

*In Memoriam***Allen Seuss Whiting, 1926–2018**

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Allen Whiting, who died in Laguna Hills, California, on 11 January 2018, was a seminal figure in the China field. As two of his many students we seek to recount his extraordinary life and career.

Although slight in physical stature, Allen Whiting was a giant in China studies and in numerous other professional endeavours. His career encapsulated the tumultuous history of American-Asian relations from the Chinese Communist Party's triumph on the mainland and throughout the conflicts and crises of the Cold War that involved China. Allen was a rarity. He was a scholar with great depth of expertise on one country (China) while also possessing breadth in international relations across Asia as a whole.

A proud yet very private man, Allen Whiting leaves an extraordinary legacy. His contributions encompassed exceptional scholarship; the training of numerous students; government service in Washington, DC and Hong Kong; and the drafting of crucial intelligence assessments and confidential policy advice at the highest levels of American government.

**Upbringing and Education**

The only child of Leo Robert and Viola Seuss Whiting, Allen was born on 27 October 1926, in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, a coastal city near New York. His father was a chemical engineer who helped perfect longer-lasting paints for use on American warships. Allen's relationship with his father was loving but paradoxically somewhat remote; his relationship with an often angry mother was very distant and troubled.

Perhaps to escape the stress of an unhappy family life, Allen very early turned to music. He was an accomplished piano and saxophone player who performed "ragtime" in swing bands in high school and college. Drafted into the US Army in 1944, Allen entered basic training in South Carolina. He experienced emotional trauma during military service and received an early discharge.

Allen was an outstanding student and had been admitted to Cornell University. However, he deferred study there and first enrolled in Deep Springs College, a unique, microscopically small work-study institution nestled in the

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Sierra Nevada Mountains. The enrollees at the college were ranch hands as much as students, and the setting was starkly different and far removed from Perth Amboy. On his own and apart from his parents, Allen thrived at Deep Springs, later returning to Ithaca to complete his undergraduate education.

Allen gained his earliest exposure to Asia at Cornell, where he studied with the renowned historian Knight Biggerstaff, a veteran of the Marshall Mission to China and founder of the *Journal of Asian Studies*. Allen probably acquired an early awareness of the destructive politics of the Cold War during his undergraduate years. Biggerstaff's modest acquaintance with Owen Lattimore led to false charges of pro-Communist sympathies and the revocation of his security clearances (Biggerstaff's clearances were restored years later).

Allen was an exemplary student at Cornell. Upon graduation in 1948, he enrolled at Columbia University, earning an MA in 1950 at the Russian Institute. Befitting the time, Allen then focused more on the Soviet Union, but he had a gnawing curiosity about Asia and China. He completed his PhD at Columbia in 1952, under the tutelage of Philip Mosely, an early and highly influential Soviet specialist who worked for Secretary of State Cordell Hull during much of World War II.

Allen's experiences at Columbia had a lasting effect on his subsequent career. Mosely was an early exemplar of the "insider/outsider" phenomenon in US foreign policy, exercising behind-the-scenes influence as Director of Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. Allen initially contemplated a career in the State Department, and while still enrolled in graduate school received exceptionally high marks on the Foreign Service exams. However, he did not receive an invitation to join the Department. His youth was the primary impediment to a Foreign Service appointment: an examiner concluded that Allen needed more real world experience. Quite possibly, the lack of an appointment was also evidence of the ugly politicization at State during the 1950s.

While preparing for the Foreign Service oral examination, Allen met Alice Marie Conroy, another Cornell graduate who was also intent on a State Department career. They dated and married soon thereafter, coinciding closely with Allen's decision to begin Chinese language study. The Whitings formed an enduring partnership. Alice opted to forego her own ambitions for the sake of Allen's career, believing that this would nevertheless enable her to see the world. She provided the emotional ballast in the marriage, especially when Allen made abrupt career decisions that had major consequences for his family. Four children (Deborah, David, Jeffrey and Jennifer) and six grandchildren survive Allen and Alice.

## Early Career

Allen was very early confronted with the noxious consequences of the McCarthy era. In 1951, he joined the faculty of Northwestern University as an instructor, but soon confronted major suspicions from faculty members about his interest

in the Soviet Union and China.<sup>1</sup> A senior professor (and future president of the American Political Science Association) deemed Allen's scholarly pursuits *prima facie* evidence of pro-Communist sympathies, and Allen's contract was not renewed. He was unemployed for nine months, and he and Alice had to rely on friends who opened their homes to them.

