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**Research Cover Sheet**

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Book Analysis of Richard H. Solomon's  
*Chinese Negotiating Behavior: Pursuing Interests Through 'Old Friends'*

“There are distinct and repetitive patterns in Chinese negotiating behavior, and American negotiators should draw confidence from the fact that their People’s Republic of China (PRC) counterparts will conduct negotiations in a relatively predictable manner, one that has been dealt with effectively by other U.S. officials in pursuit of American policy objectives.”<sup>1</sup> When author Richard Solomon initially came to the conclusion above, he was referencing a classified study by the RAND Corporation aimed at providing guidance to senior American officials before their first encounters with PRC negotiators. The results of the study were declassified and published in 1995 in *Chinese Negotiating Behavior: Pursuing Interests Through 'Old Friends,'* through the U.S. Institute of Peace.<sup>2</sup>

Solomon’s education and career prepared him well to write *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*. Solomon was granted two degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the highest being a PhD in Political Science with a specialization in Chinese politics, in 1966.<sup>3</sup> He then served as a professor of Political Science at the University of Michigan until 1971 when he became a staff member of the U.S. National Security Council (NSC) focusing on Asian Affairs and working with NSC Advisor Henry Kissinger towards normalizing relations with China.<sup>4</sup> From 1976 to 1986, Solomon served as head of the Political Science Department for the RAND Corporation after which he joined the U.S. Department of State as the Director of Policy Planning.<sup>5</sup> Nominated by President George H.W. Bush, Solomon served as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs from June of 1989 to July of 1992.<sup>6,7</sup> During this time, Solomon helped negotiate the Cambodia peace treaty, facilitated nuclear proliferation discussions between North Korea and South Korea, contributed to the formation of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation initiative, and participated in bilateral negotiations with Vietnam,

Mongolia, and Japan.<sup>8</sup> After serving as U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines, from September of 1992 to March of 1993, Solomon became the president of the United States Institute of Peace.<sup>9</sup> Solomon has several publications to his credit, including *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture*, *A Revolution is Not a Dinner Party*, *The China Factor*, *Creating a Common Communications Culture: Interoperability in Crisis Management*, "Managing International Conflict in the Twenty-First Century" in *Passing the Baton: Challenges of Statecraft for the New Administration*, and *Exiting Indochina: U.S. Leadership of the Cambodia Settlement and Normalization with Vietnam*.<sup>10,11</sup> In 2010, Solomon, along with co-author Nigel Quinney, saw the publication of their *American Negotiating Behavior: Wheeler-Dealers, Legal Eagles, Bullies and Preachers*.<sup>12</sup>

Solomon is a credible source to author *Chinese Negotiating Behavior* as he had first-hand experience as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs and as a senior staff member of the NSC during the "normalization" phase of relations with the PRC during which time he was directly involved with negotiations with the Chinese.<sup>13</sup> As an NSC staff member and later RAND consultant to the NSC and the Departments of Defense and State, Solomon gained perspective and familiarity with the topic as well as with the major players discussed.<sup>14</sup> Although Solomon had sufficient personal experiences to write a book on this subject, the primary source of data for the study was the official record of negotiations between senior US officials and their PRC counterparts.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the negotiation records, the study also drew from the experiences of more than thirty U.S. officials who had negotiated with Chinese counterparts from the Nixon administration through the Reagan administration as well as six officials from other U.S. agencies and several U.S. businessmen.<sup>16</sup> To a lesser degree, Solomon

utilized historical analyses, memoirs, Chinese press statements, and official PRC documentation.<sup>17,18</sup>

