aroused.
Mutual recriminations occur as expectations go unmet, prompting periods of estrangement" (Oksenberg 222). James Mann argues that U.S. journalists need to place contemporary events in China within a broader context, seeing the single event as part of a larger pattern. Mann states that, “Above all, American media coverage of China needs to challenge existing assumptions and be ready for the unexpected. By doing so, we can avoid the sense of shock that erupts at each swing of Chinese history, including most recently after the Tiananmen crackdown of 1989” (Mann 107). Moreover, as Mann earlier states, “The urge to generalize is understandable, but China is too big, too complex, too diverse to capture in a single frame” (Mann 106). However, Oksenberg laments that, “Despite its importance, no journalist or academic has really understood the political dynamics of this era” (Oksenberg 223).
Methods Statement

The crux of this paper is an analysis of two primary sources: the China Daily and the USA Today. The USA Today, with 6.3 million readers, is the nation’s most read daily newspaper. Moreover, as a mainstream newspaper, the USA Today seems to boast “traditional” claims of journalistic “objectivity.” As Allen H. Neuharth, former chairman and president of the Gannett Company (USA Today parent company) states, “USA Today’s secret is very simple. It communicates with the reader on a personal level, very quickly, clearly, and directly in an upbeat, exciting, positive environment. It’s giving the readers information that they want and need in order to form their own opinions. USA Today has made reading a newspaper an enjoyable experience again” (Prichard 340). A large amount of space in the USA Today is also geared toward business. Gaining an early start, the paper published 3,484 ad pages in 1986 alone “finishing second among newsweeklies and business magazines” (Prichard 363). When the USA Today was launched on September 15, 1982, it became, “the country’s first national, general-interest daily newspaper” (Prichard 1).

The China Daily began its publication roughly a year prior to the USA Today on June 1, 1981. The China Daily is the first “English daily newspaper published in China since the founding of the People’s Republic” (Chang 112). Much like the goal of the USA Today, the China Daily serves as a general information source on the Chinese nation. Moreover, similar to the USA Today, the China Daily appears to have a business-orientation. As of 1989, the China Daily devoted, “on the average, 25 percent of its total space to advertising” (Chang 129). Furthermore, the readership of the paper seems to be predominantly business-based as the China Daily, “was launched to meet the needs of
China's open policy and to serve the increasing number of foreigners in China, including foreign tourists and foreign businessmen as well as Chinese who understand English" (Chang 112).

The USA Today and the China Daily provide for constructive comparison. Both papers were launched at roughly the same time with the mission of providing general news for their nations. Moreover, both papers appear to be geared towards a business-orientated audience. As the China Daily and the USA Today approach their respective twentieth birthdays, it is interesting to note how these papers, born of a similar mission, are affected by their specific geographic location. In other words, how does one's culture affect their media sources? Consequently, examining the China Daily and the USA Today coverage via the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade provides an interesting case study.

I analyzed the two papers over roughly a two-week period: May tenth through May twenty-first. As the Embassy bombing occurred on May seventh (Belgrade time), the reason for my start date of analysis must be noted. When the bombing occurred it was already the morning of May eighth in China, too late for an addition to the day's paper. The news broke in the papers on May ninth. However, throughout my research I was unable to find a May ninth edition of the China Daily. Consequently, the USA Today begins its coverage as well on the tenth as the only edition prior to the tenth was the USA Today weekend edition (May seventh through the ninth). Thus the analysis of the text begins on May tenth for both papers. The analysis continues until two weeks after the date of the bombing, May twenty-first.
I began my analysis by initially identifying recurring themes within each separate newspaper. I noted twenty-two themes in the *China Daily* and twenty themes in the *USA Today* (see appendix). After identifying the themes I read every article in each paper (May tenth through May twenty first) that pertained to the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. I made note everytime an article made reference to a theme. I used this method as a way to isolate recurring ideas and motifs within the text.

After an analysis of each paper was completed I looked for parallels and contrasts between as well as within the papers. I then continue the analysis by discussing the dominant themes displayed in each paper.
Text Analysis

China Daily

The various themes found in the China Daily reporting of the Embassy bombing can be clustered around four basic themes: the “barbaric act,” sovereign nation, international community, and U.S. hegemony. I explore each of the four themes as a separate (yet interconnected part) of current Chinese ideology. Moreover, each of the four basic themes is further explored through specific sub-themes.

1. “Barbaric Act”

China’s history contains painful references to foreign aggression. Foreign “barbarians” have invaded China since the early dynasties in hope of capturing the riches of the Middle Kingdom. The Chinese need only look back a few hundred years to see the “barbarians” from the West arriving on their shores. Consequently, Modern China’s history (until Communist takeover in 1949) is shadowed by various forms of Western exploitation. The word “barbarian” summons painful memories for the Chinese. Thus, it is important to note how the NATO bombing is repeatedly portrayed as a “barbaric act.”

A. “Barbaric” Word Choice

To begin with, the China Daily is very definite in word choice using the term “barbaric” to describe the bombing of the Embassy in Belgrade. The headline of the China Daily on May 10th proclaims, “People agonized by criminal act.” The China Daily bases the corresponding article on a television speech delivered the day prior by Vice-President Hu Jintao. Hu is quoted as saying, “The criminal act, which is in violation of international laws and norms of international relations, has aroused the utmost
indignation of the Chinese people” (“People Agonized” 1). Moreover, this initial article continues the condemnation of the bombing by further labeling the bombing as a “barbaric”/“barbarous” act. The article states that, “China has called on the UN Security Council to convene an emergency meeting to discuss and condemn the barbarous act of the U.S.-led NATO” (“People Agonized” 1). The article ends by stating, “people across the country held forums and gatherings and issued letters or telegrams of protest to voice their support for the solemn statement of the Chinese Government condemning the barbaric acts of U.S.-led NATO” (“People Agonized” 1).

Moreover, the China Daily is very sure to distinguish between a “barbaric” act and a “tragic mistake.” The paper relates Clinton’s remarks about the bombing made while surveying tornado damage in Oklahoma City. In a way the China Daily seems to draw a distinction between Clinton’s informal manner at the tornado sight and Vice-President Hu Jintao who made his formal remarks on television “wearing a black suit and tie” (“People Agonized” 1). The China Daily quotes Clinton as saying, “Bombing the Chinese embassy was a ‘tragic mistake,’ Clinton said on Saturday, as China protested the atrocious act” (“Nations Condemn” 12). The article ends by stating that, “Denying the attack was ‘barbaric,’ Clinton and NATO will continue its military campaign” (“Nations Condemn” 12)

Nonetheless, the China Daily continues to report national denouncement of the “barbaric act.” “Calling the bombing which killed at least three Chinese and injured more than 20 Saturday morning (Beijing time), ‘a barbarous act,’ dozens of organizations voiced their strong support for a solemn statement of the Chinese Government” (Bao, “Residents Denounce” 2). Additionally, there are also reports of the “barbaric act” being
attributed to “barbarians.” The China Daily runs a report of sophisticated computer hackers who denounce the attack by altering the U.S. embassy website. “A picture of James Sasser, U.S. ambassador to China on the main page, was replaced with Dadao Yeman Ren, the Chinese equivalent of ‘down with barbarians’” (Zhao, “Chinese Condemn” 2). Consequently, “barbaric” is a word choice used repeatedly throughout the entire coverage of the bombing.

B. “Revolutionary Martyrs”

The China Daily’s reporting on the victims and their families intensifies the “barbarous act” of the U.S.-led NATO attack. The bombing of the embassy killed three Chinese journalists: Shao Yunhuan, a 48-year-old reporter for the Xinhua News Agency9; and, newlyweds Xu Xinghu and Zhu Ying, reporters for the Guangming Daily. Almost immediately, the three reporters are hailed as sacrificial victims of China. In his television address, Vice-President Hu Jintao states that, “I, on behalf of the CPC Central Committee, the Chinese Government, and the Chinese people, would like to express sincere regard for all staffers in [sic] embassy in Yugoslavia, to express our most profound condolences on the deaths of the martyrs” (“People Agonized” 1). Thus, the victims are reported as more than mere casualties of war, but sons and daughters of China and martyrs for the cause of their country. Consequently, the pictures on the front page of the May 10 edition illustrate the proclaimed status of the victims. The central picture shows students in Beijing “holding high portraits” of the three Chinese journalists killed in the bombing. Additionally, the graphic at the bottom of the page seems to reflect the grief and mourning associated with the event. Pictured is a grief stricken father (Zhu
Fulai) holding his dead daughter (Zhu Ying) while being supported by a senior official of China's Foreign Ministry. Photos hailing the fallen journalists are also found in a complete photo spread in the paper (“Life/People” section 8). Once again, the journalists’ pictures adorn banners with slogans such as “Their noble spirit will never perish.” Also appearing on the same page is an interesting assortment of photos of Xu Xinghu and Zhu Ying, the newlywed reporters. There is a picture of the two smiling together on the street. Directly juxtaposed to that picture is a graphic of the two lying dead and covered in blood.

Tributes for the journalists and their families flow throughout the paper. In an editorial, Xiong Lei writes, “I could not hold back my tears for these compatriots and my fellow journalists, which was not like me to cry for strangers. I shed tears for Shao Yunhuan, a filial daughter and a caring mother, but mostly a responsible journalist.” Xiong continues later in the article, “Nor could I hold back my tears for Xu Xinghu and his wife Zhu Ying, as I saw on TV how their colleagues missed them and how they had defied risks and dangers to cover Yugoslavian people under the brutal NATO aggression. They were married only a year ago and their life together and careers had just started when they were killed by the sinister NATO” (Xiong 4). Moreover, the death of the journalists is made even more personal when the “heartbroken father” of Zhu Ying writes a letter to Bill Clinton. The China Daily quotes the letter as saying, “What did my daughter and her husband ever do to harm you? They were just innocent Chinese correspondents living in the Chinese Embassy. What possessed you and NATO to attack the embassy?” Furthermore, the father is quoted as stating to Clinton, “I imagine that
when you are with your wife and your daughter Chelsea, you must be as happy as we were” (Bian 2).

In particular, much attention is paid to how the Chinese leaders react to the event. In the May 13 paper the headline heralds, “Nation mourns three martyrs.” The corresponding article from Xinhua begins by stating, “Top Chinese leaders Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Zhu Rongji, Hu Jintao, Wei Jianying, and Li Lanqing went to the headquarters of the Xinhua News Agency and Guangming Daily yesterday afternoon to mourn the three martyrs killed in NATO’s missile attack on the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia on Friday, and express their condolences to the relatives of the dead.” Jiang Zemin is also reported as telling Shao Yunhuan’s son that, “his mother was a heroine and the pride of the Chinese nation” (“Nation Mourns” 1). Furthermore, the following day at a ceremony welcoming back personnel from the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Jiang awards the three reporters with the title of “revolutionary martyrs.” In his speech he states that, “all three died for peace, justice, and the motherland and they will stay in our memory forever” (“Revolutionary Martyrs” 1). Consequently, the warm and patriotic portrayal of the three reporters further darkens the “barbaric” nature of the bombing.

C. People From “All Walks of Life Condemn Bombing.”

Furthermore, the China Daily also reports widespread condemnation of the “barbaric” attack. Bao Daozu writes that, “People from all walks of life yesterday continued their nation-wide condemnation of the U.S.-led NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia, but emphasized the importance of maintaining social stability” (Bao, “Residents Denounce” 2). Another article makes reference to President Jiang Zemin
commenting that, "It is natural that a broad and forceful wave of protests swept across the country" ("Clinton Phones" 1). Thus, the condemnation is reported as originating from a diversity of sources. In a number of articles student protesters condemn the bombing of the embassy. The China Daily reports that, "Thousands of university students, shouting slogans and waving banners, marched to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing as well as consulates in Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Chengdu to protest the bombing" (Bao, "Brutal Act" 1).

