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## Trends. Enemy Images and the Inscrutable Chinese: Implications for United States/People's Republic of China Trade Talks

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United States (US) foreign policy towards the Chinese nation has been influenced by an image of the inscrutable Chinese. Here inscrutable denotes imperviousness to psychological penetration. One could not know what a Chinese is up to--and they all looked alike in that looking only bounced off and did not go through. From this perceptual stance it was easy to project the most unsavory aspects of oneself onto them and all representatives of them. The result exemplified the construct of the enemy image--an inaccurate and unflattering perception that engenders noxious behaviors in the beholder of the perception and, in turn, the object of the beholder. (Unfortunately, noxiousness--at least at times--seems to garner adaptive consequences.)

Current US/People's Republic of China (PRC) trade deliberations seem fueled by another sort of enemy image based not on psychodynamics but on illogic. Here some US policymakers are maintaining that actions of the PRC should not mirror those of the US. Unlike the US, the PRC cannot engage in espionage, mistakenly bomb the physical infrastructure of another country, and engage in the proliferation of weapons. Because the PRC's acts are like ours, they cannot be treated as like us, because to be like us they must be different than us. Thus, successfully engaging in trade talks that are mutually advantageous should not occur because they--the Chinese--don't deserve it because they cannot engage in our mutuality.

In the throes of the unconscious via psychodynamics or of illogic through cognition it may be US policymakers that are the most inscrutable. (See Alexander, M.G., et al. (1999). Images and affect: A functional analysis of outgroup stereotypes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77, 78-93; Gandelman, C. (1996). Patri-arse: Revolution as anality in the scatological caricatures of the Reformation and the French Revolution. *American Imago*, 53, 7-24; Schafer, M. (1997). Images and policy preferences. *Political Psychology*, 18, 813-829; White, R.K. (1998). American acts of force: Results and misperceptions. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 4, 93-128.) (Keywords: People's Republic of China, Political Psychology, Trade.)