The purpose of the original study was to provide guidance to senior American officials before their first encounters with PRC colleagues.<sup>19</sup> It is not difficult to find the central thesis of this work since the book is so well organized, including, in addition to the original text itself, an introduction, summary, and current essay by Chas Freeman noting changes since the original text was written. The main thesis is that Chinese officials negotiate in a “distinctive, but not unique, manner consisting of a highly organized and meticulously managed progression of well-defined stages.”<sup>20</sup> The most distinctive characteristic that Solomon noted of Chinese negotiating behavior is the “games of *guanxi*” or relationship games.<sup>21</sup> Distrusting negotiations of an impersonal or legal manner, the Chinese officials attempted to find a sympathetic counterpart to cultivate a personal relationship, which is then used to produce feelings of “good will, obligation, guilt, or dependence” to achieve their goals.<sup>22</sup> Another example of a distinctive negotiation style is the “principled stand,” where the Chinese negotiator determined the likely acceptable solution at the outset rather than taking an exaggerated position and slowly moving towards the solution.<sup>23</sup> Solomon supported his thesis well with many examples from the official negotiation records as well as anecdotes from U.S. negotiators interviewed. However, since the work only focuses on Chinese negotiating behavior and not negotiating behaviors of other cultures, the reader must wonder if “relationship games” and the “principled stand” are really distinctive of only Chinese negotiators. One might wonder if there are other cultures that use similar tactics.

According to Solomon’s study, the linear process of PRC political negotiations includes four sequential stages which he identified as opening moves, period of assessment, end game, and implementation.<sup>24</sup> The opening moves stage sees the Chinese initiate the relationship with

the identified sympathetic U.S. counterpart, establish a favorable agenda, and gain commitment to PRC ground rules. During the period of assessment, the Chinese work to draw out their target, obtain an understanding of the U.S. position, and apply pressures such as public pressures, time deadlines, or the risk of their target losing their “old friend status.”<sup>25</sup> Once the PRC officials have an understanding of the U.S. position, the end game stage begins and they quickly move to an agreement if it serves their interest. An alternative during this stage is for the PRC to test the U.S. stance with deadlock which could be resolved by the intervention of a senior leader.<sup>26</sup> During the implementation phase, the PRC ensure implementation adheres to the agreement while at the same time seeking changes and new concessions.<sup>27</sup> Solomon suggested three sources for the PRC negotiating style: the influence of western countries, the influence of other socialist states and parties (especially the former Soviet Union), and China’s own cultural tradition and historic experience.<sup>28</sup>

In his chapter on counterstrategies and counter tactics, Solomon suggested that American negotiators must “gain control of the dynamics, the rhythm, and stratagems of the friendship game. . .U.S. management of the relationship must convey to the Chinese an impression of competence in controlling the mechanics of negotiating encounters.”<sup>29</sup> Solomon provided a list of tactics in the lessons learned chapter that will maximize U.S. control over the negotiating process: (1) know substantive issues cold, (2) master the past negotiating record, (3) present your position in a broad framework, (4) know your own bottom line, (5) be patient, and don’t get trapped in time deadlines, (6) bureaucratic and political discipline is necessary, (7) minimize media pressures, (8) analyze the PRC internal political context and the negotiating style of the official interlocutors, (9) develop a negotiating strategy and apply tactics to counter Chinese negotiating ploys.<sup>30</sup> While these recommendations may be helpful to the U.S. negotiator

preparing to work with the Chinese, anecdotes and examples of just how U.S. counterstrategies and counter tactics played out would be even more valuable. Since the topic of the work is Chinese and not U.S. negotiating behavior, it is understandable that these sections are not as detailed as the sections focused on the Chinese negotiating behavior. Still, including analysis of the application of U.S. counterstrategies and how they were received would only enhance the U.S. negotiator's capabilities.