A number of professional organizations throughout China denounce the act as well. For instance, Ma Songwei of the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), in an article about a plane being sent to Belgrade to bring back the killed and wounded personnel states that, "The CAAC held an urgent meeting tonight to express the utmost indignation against NATO's brutality" (Zhao, "Plane" 1). Perhaps one of the most vocal professional groups to condemn the bombing are the journalists. "Grief and indignation enveloped all Chinese journalists as they learned about the death of three colleagues killed in the U.S.-led NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia on Friday night" (Su 2). The military is also mentioned as condemning the bombing. "General Fu Quanyu, chief of the General Staff of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), yesterday strongly condemned the NATO attack" ("Bombing Draws Condemnation" 2). In an article from Xinhua, the Association of Chinese Newspapers and the Chinese People’s Association for Peace and Disarmament are also listed as condemning the attack ("Chinese Deserve" 2).

Various reported surveys are also employed to substantiate the Chinese people’s widespread disapproval of the bombing. One article reports that, "An independent survey
has shown that 80 percent of China’s citizens dislike the United States’ international policies and they feel they have been cheated and humiliated.” The survey also reports that, “those between the ages of 22 or between 31 and 55 had changed their attitude towards the United States, as had students, enterprise managers, and workers” (“Chinese Feel Hurt” 2). In a telephone survey of 800 urban Chinese conducted by the Beijing Youth Daily, “no one believed that the missile attack on the embassy was a ‘tragic mistake’ as NATO had explained,” reports the China Daily. Furthermore, the China Daily quotes the Beijing Youth Daily as saying that, “The United States’ popularity among Chinese citizens dropped by 24 percentage points after the bombing” (“Survey” 3). The China Daily’s reports of China’s overwhelming and unanimous condemnation further substantiate the bombing as “barbaric.”

D. Bombing Rare in Diplomatic History

The bombing of the embassy in Belgrade is also disassociated from a common “tragic mistake” due to the historical placement of the event. The China Daily reports Jiang as stating that the bombing of the embassy was “rare in diplomatic history” (“China, Russia” 1). Indeed, this is a statement that appears throughout the China Daily text. Leaders, diplomats, and analysts communicate the idea that the bombing of the embassy is a transgression rarely paralleled in international relations. On May 14, a senior Chinese diplomat, while refuting the United States’ excuse for the bombing, states that, “Such a missile attack of diplomatic institutions is unprecedented in the history of diplomacy” (“Diplomat Refutes” 1). The China Daily also makes reference to an article in the People’s Daily in which an observer states that the bombing is a, “crime, rare in the
history of world diplomacy” (“Hegemony Doomed” 4). The attack is thus reported as more than an accident of war, but a “crime” rare to the course of history.

E. U.S./NATO War Technology

The proof of an “intentional” and “barbaric” attack is reiterated further in numerous references to U.S./NATO war capabilities. In a China Daily commentary, the paper writes that, “NATO officials have been proudly demonstrating their prudence in target identification and capability of precision attacks with the world’s ‘smartest’ missiles on each passing day.” The paper continues that, “The attack against the Chinese Embassy was too smart to be explained as a ‘mistake in target identification’ or technical error” (“NATO’s Hysteria” 4). He Yafei, minister of the Chinese Embassy in the United States, states that bombing could not possibly be the result of “an outdated map” as, “U.S.-led NATO has the most advanced weapons, satellites and most sophisticated intelligence system” (“Diplomat Refutes” 1). Furthermore, Li Xing writes in a commentary that, “In an age of satellites, maps should be considered secondary to intelligence.” Li then takes his criticism of the bombing one step further by extrapolating the consequences of the advanced war technology. “At the century’s end, the world has not been rid of wars and human suffering, because the United States, the only superpower, is continuing the ‘gun-boat’ policy and threatening the world peace but now armed with high-technology, satellites, missiles, and nuclear power” (Li 4).

Consequently, throughout the pages of the China Daily, leaders, analysts, officials, and editorials state that such an advanced war machine cannot miss the target.

Considering the source, many reports state that five\textsuperscript{10} satellite directed missiles cannot be
unintentional. One editorial poses the rhetorical question, “Do I feel this occurrence was accidental? HELL NO!!! How can it be? Five missiles from five different directions? The most powerful military machine ever, which spends millions on missiles, does not update its international maps” (Fields 4)! Thus, the depiction of the U.S./NATO war machine establishes NATO as regime capable of a “barbaric act.”

Hence, all five sub-themes jointly reiterate the barbaric nature of the Embassy bombing. In repeatedly employing the word “barbaric” and in making reference to the “revolutionary martyrs,” documenting people from a “all walks of life” who condemn the bombing, reporting that the bombing as “rare in diplomatic history,” and describing the vast U.S./NATO war machine, the China Daily is in fact graphically illustrating the bombing of the Chinese Embassy.

2. Sovereign Nation

Sovereignty, in light of China’s history of foreign aggression, is an extremely important concept to the Chinese. In particular, the Chinese Communist Party founded their original campaigns on eliminating foreign influence and securing China for the Chinese. Discussions of Chinese sovereignty (and the boundaries thereof) remain to be a major political debate. The NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade becomes central to this debate. Consequently, a number of prevailing themes and articles in the China Daily reinforce the idea of Chinese sovereignty.
A. Sovereignty Word Choice

Much like the term “barbaric,” the word “sovereignty” is woven throughout the text of the *China Daily*. In his television address on May 9, Vice-President Hu Jintao says, “the Chinese Government reserves the right to take further action,” and that, “All these measures demonstrate the common aspirations of the entire Chinese people to safeguard State sovereignty, uphold justice, and oppose aggression” (“People Agonized” 1). In fact, the attack of the embassy in Belgrade is portrayed as not only a direct attack in a foreign land, but also as direct aggression upon the Chinese people. “A diplomatic mission, such as the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia, is a symbol of a nation’s sovereignty,” claims Ambassador Qiao Zonghuai, “Its security and safety are protected by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and should not be flagrantly infringed upon by anyone” (“Tang” 1). Furthermore, the *China Daily* also makes repeated mention of NATO’s violation of the sovereign rights of Yugoslavia. In making reference to the embassy bombing and NATO’s “growing list” of “accidents,” Qi Wen states in an editorial that, “the bloody fact has exposed U.S.-led NATO’s extreme hypocrisy in excusing the preposterous attacks on a sovereign country by hanging on to its invented ‘humane’ goal of ensuring refugees will return to their homes in peace and security” (Qi 4). As the use of the word alone indicates, sovereignty is a key theme in the reporting.

B. Nationalism/Patriotism

Furthermore, Chinese sovereignty is supported in the reported outpouring of Chinese patriotism. On May 10, there is an article on the front cover reporting on the, “Tens of thousands of furious students and local residents” protesting the NATO bombing. The
article states that, “The demonstrators – carrying Chinese flags, banners, and photos of the journalists killed in the attack – condemned the bombing.” Furthermore, the article continues that, “They also voiced their strong support for the stand taken by the Chinese Government” (Bao, “Students” 1). President Jiang Zemin officially echoes this nationalistic sentiment when he states that, “The missile attack on the embassy is a serious violation of Chinese sovereignty and an open provocation of the 1.2 billion Chinese people.” Moreover Jiang says, “Chinese people have expressed their indignation, through demonstrations, rallies, statements, and forums, showing their passion, will, and great patriotic power” (Shao, “Jiang Slamming” 1).

Several articles, in fact, speak about how the bombing has led to a greater unity of the people. The China Daily reports, “The U.S.-led NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade and the death of three journalists have sharpened the Chinese people’s awareness for the need to develop the country’s strength and to protect its sovereignty.” Ye Qiaobo, a member of All-China Youth Federation, is quoted as saying, “The fact that we refrain from using force does not suggest that we are weak…The day that China becomes a stronger nation will come earlier if all of us unite our strengths and work harder” (“Bombing Spurs Patriotism” 2). The China Daily quantifies the rise of nationalism in an article entitled, “Flag sales demonstrate patriotism.” The article reports that, “Sales of the Chinese national flag have grown significantly” since the bombing of the embassy. The article continues that, “Many protesters, the majority of whom were university students, went to the retail stores to buy national flags to express their patriotism.” One student comments, “We intend to show our anger and condemnation by waving the national flag and singing the national anthem with our classmates in front of
the U.S. Embassy in Beijing” (Huo 8). The reported “patriotic spirit” of China establishes sovereignty as a national passion.

C. People Support Government

Equally important to the concept of sovereignty is that the people support the stance of the government. The reporting in the China Daily seems to affirm that the people and the government are one in their protest. A written statement, quoted by the China Daily states that, “The Chinese Government and people express their utmost indignation and severe condemnation of the barbarous act” (Bao, “Brutal Act” 1). An article on May 10 describing the widespread protests relates, “Thousands of residents in major cities have voiced their strong support for the government statement and most believed the bombing action was intended” (Bao, “Brutal Act” 1).

The army is also listed as pledging their support to the government. “Officers and enlisted personnel of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and members of the Chinese armed police expressed their firm support for the Chinese Government under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee with Comrade Jiang Zemin at the core,” states the China Daily. Moreover, according to a Xinhua report the PLA is, “determined to strengthen national defense and to modernize the Chinese army, to safeguard the peaceful life of China’s ethnic groups and the fruits of reform and opening-up, and to protect state sovereignty and territorial rights” (Bao, “Residents Denounce” 2).

In reference to an earlier study, it is also reported that, “More than one-third of those polled said the U.S.-led NATO should apologize and pay compensation for the attack and
they will follow the Chinese Government’s request to work and study harder and participate in demonstrations against NATO atrocities” ("Chinese Feel Hurt” 2). The Chinese Government is thus reported as having the populace’s support for the sovereign nation.

D. “Extended China” Supports Mainland

The concept of sovereignty (and the support thereof) is also applied to China’s ethnic and autonomous regions, the newly reverted territories of Hong Kong and Macao as well as overseas Chinese. The China Daily ran an article on May 10 entitled, “People in HK, Macao slam U.S.” The article lists all the various organizations and associations in Hong Kong and Macao that condemn the bombing. A letter from Hong Kong is quoted as saying that, “The incident is an extremely serious one which amounts to an outright encroachment of China’s sovereignty and territory” (Lo 2).

The China Daily also reports that various Chinese ethnic groups are supporting the protests. A report from the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People’s Congress states that, “All the parties, organizations, and ethnic groups that make up the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), as well as people from all circles, expressed the utmost indignation of the U.S.-led NATO’s brutality…” ("NPC” 2). Photos also reinforce the idea of ethnic support. On May 10, underneath the title, “National rage over NATO’s missile attack,” there is a photo spread depicting an assortment of demonstrations throughout China. A picture of marching Chinese Muslims carries the caption, “Muslims take to the streets in Yinchuan, capital of the Ningxia Hui
Autonomous Region, in protest against U.S.-led NATO brutality against mankind”
(“Life/People” section 8).

Articles also appear in the pages of the China Daily which describe overseas Chinese condemnation of the attack. The China Daily includes a report from Xinhua stating that, “Overseas Chinese students in Britain, Ukraine, Malaysia, Canada, and Germany also expressed their indignation and strongest condemnation of NATO’s missile attack” (“World Continues” 1). Another Xinhua report states that various Chinese student organizations in California protested the event (“Countries Continue” 1). Additionally, the central picture on the cover of the China Daily’s May 20 edition reiterated the view of overseas Chinese. The picture is of “ethnic Chinese organizations in Washington” holding a candle light vigil in front of the White House as they are mourning the deaths of the three Chinese journalists (1). President Jiang Zemin summarizes the reporting well when he states that, “All of China’s ethnic groups and overseas Chinese compatriots have expressed their indignation over the NATO atrocity in the past few days and expressed their stern protest and severe condemnation through a variety of channels” (“Revolutionary Martyrs” 1). Consequently, it is interesting to note the China Daily reports ethnic support from regions where sovereignty is an ongoing dispute.

E. Stand Up to U.S./Aggression

The China Daily not only defines Chinese sovereignty, but it also defends the concept and guards against those who threaten it. The China Daily cites a Xinhua report (which subsequently is reporting on an editorial in the People’s Daily) that says, “China, which maintains a foreign policy of independence and peace, will oppose anyone who practices
hegemony and will condemn those who invade others. China will never change this stance whatever threats it faces” (“Editorial Condemns” 2). While discussing the Belgrade bombing with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, President Jiang Zemin states that, “Anyone willing to bully and humiliate China will meet failure...China is not the China of old, which was weak and poor” (Shao, “Jiang: End to Raids” 1).

Furthermore, not only will China stand firm in the current face of aggression, several reports note how China has a history of opposing American aggression. A Shanghai resident is quoted as saying, “China so far is among the very few countries that do not yield to America’s will on international affairs. China’s economic growth and the escalation of its political status has been taken by the U.S. as a great threat to its hegemony” (Bao, “Brutal Act” 1). An editorial on May 17 reiterates the idea of U.S. aggression and China’s steadfast opposition: “the United States is scrambling to dominate the world, but China is one of the few countries who can say no to it” (Peng 4).

With the rights of sovereignty defined and established, China thus stands as an international harbinger of sovereign rights. The China Daily consequently employs the following strategies to support China’s sovereign stand: the continual use of the word “sovereignty,” references to the “patriotism” of the people, reports of the people supporting the government, and moreover that “extended” China supports the mainland government, and China’s firm stance against U.S. aggression.

3. International Community

It is very interesting to note that one of the most pervasive elements in the China Daily text is China’s placement within the context of an international community. In
contrast to China’s xenophobia and on-going issues of sovereignty, China’s outreach to the international community is a recent phenomenon. The *China Daily* articles establish China as an international partner in the world community. This world partnership is warranted through articles detailing international scrutiny of NATO, China’s desire to promote world peace, and China’s attempt to be part of the world economy.

A. International Community behind China/NATO breaks laws

To begin with, reporting in the *China Daily* justifies international placement by an overwhelming amount of stories describing world condemnation of the bombing, and by stating the international laws that NATO violated by bombing the Embassy in Belgrade. For example, on May 10, the *China Daily* runs a front-page story from *The Xinhua News Agency* in Moscow, which opens by quoting Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov as suggesting that, “NATO is challenging and provoking the United Nations, international law, and the international community.” Furthermore, the article goes on to list other nations expressing condemnation and or sympathy for the strike: Yugoslavia, Peru, Poland, Thailand, Iraq, Iran, and Germany. The article quotes an Iranian state-run television report saying, “The attack on the Chinese Embassy openly violated the 1961 Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations” (“Nations Condemn” 1). On the same day the *China Daily* runs a corresponding cartoon in the “Opinion” section. In the cartoon a missile labeled “NATO” blasts through several thick books entitled: “Vienna Conventions of Diplomatic Relations,” “UN Charter,” and “International Law” (“Opinion” section 4).
Reports of international condemnation and appeals to broken international law are consistently intertwined throughout the text. For instance, on May 11 the China Daily has a special side-article listing all the international laws violated by the Belgrade bombing (“NATO’s Attack” 2). In the following days leaders, diplomats, and policy analysts all refer to the international conventions shattered by NATO’s attack. The transgression of international law is subsequently confirmed by daily reports of nations who condemn the attack. A report from Xinhua entitled, “World continues condemning raids,” opens by stating, “The international community continues to condemn NATO’s bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade and call for a peaceful solution to the Kosovo crisis” (“World Continues” 1). One letter to the editor states that, “The current NATO criminals should be tried in the World Court for justice” (Qiu 4). Consequently, by detailing international laws and placing world condemnation upon NATO and the U.S., the China Daily depicts the bombing as a grave transgression against a responsible world leader.

B. Human Rights

The reports in the China Daily also use the bombing to critique the United States’ “exporting” of human rights. On May 10 the China Daily reports on a meeting of the Chinese Society of Human Rights. “Both old imperialism and new hegemonism have invariably used high-sounding words such as democracy, freedom, human rights, and humanitarianism to disguise their true actions. ‘Though they can befuddle world opinion for awhile, they cannot conceal the fact forever that they are a wolf in sheep’s clothing,’ said Zhu [Muzhi], chairman of the society” (Zhu 4). Zhu continues to state that, “As
human rights researchers, we should timely and thoroughly expose the ultra hypocrisy of the United States and its allies in launching wanton aggression and trampling on human rights under the cover of human rights protection” (Zhu 4). Subsequent articles continue to reiterate the “hypocrisy” (Shao, “Leaders Reiterate” 1) of the United States’ stance on human rights. In an opinion column on May 11, Xiong Lei writes that, “Whether they had intentionally or unintentionally targeted the Chinese Embassy, NATO’s bombing in itself indicated a disregard for human lives and human rights. They just do not give a damn for our sovereignty or what we value.” The article continues that, “For years the U.S. and other western powers have been lecturing us on human rights and other issues. We have learned earnestly. But the NATO bombing has smashed the rosy picture that the U.S. is a guardian of human rights” (Xiong 4).

Consequently, due to the bombing China decides to suspend dialogue on human rights with the United States12. The China Daily cites an interview with Li Zhaoxing, Chinese Ambassador to the United States, on NBC’s Meet the Press. The article relates that, “When asked to comment on the human rights situation in China, Li said that the whole world and everyone in China was shocked by the U.S. human rights record in the killing of the Chinese people in the embassy in Belgrade” (“Nation Calls” 1). Many reports claim that the U.S. is using the guise of human rights to invade other sovereign states while simultaneously violating human rights within that country. This all should go to demystify the, “false theory of ‘superiority of human rights over sovereignty’” (Zhu 4). Contrary to altruistic beliefs, the China Daily states that NATO and the U.S. are conversely heralding human rights to “mask” hegemonic motivations.
C. World Peace

Additionally, numerous reports appear in the *China Daily* calling for an end to the bombing and NATO's disruption of world peace. The actions of NATO are portrayed as disturbing the course of world peace. Li Jijun, vice-president of the Chinese Academy of Military Sciences states that, "NATO's eastward expansion is posing a principal threat to today's world peace and stability" (Bao, "Residents Denounce" 2). Likewise, the *China Daily* makes reference to a commentary in the *People's Daily* which states that, "the hegemonic deeds of U.S.-led NATO had disturbed Europe and even the entire world and ran counter to common aspirations for peace and development" ("Halt" 4). Thus, the bombing is depicted as not only disturbing the sovereign nation of China, but on a grander scale NATO’s strike is part of a pattern that threatens peace altogether.

Consequently, President Jiang Zemin asks all “peace-loving” nations to demand justice and work towards peace together. President Jiang Zemin, "called on all peace-loving people who uphold justice to work together to stop the U.S.-led NATO’s wanton bombing, and bring the Kosovo issue back to the track of political solution at an early date" (Shao, "Jiang Slamming" 2). Likewise, Jiang states in a speech several days later that, "All countries and people that love peace and uphold justice should unite to push forward the establishment of a just and rational new international order in the common struggle against hegemonism and power politics" ("Revolutionary Martyrs" 2).

Furthermore, editorials reiterate the threat NATO poses to world peace. In one such editorial entitled, "Failed new role threatens world peace," Liu Jiang, an expert on international relations with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, writes, "The convening of the meeting and NATO’s military strikes against Yugoslavia once again
sent the world a message that NATO is attempting to reinvent its role of a collective
defensive regional organization into an offensive military alliance as the world
approaches the 21st century... This undoubtedly poses a threat to world peace and regional
stability.” The article later states that, “Against the main trend of peace and development
of the world, NATO's new strategy must be relegated into the garbage can of history”
(Liu 4). The bombing of the Chinese Embassy is thus portrayed as evidence that NATO
not only threatens China, but the stability of the world.

D. Foreigner Safety/ Place of Foreigner

However, while in the midst of reports condemning the U.S. Government and NATO,
it is interesting to note that a string of articles appear reassuring foreigner safety in China.
A May 11 article in the China Daily entitled, “Foreigners Assured of Total Safety,” states
that, “The National Tourism Administration yesterday assured foreign tourists, including
those from the United States and other NATO countries, they would be safe in China.”
The article also quoted the speech from Vice-President Hu Jintao’s television address in
which he, “laid stress on the protection of foreign diplomatic institutions and personnel,
foreign nationals in China, and those who have come to engage in trade, economic,
educational, and cultural undertakings” (Bao, “Foreigners Assured” 2). Chinese Foreign
Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao reiterates this point when he states that, “We will
protect foreign diplomatic organs and personnel, foreign nationals in China, and those
who have come to work in China according to law” (Zhao, “Stiffer Condemnation” 1).

Moreover, on May 18 the China Daily runs a story in which a UN official states that
it is safe for foreign tourists to visit China. The article opens by stating that, “It is safe
for foreigners to travel throughout China regardless of nation-wide protests following U.S.-led NATO’s bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, says a World Tourism Organization (WTO) official.” Secretary-General Francesco Frangialli relates that, “The protests which were ‘understandable and normal’ reactions to the tragedy, were not aimed at foreign tourists” (“UN Official” 1). An article run on the same day entitled, “Foreign Tourists Angry with NATO,” takes the discussion of safety one step further. The article states that foreign tourists are not only safe, but that the foreign tourists who come to China are also angry with NATO. Joan Robincon, one of 112 Britons touring Xi’an, “home to the famous ‘Terracotta Warriors,’ the ‘underground army’ of China’s first emperor,” is quoted as saying, “Like you, I feel sorry and indignant, for I cannot agree with NATO’s bombing...I hope to continue our friendly contact with the Chinese people” (“Foreign Tourists” 2).

It is also noteworthy how there is a pattern in some articles of separating the foreign citizens from the actions of their government. In particular, several articles in the China Daily draw distinctions between the American citizens and the U.S. government. In an article mourning the loss of the three Chinese journalists and condemning NATO’s hypocrisy, Xiong Lei relates discussions about the bombing with American and British friends. Xiong states that:

“Ever since the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia began on March 24, I have been debating with some American and British friends over the justification of this undeclared war. They all told me that the NATO action was to ‘forestall neo-Nazi crimes of ethnic cleansing’ and the action was ‘very humane.’ I know they were only parroting what the U.S. Government and NATO propaganda machines wanted them
to believe. Now that the all-civilian Chinese Embassy was bombed and these
innocent Chinese journalists were killed, I wonder what they would say” (Xiong 4).

In such a way, Xiong seems to excuse her American and British friends for falling
victim to the manipulation of their own government. Subsequent editorials from foreign
nationals in the China Daily seem to confirm that most foreigners do not support the
actions of their government. One article from the United States appeals to the reader,
“Please do not believe that, as a people, we are entirely represented by the actions of our
malevolent and incompetent government. Despite the erroneous notion that ours is a
democracy in any form, Americans are subjected to the same brutality and lies as many
others. Our government is not, and has not been for some time, ‘of, for or by the people’
of America” (Britton 4). On a similar note, a retired American teaching in China writes,
“I fully support the anti-NATO/American demonstrations in China. The American
Government thinks it can be ‘policeman’ for the world, but this should not
be...Hopefully, China can teach America that America must be a responsible nation in
foreign affairs” (McAllister 4). Thus an interesting dichotomy appears in the China
Daily as reports separate foreigners (particularly U.S. foreigners) from the actions of their
foreign government.

E. Economic Growth

In addition to establishing the safety of foreigners, many articles also stressed that
economic investment in China will be as safe and secure. On May 11 a China Daily
article recalls that, “Vice-President Hu Jintao, in a speech on Sunday, laid stress on the
protection of foreign diplomatic institutions and personnel, foreign nationals in China,
and those who have come to China to engage in trade, economic, educational, and cultural undertakings” (Bao, “Foreigners Assured” 2). The article heralds that Beijing will soon host the second “Beijing International High-Tech Industries Week” and the sixth Beijing International Fair. “Business representatives, scholars, bankers, and experts from 44 countries, including the United States, Canada, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom have sent applications to attend the high-tech industries week,” claims the article (Bao, “Foreigners Assured” 2). Hainan Governor Wang Xiaofeng reiterates China’s approach to foreign investments as the China Daily relates: “China will continue pursuing its opening policies and welcome overseas investment, Wang said. All business and travel activities of foreigners, including those from the United States, will be protected by the Chinese Government” (“UN Official”1).