Chas W. Freeman, Jr., provided an essay "Chinese Negotiating Behavior Revisited" for the current publication of the book (1999) that informs the reader that much of the information provided by Solomon in the original study remains constant and useful, but the Chinese have also adapted many of the negotiating techniques they learned from their foreign counterparts. The Chinese still aim to develop or extend personal relationships and to agree on underlying principles to guide interaction over the long term.<sup>31</sup> This approach is known as *qiu tong cun yi* and focuses on finding agreement on certain issue while deferring conflicting issues, anticipating the areas of agreement will eventually outweigh the areas of disagreement to allow mutual trust.<sup>32</sup> Chinese negotiators still prefer to hear the U.S. position before presenting their own as this relieves the Chinese negotiator from having to try to explain the U.S. position to superiors and eliminates the possibility of the superiors providing poor instructions to negotiators based on false pretenses.<sup>33</sup> The Chinese prefer negotiating in China than abroad so they can be closer to their micro-managing superiors as well as due to travel constraints and limited budgets.<sup>34</sup> One area that Freeman noted has changed is intelligence gathering which is now more honest and less likely to be manipulated to fit the politics of the day.<sup>35</sup> He also mentioned that China's current leader are now better educated and have a better understanding of Western and international politics which makes the intelligence more useful to them.<sup>36</sup> China has failed to develop certain

essential tools of modern diplomacy such as effective outreach to legislators, interest groups, and the concerned public.<sup>37</sup> Finally, based on years of experience, the Chinese who regularly deal with the U.S. now expect their American counterparts to reach agreements midway between the terms asked and offered, thus adopting the salami-slicing approach in lieu of their previous “principled stance.”<sup>38</sup>

Solomon did not present a new or different model for approaching negotiations; rather he described the negotiation behavior of a specific culture. Nonetheless, the reader can appreciate how certain scenarios or anecdotes may be viewed through the lens of existing negotiation models. For example, considering negotiation preferences, and styles, the Chinese demonstrated the evade strategy at times.<sup>39</sup> They were able to stall negotiations regarding normalization when circumstances were unfavorable for their objectives.<sup>40</sup> Their stalling in conjunction with rejecting a presentation in 1977 also pressured the U.S. to develop new proposals.<sup>41</sup> To look at another example, using the TIPO framework (Trust, Information, Power, and Options), the reader can see how the Chinese utilized the information as power through the use of the press.<sup>42</sup> The Chinese used the press to set the discussion agenda, trap the U.S. administration through public visibility of high expectations, publicly attack, raise expectations, provoke, set limits, and entice as well as receive feedback via American mass media.<sup>43</sup> The Chinese used the information they sent to and received from the press to their advantage to gain power in their negotiations with the U.S.

Considering the ever increasing importance of security cooperation activities and multi-national coalitions, Solomon’s messages translate well to the military negotiating context. While every military negotiator will not negotiate with the Chinese, they may appreciate the recorded observations and apply the lessons learned since the Chinese negotiation style and techniques

were not entirely unique. For example, military members who negotiate with counterparts from partner nations will be better equipped if they have a thorough understanding of the asymmetries that exist between their own culture and that of their partner. In his chapter on counterstrategies and counter tactics, Solomon noted the significance of the different ways the U.S. and China view and approach various topics, including their world outlook, time perspective, interpersonal relations, approach to conflict, political structure, information management, and decision making.<sup>44</sup>

The lessons learned outlined by Solomon are also applicable for a military member negotiating with partner nation counterparts. While the ideas Solomon presented in this chapter may seem obvious, they bear repeating for the military negotiator. One lesson of particular relevance for military negotiators is mastering the past negotiating record. Since military members transition roles frequently, it is very possible that a partner nation counterpart might press a newly arrived military negotiator for follow-through on a previously discussed item or even bring up issues that were previously closed, hoping for a more favorable outcome. Another valuable lesson military negotiators can derive from Solomon is to know the bottom line. Too many U.S. military members enter security cooperation negotiations giving the impression that anything and everything is on the table when the reality is there are significant resource limitations that impact potential activities. As this study was not geared towards military negotiators, there are concepts that would be valuable for the military negotiator that Solomon did not address, primarily the basics of negotiations including an understanding of interests, negotiating preferences and styles, and how trust influences the use of information and power to develop options.<sup>45</sup>