As with the coverage of foreigner safety, articles state that businesses are not only safe, but that the businesspeople wish to nurture their ties with China. On May 14 the paper reports that, “In the Chinese mainland, business partners from the United States and other NATO member countries said that the missile attack tragedy will not tarnish the well-established business relationship between China and other countries.” The paper states that many of the multinational companies in Beijing, “expressed regret and offered condolences to the victims’ families” (“WTO Talks” 2). The China Daily also runs a Motorola company announcement which states, “We greatly appreciate the Chinese Government’s stance of protecting the legal rights of foreign firms in China, and we will continue our efforts to seek mutual development of both sides” (“WTO Talks” 2).

A number of articles also verify that talks regarding China’s entry into the World Trade Organization will continue. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao,
"Commenting on China’s accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the wake of NATO’s blast of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade," states that, "We hope the U.S. side will take practical measures to fulfill its commitment to resolutely support China’s entry into the WTO within this year" (Zhao, "Stiffer Condemnation" 1). On May 14 Zhu states that the attack has "seriously damaged Sino-U.S. relations and he admits that WTO negotiations will be affected, but he comments, "China hopes that the United States and other parties will honor the commitments they have made on China’s accession to the WTO at an early date" (Shao, "Spokesman Calls" 1). Vice Finance Minister Lou Jiwei is quoted in the China Daily as saying that China will continue to vie for a position in the WTO. When asked if the recent bombing affected Chinese policy, he commented that, "it was ‘impossible’ that China would stop its drive for reforms and opening-up" ("Bombing Will" 8)

Indeed, it becomes evident in the articles that China is putting much energy into economic reform. In an article discussing President Jiang Zemin’s condemnation of the bombing, the China Daily relates, "The people are determined to study and work hard to boost the nation’s economic and national strength, and fight against NATO’s atrocity with concrete deeds" (Shao, "Jiang Slamming" 1). Similarly, several days later the paper quotes excerpts from a speech in which Jiang declares, “China will unswervingly take economic construction as its central task, he said, calling for CPC members and people of all ethnic groups throughout the country to turn their indignation at NATO’s barbaric act and their patriotic enthusiasm into strength to improve China’s economic, defense, and national power constantly, thus guaranteeing China’s invincible status” ("Revolutionary Martyrs" 2). Furthermore, the China Daily reports that Director Chen Yunlin of the
Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council believes, "China is now in an important period of socialist modernization and badly needs stability and progress, said Chen...[;]
therefore, we should keep a clear mind and be vigilant, and try hard to safeguard stability" ("Bombing Draws Condemnation" 2).

Thus, it is interesting to note how the momentum from the bombing is being “directed” into the “central task” of economic construction and international recognition. It is within this theme that a number of the sub-themes begin to contradict some of China’s traditional “xenophobic” approaches and policies. The reported sub-themes supporting China’s new “international role” include: overwhelming reports that the international community is behind China and that NATO is breaking international law, references to human rights, appeals for world peace, assurances of foreigner safety, and stress on economic growth.

4. U.S. Hegemony

As China is placed within the context of the international community, the U.S. and NATO are repeatedly referred to as “hegemonic” adversaries of world peace. Bao Daozu reports that the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) agreed that, “the atrocity has taught all peace-loving people in the world an unforgettable lesson – that behind the NATO countries’ human rights masks are only falseness and hegemony” (Bao, "Residents Denounce" 2). Moreover, this hegemony is portrayed as a veil that conceals the barbaric actions of NATO. Zhu Muzhi, a participant at a meeting of the Chinese Society of Human Rights, relates that, “For a long time, the United States has proclaimed itself the ‘human rights guardian.’ To cloak its hegemony, it has concocted a false theory
of ‘superiority of human rights over sovereignty’” (Zhu 4). Similarly, the China Daily reports that, “The China Foundation for Human Rights Development, in an evening forum, noted that the raid tore open the false veil of human rights and laid bare the ugly face of international hegemonists” (“NPC” 2). Furthermore, the Chinese leadership is also very vocal in labeling the bombing as a “hegemonic act.” Shao Zongwei relates that, “Describing NATO’s military attacks as absolute hegemony and typical ‘gunboat diplomacy,’ Jiang said this brutality has destroyed peace in the Balkans and the world” (Shao, “Jiang Slamming” 1). The article further communicates the thoughts of Premier Zhu Rongji that the attack on the Chinese Embassy, “has proven to what extent the logic of hegemony and power politics has developed.” Moreover, “It is very obvious that the idea of safeguarding human rights and democracy, as well as opposing ethnic cleansing, which they are chanting loudly, is nothing more than a fig leaf” (Shao, “Jiang Slamming” 2).

Numerous editorials suggest that the U.S. is trying to strengthen its hegemony for world domination. A China Daily commentary claims that, “The gunfire in Kosovo is living proof that NATO is degenerating into a servile instrument for the United States’ pursuit of global hegemony” (“NATO’s Hysteria” 4). Furthermore, leaders, officials, and editorialists reason that the U.S. is trying to destabilize the Balkans in an attempt to secure its own hegemonic hold on the region. One editorial states that, “the most urgent strategic task for the United States in Europe is first to contain Europe and prevent it from becoming powerful enough to threaten U.S. hegemony in the world” (Lu 4).

Additionally, several days later the China Daily runs comments on an “observer’s article” published in the People’s Daily, “to strongly condemn the war launched by U.S.-led
NATO against Yugoslavia.” The article relates that, “The eastward expansion of NATO in Europe, the strengthening of the U.S.-Japanese military alliance in the Asia and Pacific region and the launching of the current aggression against Yugoslavia, all these constitute important steps in the U.S. implementation of its global strategy for world hegemony” (“Hegemony Doomed” 4).

It is also interesting to note that several cartoons in the *China Daily* illustrate the “U.S.-hegemonic theme.” In one such cartoon the Statue of Liberty is mirrored by a soldier holding a missile rather than a torch and the stone tablet in his hand is labeled “hegemony” (5/11 “Opinion” section 4). In yet another cartoon, Uncle Sam is pictured at what appears to be the negotiation table. He is grabbing the other countries’ “delegate” by the neck as he states, “So we are partners now” (5/21 “Opinion” section 4).

While the *China Daily* establishes China as a partner of the international community, it conversely cites the Embassy bombing as evidence that the U.S. and NATO (as exhibited through hegemonic tendencies) are adversaries of the international community.
USA Today

Like the China Daily, the prevailing themes in the USA Today coverage can be narrowed down into four basic themes: the “mistaken” nature of the bombing, the protests in China, the U.S./Chinese exchange, and the absence of hegemonic charges in the reporting. In keeping with the approach to the China Daily, I will explore each theme as an intricate reflection of American ideology. Furthermore, I will explore the sub-themes of each of the four basic themes.

1. Mistaken Nature of Bombing

Contrary to the China Daily reports, and yet with much the same conviction, the USA Today reports the bombing of the Chinese Embassy as a “tragic” mistake in the NATO bombing campaign. Unsurprisingly, the “hegemonic” and “barbaric” motives attributed to the bombing by the China Daily are not waged in the USA Today text. Consequently, the USA Today contains numerous references that reiterate the accidental nature of the bombing of the Chinese Embassy.

A. “Mistaken” Word Choice

From the very beginning of its coverage, the USA Today reports the bombing as a mistake. Underneath the headline, “Enraged Chinese Besiege Embassy,” the USA Today begins its coverage of the event on May 10 reporting, “Protests in China over the mistaken bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade entered their third day today, trapping the U.S. ambassador and 11 others inside the compound in Beijing despite the apologies from President Clinton and NATO” (Kelley, “U.S. Officials” 1A). Whereas
the *China Daily* prefers to use the word “barbaric” when making reference to the bombing, the *USA Today* continually labels the event as a “mistake” or “accident.” The paper reports on May 10 that, “In an unusual admission, the CIA said it delivered bad intelligence. U.S. Army Gen. Wesley Clark, NATO’s top commander, agreed Sunday that ‘it was a case of mistaken target identification early on in the process’ that didn’t get caught as it filtered through the chain of command.” The paper continues quoting Clark’s comments on ABC-TV’s *This Week*: “It wasn’t crew error. It wasn’t mechanical error... We think this is an anomaly” (Komarow, “U.S. Tries to Explain” 12A). The *USA Today* also cites a U.S. Defense Department statement reporting “the incident as an ‘anomaly that is unlikely to occur again’” (Lynch 13A). Furthermore, it is important to note that all the reports generated by the *USA Today* never question the nature of the bombing other than that of an accident.

B. Clinton’s Apology

Identifying the bombing as a mistake, the *USA Today* immediately reports the, “apologies from President Clinton and NATO” (Kelley, “U.S. Officials” 1A). Moreover, coverage suggests that initial tension is the result of the fact that the Chinese Government has not reported the apology. On May 10 the paper’s editorial complains that China’s, “state TV isn’t informing the public that Washington apologized or that the bombing was an accident” (“Once Again” 14A). Likewise, the *USA Today* editorial the following-day explains that, “China’s state-controlled media aren’t reporting to their public the U.S. apology officials say they want. It’s no surprise that the usually pro-American Chinese are angry” (“China Stokes” 14A). Furthermore, another report discussing how the
bombing was the “impetus” for student anger states that, “This understandable outrage was further fueled by the Chinese government’s eagerness to accommodate the protests and by its failure to report for four days that the White House apologized or that the attack was a mistake” (Melvin 15A).

A front-page article on May 11 opens by stating, “President Clinton formally apologized Monday for the ‘tragic’ bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade as U.S. officials blamed outdated maps and bad guesses for the mistake.” The article then makes reference to the words of President Clinton. “I apologize,’ Clinton said at the White House, offering the public, formal words China had demanded. ‘I regret this.’” Subsequent reports follow-up by suggesting that the apology, once reported by the Chinese Government, has helped to calm some of the tension. “…state-run TV also broadcast Clinton’s apology. And White House spokesman Joe Lockhart said the situation at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, under virtual siege by demonstrators, had eased” (Page 1A). Similarly, a report on May 12 reiterates that once the Chinese Government communicated the apology, the situation began to stabilize. “Chinese newspapers reported that NATO and President Clinton had apologized for the accidental bombing – facts they had omitted until Tuesday,” states the article. “The People’s Daily ran a story about sympathetic Americans expressing sorrow for the Belgrade attack, a contrast to the anti-American rhetoric of the previous three days” (Wiseman, “Sasser Leaves” 4A). The reports of Clinton’s apology and the subsequent calming effect on the Chinese people seem to reiterate the mistaken nature of the bombing.
C. More Money Needed for Defense

Occurring simultaneously with the apology, a number of different explanations are reported detailing the reason for the "tragic" mistake. One of the excuses to appear is that U.S. defense requires more financial support. "Rep. Porter Goss, R-Fla, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, said the Chinese Embassy error still showed chronic underspending on spying. The U.S. budget is roughly $28 billion for intelligence this year, much of it on satellite and defense systems," reports the paper (Komarow, "U.S. Tries to Explain" 12A). The next day the USA Today reports, "Advocates for expanding the government's $28 billion spy budget said this was evidence that it's needed. 'We cannot avoid the fact that we have overtasked and underfunded our intelligence agencies for too long,' said Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., a senior member of the Intelligence Committee" (Komarow, "Officials Detail Errors" 7A). However, one USA Today editorial comments, "Most oddly, some senators who oversee the CIA say the tragic bombing occurred because the intelligence community needs more money...How about another 35 cents? That would have paid for the tragically missing phone call between a CIA analyst and a government map-maker to double-check an address. Beyond that, no amount of money could fix the sloppy procedures that led to the bombing" ("Smart Bomb" 14A). In such a way, the discussion of money (whether for or against increased appropriations) centers the bombing issue on accidents of finance rather than transgressions against life.
D. NATO Bombing Precision

While simultaneously reporting on the need to increase the spy budget, a number of articles also state the great precision of NATO bombs. John Pike, weapons expert at the Federation of American Scientists says, “The weapons we use today are vastly more discriminating. The intelligence we use today is clearly vastly improved...But neither the weapons nor the intelligence is perfect...You go back to Korea or World War II, they were lucky if they hit the right city” (Komarow, “U.S. Tries to Explain” 12A). However, a summary of “NATO mistakes” running counter to the latter report, claims near-perfect precision for NATO bombing. The summary begins by stating that, “NATO officials say about a dozen bombs or missiles out of 9,000 have gone astray since NATO began airstrikes against Yugoslavia on March 24” (“NATO Mistakes” 12A). Consequently, a correction follows in the next day’s paper noting, “A chart Monday listing NATO bombs that went astray should not have included a May 3 strike on a bus near Pec, Serbia. NATO denies any role in that attack” (“Developments” 7A). Thus, NATO is that much more precise. Finally, Defense Secretary William Cohen’s statement that, “it [the Embassy bombing] was not a human error or mechanical error. It was an institutional error” (Komarow, “Officials Detail Errors” 7A), seems to reiterate that NATO made a simple mistake, one that is easily corrected through better institutional management. Another US Defense Department statement describes, “the incident as an ‘anomaly that is unlikely to occur again’” (Lynch 13A). Compared to reports of NATO bombing precision, the bombing of the Chinese Embassy is considered a rare mistake.
E. Chronology of CIA/NATO Mistakes

Mistakes do occur in war and it is also interesting to note how the USA Today reports seem to place the bombing within a larger chronology of events. Rather than a rare event in diplomatic history (as the China Daily states), the bombing is charted as a small mistake within the larger military campaign. “This was a terrible accident that happened, but terrible accidents happen in war,” Senator John McCain is quoted in an article as stating on NBC’s Meet the Press. The article also draws parallel to the Persian Gulf War where U.S. intelligence did not detect that part of a bunker in Baghdad that had been converted into a shelter for women and children. The bunker was then struck by laser-guided bombs (Komarow, “U.S. Tries to Explain” 12A). As mentioned earlier, the USA Today also ran a summary of “NATO Mistakes.” Listed are less than a dozen mistakes that have occurred since bombing began on March 24. The Chinese Embassy bombing is one of three noted events occurring on May 7. The summary simply relates, “NATO inadvertently hit the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, killing four and injuring 20” (“Developments” 12A). A USA Today editorial claims, “The failure to follow good procedures took place even though avoiding collateral damage is a commandment for the White House, and bad maps are a truism as old as warfare itself...The intelligence community has been here before” (“Smart Bomb” 14A). The article then goes on to list several occurrences in which former CIA procedures have led to bad mistakes. Thus, the bombing is placed inside a larger framework where mistakes are not the norm, but nonetheless a “tragic” occurrence in strategic operations.

Consequently, the USA Today employs several strategies that reiterate the “mistaken” nature of the bombing: the “mistaken” word choice, references to Clinton’s
apology, reported claims that more money is needed for defense, reports on NATO’s bombing precision, and placing the bombing within a chronology of CIA/NATO mistakes.

2. Protests in China

It is interesting to note, however, that most of the USA Today coverage of the bombing of the Chinese Embassy is actually centered on the actions transpiring against the U.S. Embassy in Beijing rather than the bombing in Belgrade. The framework of the coverage yields more of an American drama than a Chinese tragedy.

A. Attack on U.S. Embassy

To begin with, the initial reaction of the USA Today is to highlight the riot consuming the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. The headline on May 10 seems to foreshadow a trend in the U.S.-centered reporting: “Enraged Chinese Besiege Embassy: U.S. Officials in Beijing Trapped; Diplomacy on Kosovo Intensifies” (Kelley, “U.S. Officials” 1). The USA Today reports that the siege has virtually made the Ambassador and his officials hostages. The paper quotes Sasser’s phone interview on CBS’s Face the Nation relating, “Ambassador James Sasser said nearly every window had been shattered in the embassy building, its chancery and his residence, forcing his wife and son to take refuge elsewhere. ‘No question that we’re hostages here,’ Sasser said.” The paper continues to quote Sasser as saying, “The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has guaranteed our safety...The problem...is this whole thing could spin out of control” (Wiseman, “In China” 12A).
On the third day of protests the *USA Today* quotes Sasser as saying on ABC’s *Good Morning America* that, “the situation has stabilized. There are more police out today, and they seem to be doing a better job of controlling the crowd” (Wiseman, “Anti-U.S. Vitriol” 10A). However, a corresponding article notes that as of Tuesday morning Beijing time, “Ambassador James Sasser, hunkered down for another day at the besieged U.S. Embassy in Beijing, says he won’t leave until the Chinese government can guarantee his safety.” The article’s graphic confirms Sasser’s hostage status as he is pictured as a prisoner looking out of a battered and broken Embassy window. The caption reads, “The U.S. ambassador to China looks out from the damaged embassy where he has been imprisoned for 4 days (Lee 10A). Consequently, the same graphic depicting the imprisoned Sasser is used again in the May 13 editorial section (14A). On May 12 the *USA Today* reports, “U.S. Ambassador James Sasser walked out of his battered embassy compound Wednesday morning as four days of protests subsided” (Wiseman, “Sasser Leaves” 4A). It is interesting to note that once Sasser leaves the U.S. Embassy, the coverage of the Chinese Embassy bombing does not appear on the front-page of the *USA Today* again.

B. Anti-U.S. Sentiment

The rage and anger of the Chinese against the U.S. (as exemplified in the reported siege of the U.S. Embassy) is a reoccurring theme in the text. On May 10 the *USA Today*’s front-page story reports that, “Up to 20,000 protesters, some screaming, ‘Get out, American pigs,’ surrounded the U.S. Embassy in Beijing Sunday... ‘The Chinese people have flown into furies’ over the attack, China’s *People Daily* newspaper said
today” (Kelley, “U.S. Officials” 1A). A parallel article on May 10 opens by stating, “Filled with grief and rage, tens of thousands of people swept through the streets here Sunday, hurling rocks at the U.S. and British embassies and chanting anti-U.S. slogans in a second day of protests against the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade.” The article goes on to quote several agitated Chinese citizens. “If China declares war on the U.S. and NATO, I will be the first to volunteer,” said Beijing resident Wen Qiang, 37, a Chinese army veteran... ‘The murder should be punished,’ said Jin Hongman, 33, a government worker.” The article also makes reference to the State Department’s warning to American citizens abroad. The article relates that, “In the face of mass protests the United States is closing its embassy in Beijing and consulates across China today and Tuesday. The State Department has warned U.S. citizens living or traveling in China to keep a low profile” (Wiseman, “In China” 12A). An article in the USA Today states that “Companies with distinctly American identities” have also been the target of anti-U.S. sentiment. The article reports that American fast-food chains such as Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonalds had to close several restaurants due to protesters or damage (McDonald 4A).

The graphics used throughout the coverage also help to illustrate the anti-U.S. sentiment. For example, one of the front-page pictures on May 10 is of a protester breaking through police lines outside the U.S. embassy. On May 11 (7A), there is a picture of the People’s Armed Police guarding the U.S. Embassy in Beijing as a “mock U.S. missile lies near the gate.” Numerous pictures show the destruction of American symbols. Several pictures depict the torching of the American flag (5/10, 12A and 14A), others depict angry protesters (5/11, 14A; 5/12, 4A). Yet another is a picture of Bill
Clinton dressed as the Statue of Liberty and carrying a bomb. At his feet is an American flag covered by a swastika (5/12, 15A). On May 17 a picture with a corresponding caption reads, “Anti-U.S. feelings: A U.S. Embassy staff member removes the vandalized insignia from the front gate of the embassy compound Wednesday in Beijing. The bombing in Belgrade set off a string of protests” (14A). In contrast, there are only several pictures throughout the coverage depicting injury to the Chinese. On May 10 there is a picture of a firefighter guiding an injured staff member from the Chinese embassy (13A) and the Chinese living in Yugoslavia protesting in front of the “damaged” Chinese embassy (14A). On May 11 there is a picture with a caption stating, “Bombing victim: Mourners Zhu Fulai touches the face of a man who was killed in Friday’s accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. The ceremony was held Monday at a cemetery in the city” (7A).

On May 11 a USA Today editorial claims, “Portentously, this century is ending as it began, with crowds of angry young Chinese sacking American buildings, condemning U.S. influence, calling for American extermination and doing so at the prompting of their government.” The editorial continues by giving a historical assertion for the claim. “The first anti-American gambit ended badly for China after the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. U.S. Marines invaded Beijing, trade treaties were amended unfairly to favor Western countries, and China’s 2,000 year-old imperial regime was toppled from within.” The editorial, criticizing the fury in Beijing, ends by stating, “The U.S. and China saw in 1900 how a protest could rewrite history. If Beijing can’t think clearly about the future before unleashing it, Washington will have to think for both sides” (“China Stokes” 14A). In an analysis of the Embassy bombing, Paul Wiseman references the cultural gap between
China and the United States. "The recent Belgrade bombing and the furious anti-U.S. protests it set off here have exposed the seething resentment many Chinese feel toward the United States. They also have exposed huge differences in the way the United States and China look at the world and define their national interests" (Wiseman, "China's Grievances" 14A). Many of the reports in the USA Today are thus concerned with the intensity of anger that the Chinese project at the United States.

C. Government Orchestrated

Nonetheless, numerous reports suggest that the Chinese citizens' anger against the U.S. may not be genuine and that the Chinese government is responsible for the large-scale demonstrations. The opening cover story on the bombing refers to the demonstrations as "government-supported protests" (Kelley, "U.S. Officials" 1A). USA Today correspondent Paul Wiseman states, "Signs with arrows directed 'Demonstrators this way'" (Wiseman, "In China" 12A). When Sasser eventually leaves the embassy, Wiseman writes, "It was the first time Sasser left the embassy since government-run demonstrations began last Saturday..." (Wiseman, "Sasser Leaves" 4A). Senator John McCain is quoted as stating on Meet the Press, "It is clear that the Chinese are orchestrating this for some political reason." Furthermore, he said it, "should stop immediately" (Kelley, "U.S.-China Relations" 12A). The USA Today editorial on May 10 asserts that, "In China, the manipulation is less subtle. U.S. diplomats are deliberately being spooked. Crassly, state TV isn't informing the public that Washington apologized or that the bombing was an accident. Students, once starry-eyed about the U.S., are angry and confused" ("Once Again" 14A). Similarly, on May 11 Paul Wiseman suggests that
the media have a hand in perpetuating the frenzy. “China’s state-run media, which stoked the anti-U.S. frenzy over the weekend, continued to run sensational stories Monday about the bombing” (Wiseman, “Anti-U.S. Vitriol” 10A). The next day Wiseman reports that, “There were no new outbreaks of anti-American violence when the bodies arrived, as some had feared. China’s leaders, apparently satisfied they’ve gained a diplomatic advantage over the West, calmed the protests Tuesday” (Wiseman, “Sasser Leaves” 4A).

A USA Today editorial on May 11 suggests, “China has not been careful. At first shocked at the bombing, hard-line officials sought to capitalize on NATO’s blunder. With lies, they’ve whipped up nationalistic fervor against U.S. teachers, reporters, diplomats, pro-U.S. Chinese officials, U.S. consumer goods and McDonald’s restaurants. They took U.S. advertising off the air” (“China Stokes” 14A). Additionally, various editorials parallel the USA Today commentary. One person writes in, “I view the events regarding China this past week with grave concern. While I regret the accidental NATO attack on the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, the People’s Republic of China sanctioned the demonstrations and assaults on our embassy in Beijing, and that is unconscionable” (Parr 14A). Another editorial claims, “Nevertheless, the Chinese leaders organized, incited, and orchestrated violent anti-U.S. and anti-NATO demonstrations despite the repeated apologies given by President Clinton and leaders of the NATO alliance” (Jagannathan 14A).