While this book is very focused on specific high level negotiations between senior diplomats from the U.S. and China, there are generalities that can be drawn and applied in similar negotiations between the U.S. and other countries. This book adds to the knowledge base gained through the Negotiations and Conflict Management Elective as it illustrates through anecdotes many of the concepts learned and applied throughout the course. *Chinese Negotiating Behavior* would be useful as a personal reference to prepare for negotiations specifically with the Chinese or even with another nation's representatives. It is also a valuable reference to teach others about negotiating when more than one culture is represented. As this book will not teach the novice negotiator how to negotiate, a general negotiations book would be more beneficial to establish a baseline. Rather, this book provides entertaining anecdotes that demonstrate negotiating styles and tactics as well as some guidance and pitfalls to avoid. As multi-national activities are becoming more and more important to the U.S. National Security Strategy, the information gleaned from previous experiences is vital to developing current and future generations of military leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior: Pursuing Interests Through 'Old Friends'* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), 18.

<sup>2</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, back cover, 3.

<sup>3</sup> United States Institute of Peace, "Richard Solomon," <http://www.usip.org/experts/richard-h-solomon> (accessed 4 March 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Richard H. Solomon, "Enabling the Rise of the Dragon: The Challenge of Managing US-China Relations" (address, 15 November 2011). <http://www.usip.org/files/specialists/Solomon-Holdridge-speech.pdf> (accessed 4 March 2012).

<sup>5</sup> George Bush: "Nomination of Richard H. Solomon To Be an Assistant Secretary of State," March 24, 1989. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16846> (accessed 4 March 2012).

<sup>6</sup> United States Institute of Peace, "Richard Solomon."

<sup>7</sup> George Bush: "Nomination of Richard H. Solomon."

<sup>8</sup> Washington Post Live, "Richard Solomon." <http://washingtonpostlive.com/conferences/speakers/richard-solomon> (accessed 4 March 2012).

<sup>9</sup> United States Institute for Peace, "Richard H. Solomon."

<sup>10</sup> United States Institute for Peace, "Richard H. Solomon."

<sup>11</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 205.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.usip.org/events/american-negotiating-behavior-and-the-transformation-us-diplomacy>

<sup>13</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, back cover, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 15.

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- <sup>15</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 14.  
<sup>16</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 14.  
<sup>17</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 15.  
<sup>18</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 3.  
<sup>19</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 3.  
<sup>20</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 3.  
<sup>21</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 4.  
<sup>22</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 4.  
<sup>23</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 17.  
<sup>24</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 5.  
<sup>25</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 5-7.  
<sup>26</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 7.  
<sup>27</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 7.  
<sup>28</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 18-20.  
<sup>29</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 160.  
<sup>30</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 172-176.  
<sup>31</sup> Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., "Chinese Negotiating Behavior Revisited," in *Chinese Negotiating Behavior: Pursuing Interests Through 'Old Friends'* by Richard H. Solomon (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), 182.  
<sup>32</sup> Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., "Chinese Negotiating Behavior Revisited," 183.  
<sup>33</sup> Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., "Chinese Negotiating Behavior Revisited," 185.  
<sup>34</sup> Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., "Chinese Negotiating Behavior Revisited," 184, 186.  
<sup>35</sup> Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., "Chinese Negotiating Behavior Revisited," 187.  
<sup>36</sup> Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., "Chinese Negotiating Behavior Revisited," 188.  
<sup>37</sup> Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., "Chinese Negotiating Behavior Revisited," 189.  
<sup>38</sup> Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., "Chinese Negotiating Behavior Revisited," 194.  
<sup>39</sup> Dr. Stefan Eisen, "Practical Guide to Negotiating in the Military," USAF Negotiation Center of Excellence, <http://culture.af.mil/NCE/PDF/pracguide2011.pdf> (accessed 29 November 2011), 10.  
<sup>40</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 93.  
<sup>41</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 95.  
<sup>42</sup> Dr. Stefan Eisen, "Practical Guide," 5.  
<sup>43</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 113-122.  
<sup>44</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 163.  
<sup>45</sup> Dr. Stefan Eisen, "Practical Guide."

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