It is interesting to note that the USA Today articles do not overtly question statements of government-run demonstrations. Moreover, only several small editorials affirm the Chinese people’s anger. One editorial states, “The USA Today editorial on China was
totally uncalled for because it makes it appear as if it's wrong for China to be upset with the United States ("China stokes anti-U.S. fires, recalling blunders of the past,"
Tuesday)... It appears that much of America is trying to place blame on China for the incident that triggered Beijing's anger. If China blew up our backyard in a pathetic mishap, we wouldn't be angry" (Norton 14A)? James Sasser lends some credence to the idea that the demonstrations weren't completely controlled by the Chinese government. "Sasser believes the Chinese government sanctioned the demonstrations, but he thinks officials were surprised by the ferocity and numbers of protesters. From what he could see from embassy windows, Sasser said, 'the crowd was extraordinarily difficult to control. And some were attacking the police'" (Lee 10A). However, articles empathetic to the Chinese anger are often overshadowed by accusations of government-run protests.

D. Tiananmen Square

It is also interesting to note that a number of the reports on the Chinese demonstrations make reference to Tiananmen Square – a protest lodged in American memory. Some articles use the Tiananmen Square references to draw an illustration of the large-scale protests taking place in China. "The bombing generated the largest public protest in China since the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstration 10 years ago, but this time marchers had the approval of the government" (Kelley, "U.S. Officials" 1A). Another article on May 11 states, "The crowds outside the [U.S.] embassy were smaller then they had been Saturday and Sunday, when tens of thousands filled the streets in the biggest protests here since the Tiananmen democracy movement a decade ago" (Wiseman, "Anti-U.S. Vitriol" 10A).
Still other articles suggest that the government is using the protests as a way to distract attention from the tenth anniversary of Tiananmen Square. Wiseman writes that, "The Chinese government has permitted the protests, thinking perhaps it would be safer to give people a chance to vent their outrage...Stirring up passions against foreigners might distract people as the 10th anniversary of the June 4 Tiananmen crackdown approaches" (Wiseman, "In China" 12A). A corresponding article discussing how U.S.-China relations should stay solid after the bombing relates that, "U.S. diplomats said that China might have reasoned that a fierce round of anti-American rhetoric would dampen enthusiasm for planned demonstrations on the 10th anniversary of the Chinese crackdown on pro-democracy protestors in Tiananmen Square on June 4" (Kelley, "U.S.-China Relations" 12A). In a USA Today editorial discussing the Chinese government’s manipulation of the protests, the article warns, "All this could backfire on China’s regime...As in Tiananmen Square, protestors could turn their anger on their communist government, with which they have more bones to pick than with NATO and the USA. If police killed a protester, for example, the mob could turn on that symbol of state oppression" ("China Stokes" 14A). Likewise, Wiseman reiterates the point that the protesters’ energy can easily be redirected. In reporting on analysts who say the government is trying to "divert public attention" from the Tiananmen Square anniversary, Wiseman writes, "Still, analysts say the government is taking a huge risk. ‘Chinese nationalism is like wild grass that has seen the spark of fire,’ says Qiu Ye, 37, a freelance journalist protesting near the U.S. Embassy Tuesday" (Wiseman, "Sasser Leaves" 4A).

However, once again Sasser seems to be one of the sole reported voices of disagreement. "If anything," he says to the USA Today, "allowing them to go ahead and
do these demonstrations gives them plenty of time to recover before June 4. This just puts them in the mode to get out there and conduct more demonstrations” (Lee 10A). Nonetheless, Sasser’s statement must compete against the American memory of the Tiananmen Square “pro-democracy movement” and the alleged fight of the students against the authoritarian government.

Thus, the USA Today coverage of the Chinese Embassy bombing is predominantly overshadowed by numerous references to protest. In this section, the coverage ranges from articles describing destruction of American symbols to the Chinese government’s squashing of the student movement a decade prior. The sub-themes contributing to this coverage include: repeated articles detailing destruction done to the U.S. embassy, articles on exhibited “anti-U.S.” sentiment, references to government-orchestrated protest, and parallels to Tiananmen Square.

3. U.S.-China exchange

China’s “fight for democracy” in Tiananmen Square is not the first time that Americans have become impassioned with China. Beginning in the early 1800s American missionaries arrived on China’s shore in the hope of bringing spiritual salvation and physical well-being to the population. The question of China’s soul continues in contemporary American discourse. While some texts state that China can still be converted to the “American way,” others approach the Chinese with hesitation and caution. The USA Today coverage of the Embassy bombing is no exception as articles struggle to define the U.S.-China relationship.
A. No Long-Term Effect on Relationship

A number of the articles in the USA Today express optimism that the Chinese Embassy bombing is merely a minor setback in overall U.S.-China relations. The USA Today’s initial cover story on the bombing is quick to point this out. The second paragraph of the article states, “But U.S. diplomats insisted that the government-supported protests would not derail U.S.-Sino relations or efforts to broker a diplomatic solution to the Kosovo conflict” (Kelley, “U.S. Officials” 1A). Articles confirm that once the anger from the incident fades, the relationship will continue. “Despite threats of ‘Death to America’ by protesters in China Sunday,” writes Jack Kelley, “U.S. officials do not believe there will be any long term damage to Sino-American relations over NATO’s bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade.” The article suggests that the anger has already started to dissipate at the urging of Chinese leaders. Quoting Vice-President Hu Jintao, Kelley writes, “Late Monday, China called on students to exercise restraint. ‘We must remember that China’s people love peace,’ Hu said. ‘Your voice has been heard’” (Kelley, “U.S.-China Relations” 12A).

Likewise, Sasser echoes the same sentiment. The USA Today writes, “Sasser, who has been credited with nurturing the U.S.-China relationship, said the two countries are going through a difficult but not irreversible period… ‘Once the emotion leaks out of the problem, wiser heads will prevail,’ he said” (Lee 10A). Moreover, while U.S. officials admit that the bombing has delayed WTO talks, there is hope that it will only be a temporary delay. Greg Mastel, a China specialist at the Economic Strategy Institute states, “With this sort of acrimony, it’s impossible to strike any kind of final deal. It’ll
mean maybe a month’s delay” (Cox 1B). Thus, as the USA Today reports, while the bombing poses a challenge, it will not stop economic exchange.

B. WTO/Trade

Indeed, trade is reported as the lynchpin of the U.S.-China relationship. Wiseman writes that, “Despite all the difficulties, many analysts are convinced that China will continue to seek relatively cordial relations with the United States and the West. That’s because it wants to keep doing business. China’s economy, hamstringed by inefficient state-owned companies and a broken financial system, needs access to foreign investment and export markets.” The article continues to point out that, “Notably, the Chinese did not cut off talks last week with the United States on the terms under which China can join the World Trade Organization” (Wiseman, “China’s Grievances” 14A). A number of articles stress the importance of trade talks, yet at the same time some are wary of Chinese manipulation in the process. A USA Today editorial criticizing the Chinese governments handling of the bombing, states that China, “is bullying diplomats with the embassy violence, so they’ll be fearful of China and work on the White House to appease the nation in the future. And underneath all this, there’s heavy pressure for the U.S. to approve China’s membership in the World Trade Organization by June” (“China Stokes” 14A). Moreover, Wiseman states that some analysts believe the Chinese government is using the bombing uproar to, “Position itself to join the World Trade Organization on favorable terms.” Moreover, “When WTO talks – postponed because of the bombing and protests – resume, China is certain to demand better terms” (Wiseman, “Sasser Leaves” 4A).
Similarly, subsequent editorials express doubt and concern in trade negotiations with the Chinese. One editorial states that, “The Chinese are tough, skilled, and calculating negotiators who do not respect weakness. The only way to achieve progress in trade, World Trade Organization compliance, and human rights is to allow the Chinese access to U.S. markets only to the extent that they comply with our desires in regard to these issues” (Parr 14A). Another editorial warns of the danger of trade with China claiming, “One need not be a prophet to see which way the wind will eventually blow once the U.S. fully arouses the sleeping giant economically in the very rapid way we are doing – all for the sake of the immediate bottom line of American business” (Jagannathan 14A).

However, a few articles are more optimistic about trade with China. Greg Mastel (a China specialist at the Economic Strategy Institute) states, “It’s in China’s interest and the U.S.’s interest to strike a deal, and the bombing hasn’t changed that” (Cox 1B). Another USA Today article reports that, “Despite security fears, China and its foreign investors have strong incentives to keep doing business” (McDonald 4A). Finally, an editorial in response to Parr’s comments (“Tough policy toward China correct one, 5/13) argues for better trade relations with China stating, “In my opinion, the U.S. trade deficit has been caused in part by the action or inaction of U.S. politicians and government leaders who have not supported our businesses trying to establish trade with China.” The article concludes by stating, “Our government complains about the trade deficit with China, but officials sure don’t do much to help American business in China…Wake up, Americans. Get your heads out of the sand” (Phillips 14A). Nonetheless, while trade
with China is an important issue, articles and editorials urge caution when interacting with the Chinese.

C. Chinese Spying/Human Rights/Campaign Contributions

Thus, it is interesting to note the references that the USA Today bombing coverage makes to negative situations and negotiations with the Chinese. In particular, several topics mentioned on repeated occasions are Chinese spying, human rights debates, and campaign contributions. To begin with, the paper reports that the bombing has led China to, “suspend human rights dialogue and military exchanges with the United States” (Kelley, “U.S. Officials” 1A). In discussing how some U.S. officials speculate that China may be using the bombing for “political advantage,” Kelley suggests that, “It also came amid U.S. charges of Chinese spying on U.S. installations and disputes over trade and human rights” (Kelley, “U.S.-China Relations” 12A). In a USA Today editorial the same day, the paper states that, “China’s ambassador to the U.S. said Sunday, after mentioning the death of three Chinese and calling for investigation, that he’s piqued that Washington has accused China of nuclear spying and human-rights violations” (“Once Again” 14A). The USA Today editorial on the following day questions why China may be using the bombing for political gain. “China’s ambassador to the U.S. offered a hint, saying at his earliest opportunity that he was mad not only at the quality of the White House apology, but also at the fact that Washington has in the past criticized China’s human rights record and accused the country of spying,” states the editorial. “Yet China has a terrible human rights record, and indeed it has been spying at U.S. nuclear labs” (“China Stokes” 14A).
Paul Wiseman’s article reiterates the latter point by quoting analysts who say the Chinese government is “skillfully” using the protests to, “Put the United States on the defensive diplomatically. Washington has been bashing Beijing over its human-rights abuses; allegations it tried to buy political influence in the United States with illegal campaign contributions; and charges it stole weapons technology from U.S. research labs” (Wiseman, “Sasser Leaves” 4A). Indeed, various cartoons and editorials seem to echo this frame of reference. In one cartoon with the caption, “Some people can sleep through anything,” President Clinton is fast asleep while “nuclear secret leaks” escape out the drain of his sink (5/11 14A). Another cartoon depicts President Clinton and presumably a White House aide. The aide is holding a phone and says to Clinton, “It’s China...They want their campaign contributions back” (5/12 14A). One editorial seems to suggest that with nuclear espionage allegations, China is overreacting to the bombing. “Most disturbing is the negative response of the Chinese government to this event and to NATO efforts in Kosovo in light of the recent revelations regarding Chinese nuclear espionage” (Parr 14A). Another editorial, criticizing President Clinton’s apology to the Chinese states, “These are the same Chinese who seized Tibet, threatened Taiwan with missile launches, stole U.S. weapon secrets, donated wads of campaign cash in hopes of influencing American policy, continue to terrorize dissident Chinese citizens, and sell weapons to military enemies of the USA” (Murphy 14A).

Consequently, it appears that the U.S.-China relationship is locked into the frames of prior negotiations. That is to say that the USA Today reports connect (if not cement) the Chinese Embassy bombing to current perspectives on the U.S.-Chinese exchange. This is clearly illustrated by references to a lack of long-term effect on the relationship (possible
business motivation), the WTO and trade, and finally, such political issues as Chinese spying, human rights violations, and campaign contributions.

4. Absence of Hegemony

Furthermore, it is important to note how the U.S. perceives (or does not perceive) its role in negotiations with China. Clearly, the U.S. views its role differently than China. On May 17, the *USA Today* runs a news analysis entitled, "China’s Grievances Go Beyond Embassy Hit." Within this article, Paul Wiseman quotes several analysts to answer the question "What does China want?" Wiseman writes that one of the answers to this question is, "Limits on U.S. power unopposed since the collapse of the Soviet Union. ‘They really fear what they call ‘hegemonic power,’’ Merle Goldman, professor of Chinese history at Boston University, said. ‘They feel the U.S. can do whatever it wants because there is no countervailing force’" (Wiseman, "China’s Grievances" 14A). Indeed, Goldman’s claim seems to be in keeping with the hegemonic accusations of the *China Daily*. However, this *USA Today* news analysis is one of the only articles that makes even a vague reference to the term “hegemony.” And when the word “hegemony” appears (as in the case of the latter article), it is labeled a Chinese accusation. Moreover, with the exception of several small submitted editorials15 the bombing is never questioned to be anything other than a mistake. Clearly, after an analysis of the *USA Today* text, it becomes clear that the charge of hegemony is not even questioned or considered.

Rather, the *USA Today* reports matter-of-factly that the strategic operations will continue. The May 10 cover story in the *USA Today* relates that, “Undeterred by the
protests, NATO launched airstrikes on Yugoslavia today for the 48th straight day, targeting the airport in Nis, 120 miles southwest of Belgrade. Despite the bad weather, explosions also were heard elsewhere in the country” (Kelley, “U.S. Officials” 1A).

Thus, the bombing procedures move forward and the Belgrade bombing becomes a sad mistake in a larger military campaign. An article on the same day reports that, “Amid an uproar over its mistaken bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, NATO defended on Sunday its conduct of the air war in Yugoslavia and said there would be no letup.” Moreover, NATO spokesman Jamie Shea reiterates that, “NATO would have preferred not to use force. But having started the campaign...we are determined to push it through...To stop now would be to hand (Yugoslav President Slobodan) Milosevic ethnic cleansing on a plate” (Lynch 13A).

Moreover, the U.S./NATO actions in the Balkans are reported as furthering (rather than hindering) the cause of peace. The USA Today quotes Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering as stating on ABC’s This Week with Sam Donaldson & Cokie Roberts that, “The problem in Yugoslavia and in Kosovo is not the Chinese Embassy...The notion (that China) would stand in the way of a peaceful settlement doesn’t reflect what I understand about Chinese intentions and policies in this issue” (Kelley, “U.S.-China Relations” 12A). Thus, as Pickering states, the war is not about the bombing of the Chinese Embassy, rather the war is about peace. And in this case China, rather than the U.S., threatens the development of peace. As the USA Today relates, “The peace we’re trying to make is in the interests of everybody,” Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass, told Fox News Sunday. “My hope is that China will become ever more forceful in becoming part of the diplomatic solution”’ (Kelley, “U.S.-China Relations” 12A). A May 10 editorial seems
to echo the U.S. position by stating, "The recent destruction of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was just an accident of war... To quote President Clinton in answer to Chinese charges that NATO and the U.S. are behaving like 'barbarians': 'What is barbaric is what (Slobodan) Milosevic has done'" (Ruggieri 14A). Contrary to Chinese charges of U.S. hegemony, the U.S. (as exemplified in the USA Today) perceives its role as furthering rather than hindering world peace.
Conclusions

An American college graduate teaching English in China at the time of the Belgrade bombing relates her personal experience. Describing her friends’ translations of irate placards she states, “I do understand this anger! If my country’s embassy became a casualty of a war I did not support or believe in, I’d be pissed off and afraid. But the discussions that followed the placards revealed to me, in a very acute sense, the irreconcilable differences in the very moment of thought between myself and the Chinese students. It’s like this: even if we were to be given the exact same information, the U.S. and the P.R.C. would deliver this information in different ways. Subtle, but exact. So what does it matter? Generations of culture and geography and war and government and conditioning cannot be penetrated” (Jones).

Indeed, in comparing the China Daily and USA Today text, there is basically only agreement on one point: the Chinese Embassy was bombed by a U.S.-supported NATO mission on midnight May 7, 1999 (Belgrade time). Other than that there are large discrepancies in “facts” between the two newspapers. The China Daily reports three dead and twenty injured, and while the USA Today reports that twenty people were injured, the paper fluctuates between a death toll of three to four. To the Chinese newspaper the victims were wives, a mother, son, daughter, and newlyweds. They were great journalists who achieved the title of “revolutionary martyr” by serving the cause of their country. To the U.S. newspaper, they were a statistic – nameless victims of the war. Moreover, there is disagreement in the number of missiles that hit the facility. The China Daily initially reports that the Embassy was hit by three missiles, later suggesting that five missiles hit the building. The USA Today neither confirms nor denies the number of
missiles targeted at the Embassy. In fact the USA Today refers to Chinese reports stating that, “China says three [bombs] slammed into the compound” (Komarow, “Officials Detail Errors” 7A). The number of missiles targeted at the embassy is never officially confirmed. Thus, it is difficult even to find agreement on the “basic facts” of the bombing.

The traditional and influential *Four Theories of the Press* model would note the dichotomous comparisons between the Chinese and the U.S. press. Within this theory, the Chinese press would be labeled “authoritarian” while conversely the U.S. press would be considered “libertarian.” Consequently, this theory approaches such analysis with presupposed bias and assumptions. That is, approaching Chinese media through a Western liberal press model assumes superiority over the “controls” of the authoritarian model of the press. One would have to conclude, via the *Four Theories of the Press* model, that one media source is correct and the other is wrong. That the USA Today as a “libertarian press” is able to ascertain and report the facts, while the China Daily as an “authoritarian press” is controlled by the government and limited in its reporting of the truth. To an extent, this is certainly true. The U.S. press is granted freedom under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and the Chinese press operates under the control of the government – most certainly a point worth noting. And yet, Yuezhi Zhao, while affirming the relevance of discussions “on the struggle of press freedom against state control,” reminds us that, “While this narrative holds much explanatory power, it tends to oversimplify the complicated process of transformation in the Chinese media” (Zhao 8). Moreover, the *Four Theories of the Press* model cannot address cultural dynamics or build intercultural understanding through black and white comparisons.
Clearly, a new and creative media analysis is needed for viewing the complex, changing, colorful, and evolving picture of China. Zha Jianying writes that reports on China often miss the dynamic nature as China is seen "through a pair of old lenses," and furthermore, "A closer look at China from multiple angles would yield a more complex, more ambiguous picture" (Zha 3). Consequently, ideological analysis cuts to the heart of the matter as it questions the actual "pair of lenses" (or frames) that we use to analyze media texts. Ideological analysis operates from the theoretical perspective that the frames we use to view media texts are an accepted, "system of meaning that helps define and explain the world and that makes value judgments about the world" (Croteau and Hoynes 157).

However, as we are often not aware of our frames, we accept the frame's perspective as "common sense" (Croteau and Hoynes 164) and based on these "frames of common sense" we make assumptions about events in the world. Moreover, as Peter Berger writes, social phenomenon aids one in the construction of the "frames of common sense." Berger states that, "society is a product of human activity that has attained the status of objective reality. The social formations are experienced by man as elements of an objective world. Society confronts man as external, subjectively opaque and coercive facticity" (Berger 11). That is to say that the social phenomenon in each society (in this case the U.S. and China) provides individuals with competing "frames" used for "objectively" evaluating reality. This is clearly demonstrated in the Belgrade bombing with one event and two very different societal pictures. Thus, rather than assuming one view right and the other wrong, it is important to question the "underlying images of society" (Croteau and Hoynes 157) that each account provides. The ideological analysis
yields a more dynamic and complex understanding of U.S. and Chinese media texts. This ideological analysis focuses on several sections: How the symbolic forms in the text are defined, and how these definitions are affected and used by cultural hegemonic controls to maintain legitimacy.

Definition/Construction of Symbolic Forms

To accept the “frames of ideology” is to accept the socially defined meaning of a symbol. Once again, John Thompson suggests to, “conceptualize ideology in terms of the ways in which the meaning mobilized by symbolic forms serves to establish and sustain relations of domination” (Thompson 58). Furthermore, Croteau and Hoynes connect this concept to the media when they write of “different ideological perspectives, representing different interests with unequal power, engage in a kind of struggle within media texts” (Croteau and Hoynes 159). Likewise, Daniel Lynch writes that the media as an agent in “the initiation and circulation of society’s communication system” serves as “the building blocks of the ‘symbolic environment’” (Lynch 2). Thus, the media is a forum that hosts competing definitions of symbolic forms.

As the media (as the communication system) construct the “symbolic environment” or the definition of symbols, comparing coverage of the bombing in the China Daily and the USA Today becomes all the more pertinent. The two texts contain numerous competing definitions of symbols. Objectively speaking, an embassy is just a building, but the China Daily and the USA Today attribute two very different definitions to this symbolic structure. As Ambassador Qiao Zonghuai states, “A diplomatic mission such as the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia, is a symbol of a nation’s sovereignty”
("Tang" 1). Thus, while the China Daily reports the Embassy as a sovereign symbol, the USA Today defines the bombed Embassy as an "accident" of war. Moreover, the USA Today spends the majority of its coverage on the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. Indeed, the initial headline of the bombing in the USA Today declares, "Enraged Chinese Besiege Embassy..." (Kelley, "U.S. Officials" 1A). Thus, by concentrating on the damage done to this U.S. symbol, the bombing becomes more of a story about transgression against the U.S. than harm done to China.

Furthermore, the China Daily and USA Today text provide many other examples of defined symbolic forms. The China Daily defines the bombing as a "barbaric" act. The paper reiterates this definition in its repeated use of the word "barbaric," as well as by labeling the victims as martyrs, citing that people from "all walks of life" condemn the "barbaric" act, by stating the bombing as a rare transgression in diplomatic history, and by describing the advanced war technology of "U.S.-led" NATO. All of these elements contribute to defining the bombing as a "barbaric act." On the other hand, the USA Today instantly reports the bombing as an "accident" of war. In a similar fashion, the paper refers to several elements to reiterate the "accidental" definition of the bombing. Like the China Daily's usage of the word "barbaric," the USA Today uses the word "accident" or "mistake" on numerous occasions. Moreover, the USA Today makes references to Clinton's apology, the need for more defense money, NATO war precision, and a chronology of CIA/NATO mistakes which support the "accidental" bombing definition. Each paper stresses and defines symbols differently to support their own cultural viewpoint. These definitions in turn create frames - a "system of meaning" that will help people "explain the world" and "make value judgments about the world"
However, one must adopt a societal system of meaning before it can become an ideological frame.

Effects of Hegemony on the Ideological Frame

As stated earlier, ideology involves not only the definition of symbols, but also the attempt to have definitions of symbols accepted as “common sense” – the foundation of ideology. The attempt to have one’s definition accepted as “natural” is a function of hegemony. Once again, Croteau and Hoynes expand the traditional definition of hegemony by stating that, “Hegemony operates at the level of common sense in the assumptions we make about social life and on the terrain of things that we accept as ‘natural’ or ‘the way things are’” (Croteau and Hoynes 164).” Hegemony, thus sustains “frames of common sense.” As Peter Berger attests, “society manifests itself by its coercive power. The final test of its objective reality is its capacity to impose itself upon the reluctance of individuals” (Berger 11). Hence, many groups in society compete to have their symbolic definitions accepted as “common sense.” Consequently, the China Daily and the USA Today reflect varying degrees of hegemonic influences by the frames the stories are placed in and by the way the coverage seeks to maintain legitimacy.

A. Setting the Context

To begin with, it is interesting to note the placement of the defined symbolic forms. The China Daily reports that the bombing of the Chinese Embassy is an event “rare in diplomatic history.” Thus, by placing the event in such a historical frame, the bombing becomes an extremely serious transgression of national sovereignty. Moreover,
the *China Daily* makes repeated reference to how the “U.S.-led” war in Yugoslavia is disturbing the world’s aspirations for peace. In such a way, the *China Daily* justifies China’s righteousness by placing it as part of an international community appalled by “U.S.-led” NATO. The *China Daily*, in fact, labels the United States a “hegemon” with worldly goals of domination.

On the other hand, the *USA Today* never question (and rarely mentions) the hegemonic accusation. In such a way, the omission of the hegemonic accusation itself seems to expose subtle hegemonic influences. Indeed, only several small editorials even question that the bombing could be anything more than a mistake of war. Whereas the *China Daily* places their defined event in the context of a national and international transgression, the *USA Today* situates the defined “accident” within the context of a larger military campaign. That is to say that the bombing, while “tragic,” is a fact of war in the fight for peace. Moreover, the majority of the *USA Today* coverage of the bombing is placed in the frame of “anti-U.S.” sentiment. The coverage depicts the “furious” Chinese destroying the American Embassy and installations. Reports in the *USA Today* suggest that much of the anger is government-incited. Furthermore, articles in the *USA Today* seem to reiterate the Chinese government’s dubious motivations with references to Chinese spying, human rights violations, and campaign contributions.

**B. Legitimacy – Acceptance of Symbolic Forms**

Consequently, the extent to which a “ruling group” controls and maintains power is dependent on the acceptance of defined meaning. As Daniel Lynch writes, “Legitimacy is rooted in ideational culture, which is constituted by communication and is
identical to the symbolic environment” (Lynch 2). Thus, when one accepts the defined “symbolic environment” (frame) they are in fact granting legitimacy to the definers of the meaning. The power structures of society rest on the populace’s acceptance of meaning and granting of legitimacy. Sociologist Jurgen Habermas states that, “The political system requires an input of mass loyalty that is as diffuse as possible.” Furthermore, when there is no longer mass loyalty or the general acceptance of meaning, a “legitimation crisis” occurs which “is directly an identity crisis” of the power structure (Habermas 46).

At first glance, the reports in the China Daily seem to grant the Chinese leadership a high degree of legitimacy. Speeches and comments by officials are given great play throughout the text. In this case, it appears that official proclamations have shaped the meaning and definitions in the text - i.e. the bombing is “barbaric” and the result of the “hegemonic” United States. Nonetheless, it is equally important to note competing ideological frames within the China Daily text itself. While the paper condemns the actions of the American government, it simultaneously welcomes American investment and “cultural exchanges.” It is also interesting to note the articles in the paper that attempt to separate the American citizens from the actions of their government. Thus while in one case America is symbolized as a political hegemony, in others America is defined as an economic partner. Two separate definitions of America, and each competing for acceptance and legitimacy.

Additionally the USA Today coverage, albeit more subtle, competes for legitimacy. Granted, while the USA Today coverage is not centered solely on the words of American leadership, the coverage does, however, seem to conform to U.S.
mainstream values. That is to say that the coverage never questions (with the exception of several small editorials; see footnote 11) the bombing of the Chinese Embassy. The bombing is simply assumed to be a minor accident of war. Thus, the coverage never threatens the perception that America is following the just path. Moreover, reports in the USA Today reaffirm the legitimacy of American democracy. America in pursuit of a greater evil “accidentally” bombed the Chinese Embassy. The Chinese students, “once starry-eyed about the U.S., are angry and confused” (“Once Again” 14A) by the manipulation of their government. Like Tiananmen Square, the government is orchestrating attacks on democracy. Thus, the unquestioning acceptance of the bombing as an “accident,” and the extensive coverage of damage done to U.S. symbols, seems to reiterate the legitimacy of the American democratic principle.

The Big Picture

How objective is the press as an “objective mirror of reality?” Does the press, as Allen H. Neuharth states of the USA Today, give “readers information that they want and need in order to form their own opinions” (Prichard 340)? When considering these questions in relation to China, one must take Edward Farmer’s assertion into account that, “One could argue that the rise and fall of American enthusiasm for China has more to do with what is happening in the United States than it does with what is happening in China” (Farmer 250). Truly this is evident in analyzing the “U.S. mainstream” media coverage of the bombing of the Chinese Embassy as the majority of the USA Today coverage is devoted to transgressions against the United States. Moreover, little time is spent truly analyzing underlying issues and themes paramount to China. As James Mann
states, “Above all, American media coverage of China needs to challenge existing assumptions and be ready for the unexpected. By doing so, we can avoid the sense of shock that erupts at each swing of Chinese history…” (Mann 107). Ideological analysis, when applied, is an effective method for better understanding, interpreting, and challenging media texts. As Croteau and Hoynes write, “At its best, ideological analysis provides a window onto the broader ideological debates going on in society” (Croteau and Hoynes 160-161). Through careful ideological analysis of the media coverage of the Chinese Embassy bombing, the text is freed from prior frames and changes from a black and white depiction to a colorful and complex picture.

However, it appears that the USA Today in this case is reflective of the U.S. press as few media sources sought the complexity in this picture. Political scientist Larry Hubbell notes that, “The leading U.S. newspapers and news magazines took an uncritical view of the U.S. government’s story” (Hubbell 161). Moreover, “One of the few media outlets that did not wholeheartedly accept the U.S. government’s explanation of the incident was the Los Angeles Times. On 9 May, a front-page article by Lisa Rubin, Tyler Marshall, and Richard Boudreaux noted that ‘the embassy was hit in an apparent case of mistaken identity.’ Most of the major U.S. news outlets did not feel it was necessary to make even a weak qualification” (Hubbell 162). Are Americans thus forming their own opinions?

American media (and thus presumably the American people) have adopted a warped picture of China. Michael Dutton writes that, “Western journalists and editors – and also, one suspects, the majority of their readers – still seem to view China through the lens of 1989 and the imagery of the man and the tank.” Moreover, Dutton states that this
image has become a “subconscious paradigm through which to view China,” and that, “As a binary opposition of good and bad, the man-and-tank image has helped frame most of ‘our’ understandings of contemporary Chinese politics in the post-1989 era” (Dutton 277). However, such a dichotomous lens of analysis is deficient if one wishes to gain a complete understanding of the Chinese Embassy bombing. As Dutton relates, “when the streets filled with overtly political protesters after the 1999 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, this binary opposition had gone” (Dutton 277). Nonetheless, black and white media frames overshadow the true dynamics of the Belgrade bombing. The American audience misses undertones suggesting the tension of competing ideologies in China and illustrations of a growing nationalism in the country.

To truly understand the frame we use to view China, we must first turn the lens of analysis on ourselves. That is to say, we must seek to understand the roots of our perceptions and then question how our perceptions affect our view. While people can never completely step out of the realm of their own cultural ideology, they must be willing to consistently challenge and question their own cultural perspective. The building of the bridge between China and the U.S. depends on a cultivated sense of such intercultural understanding. This broad frame of understanding must be applied not only to media, but diplomatic and personal relationships as well. We must be willing to view an event from more dynamic frames of reference.

Huang Xiangyang, copy desk chief for the China Daily, offers an interesting perspective. Huang spent five months at the Seattle Post-Intelligencer on a fellowship program. The copy desk chief ponders U.S.-China relations in light of the Embassy
bombing. He poses the rhetorical question, "What is the way out for the stale-mated Sino-U.S. relations?" In response, Huang suggests a Chinese anecdote:

_There is a story about a simple Chinese character (composed of two horizontal strokes and one vertical stroke) that can mean different things when read from two opposite sides. There were once two kids who argued vehemently about the meaning of the character carved on the table."

"Shift your seat and read it again," their teacher said.

_They did, and they stopped arguing._
Afterword

This is a paper about perceptions -- why we have the perceptions of an event that we do and how we may gain these perceptions. I am indebted to a number of people for challenging my own perspective and making this project possible. I am particularly thankful to Dr. Richard Ice and Dr. Jeanne Cook for initially encouraging me to join their semester study-abroad trip to China in 1998. It is here, in China, that I had to recognize my American perspective, and ultimately question, “What does it mean to be an American in this increasingly global community?” The question yields no easy answer, but it is the question that encourages the continued journey of discovery. I am also deeply thankful to the College of St. Benedict/St. John’s University students who were an integral part of the initial 1998 journey to China. It is their enthusiasm, curiosity, and humor that helped make the journey an unforgettable experience. It is imperative that I also extend appreciation to my Chinese friends – as their complex and dynamic lives have brought color to a black and white picture.

A number of people have been instrumental in helping me focus my experience into a thesis project: Dr. Katie Johnson, Dr. P. Richard Bohr, Dr. Jeanmarie Cook, and Dr. Richard Ice (thesis advisor). I am extremely grateful for their guidance, patience, and encouragement throughout this project. Finally, it goes without saying that I am deeply grateful for the on-going support of my family. Without their love and encouragement this journey would not have been possible.

What does it mean to be an American in this increasingly global community? More specifically, how is America to relate to China in this next century? While the answers to these questions may not be readily apparent, it is nonetheless imperative that
we consider the implications of the question. One of the first steps is to explore the roots of our own perceptions.
Appendix

Prevailing Themes*

*It must be noted that the research of “prevailing themes” was conducted with a qualitative emphasis. Hence, the number of references should be applied as indicators of prevalence.

China Daily

- International Community for China/NATO Breaks International Laws: 75
- “Barbaric” Act: 42
- World Peace (or threat to): 42
- NATO/U.S. – For Human Rights?: 38
- Sovereignty: 38
- Justice: 29
- U.S. Hegemony: 26
- People From “All Walks of Life” Condemn Bombing: 21
- Three Martyrs/Good Children: 20
- Economic Growth/Progress: 15
- Patriotism/Nationalism: 15
- People Support Government: 15
- U.S. and NATO War Technology: 15
- China Will Not Yield to U.S.: 12
- “Extended China” Supports Mainland: 11
- Foreigner’s Safety (Tourism, Business): 11
- American Citizen vs. American Government: 9
- China Responds to Media Criticism: 8
- Bombing Rare in Diplomatic History: 6
- Criticisms of U.S. excuse: 6
- Chinese Act in Accordance with Law/Social Stability: 5
- National Defense: 2
• “Mistaken” Bombing: 24
• Trapped/Besieged Embassy: 15
• “Anti-U.S.”: 13
• Chinese Spying/Human Rights/Campaign Contributions: 12
• Chinese Fury/Out of Control: 11
• China’s Cooperation Wanted for Peace/Bombing Will Continue: 10
• Government Orchestration: 9
• Chinese Market/Business/WTO/Trade: 8
• Washington’s/Clinton’s Apology: 8
• Tiananmen Square (Pro-Democracy Demonstration): 7
• U.S.-China Relationship Will Stay Solid (No Long-Term Effect): 7
• Propaganda/State-Run Media: 6
• Chinese Military/Military Cooperation: 5
• Chronology of CIA/NATO Mistakes: 4
• More Money Needed for Defense: 4
• NATO Bomb Precision: 4
• Student Protesters: 4
• Tibet/Taiwan: 4
• Question “Mistaken” Bombing: 3
• Warning Travelers: 3


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“Smart Bomb, Dumb Mistake.” Editorial. USA Today 12 May 1999: 14A.


Endnotes


2 Formed in 1946, the goal of this commission was to assess the state of the U.S. press. The commission concluded that the press must be more socially responsible in its reporting and the informed public must in turn see that the press live up to its assigned responsibility. For more discussion of the topic see Altschull, chapter 8.


6 Statistic found on Lexis-Nexis newspaper source summary.

7 I was unable to locate the May 16th edition of the China Daily.

8 I would like to give credit here to Ming Lam whose undergraduate research paper on the NATO bombing helped me to arrive at this wording.

9 References to the Xinhua News Agency appear several times in this paper. Xinhua is the official news agency of the People’s Republic of China.

10 Initial reports in the China Daily claim that the Chinese Embassy was hit by three missiles, however later reports suggest that there were actually five missiles directed at the Embassy. The USA Today neither confirms nor denies the number (see page 87 of this paper).

11 Macao reverted back to mainland China on December 20, 1999.

12 China also suspends military exchanges with the United States. (Kelley, “U.S. Officials” 1A).

13 USA Today coverage during this time vacillates between reporting the death count as three and four.

14 Tiananmen Square is the symbolic center of China’s 1989 democracy movement.

15 See Culibrk, Ellis, and Kokkoros.

16 See Dutton’s article for more discussion of China’s growing nationalism and Western journalists’ misperception of the situation.