Undaunted, Allen received a modest Ford Foundation grant that enabled language study and travel in Taiwan and Hong Kong during 1953–54. But his first direct exposure to Asia had lasting consequences for his health. While swimming in Taiwan, Allen contracted polio, immobilizing both legs and suffering additional muscular infirmities. Through sheer will, a long and painful recovery, and disciplined exercise, he regained use of his legs. However, he was afflicted with severe back problems for much of his life, and when fatigued would walk with a discernible limp.

Allen nonetheless remained determined to fully utilize his Ford grant for the remainder of his time in Taiwan and Hong Kong. He continued his language study; undertook detailed research on CCP history; and became personally acquainted with leading political figures on Taiwan, including Chiang Ching-kuo. Chiang once invited him to a private dinner, and (despite severe incapacitation) he found a way to attend.

Returning from Asia in 1955, Allen joined the faculty at Michigan State University in East Lansing, where he gained early exposure to America's growing but still covert involvement in Vietnam. The Central Intelligence Agency sponsored training programmes at the university in support of South Vietnam's president, Ngo Dinh Diem. Already sobered by America's experiences in China during the 1940s, Allen maintained a scrupulous distance from the CIA's activities on campus. But his increasing awareness of the US role in Vietnam deeply influenced his subsequent views of Southeast Asia.

In 1957, Allen joined the Social Science Department of the RAND Corporation, in Santa Monica. RAND in the 1950s was ideally suited for Allen's temperament and intellectual creativity. With an ample budget from the US Air Force, RAND recruited an exceptional array of interdisciplinary talent, amassing research capacities on the Soviet Union and China and related fields that no university could match. Allen also came into regular contact with senior US military officers for the first time.

Though much of RAND's work was classified, Allen published extensively during his tenure in Santa Monica, including studies on the increasing fissures between the Soviet Union and China and on China's strategies toward Taiwan. Allen's landmark study during his time at RAND was *China Crosses the Yalu*. It was a singular piece of scholarship, and arguably remains his most influential work. By the age of 34, Allen had already secured his reputation as a leading scholar.

1 Allen described this encounter and additional episodes during his career in a memorable lecture at the George Washington University. See Whiting 2001.

## Washington, DC

In the aftermath of John F. Kennedy's election, Allen turned his focus eastward. In 1960, he taught briefly at Columbia, and was close to accepting a research appointment at the Council on Foreign Relations. But there was an undoubted allure to a position in the new administration.

During Allen's studies at Columbia, he had become acquainted with Roger Hilsman, who in 1961 was appointed head of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the State Department, known as INR. Compared to the mammoth intelligence bureaucracies elsewhere in the government INR was small in size and at a seeming disadvantage, though it enjoyed physical proximity to senior State Department officials. It was not a collector of intelligence, and its relevance therefore depended on adding value to the contributions of the CIA and other intelligence agencies.

In the fall of 1961, Allen began work as a Special Assistant at INR. The following year, Hilsman offered him the directorship for Far East Analysis at INR, where he worked for the next four years. The move to Washington, DC was the eleventh for the Whiting family in ten years. Allen regarded his time at the State Department as among the high points of his professional career. Despite his prodigious contributions to scholarship and teaching in later decades, he never felt more energized than in the first half of the 1960s. He had "Potomac fever," which Alice Whiting also came to share.

The upheavals of the early and mid-1960s were extraordinary. The Cuban missile crisis, the civil rights struggle (Alice was on the Washington Mall for Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech), the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the deepening of American combat involvement in Vietnam, and the profound domestic divisions and opposition to the war were all jarring events. For Allen and the small group of analysts at INR, the crises of those years seemed never ending, with America's escalation in Vietnam the recurrent backdrop. Allen and his team at INR tackled crucial issues that consumed policymakers throughout the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations.

He was also one of a small group of advisors who advocated for a possible opening to "Communist China." In 1961 they argued for a modest relaxation of the trade embargo to make foodstuffs available to China (then in the grip of the Great Leap famine), for a relaxation of the travel embargo and for more frequent ambassadorial meetings through the "Warsaw Channel." None of these recommendations came to pass, but Allen and others persisted. On 14 November 1963, eight days before his assassination in Dallas, President Kennedy proclaimed at his last news conference: "If the Red Chinese indicate a desire to live at peace with the United States, with other countries surrounding it, then quite obviously the United States would reappraise its policies. *We are not wedded to a policy of hostility to Red China* [emphasis added]."<sup>2</sup> Though this

2 See Kennedy 1963.

statement was intended to probe Beijing, Kennedy's tragic death and Lyndon Johnson's ascendance to the presidency terminated the possibility of an opening.

During his time in government, Allen never occupied a policy making position. But his cultivation of relationships with superiors at State; his dealings with powerful Senators (including J. William Fulbright and both then-surviving Kennedy brothers); and (perhaps most important) his exceptional gifts as an intelligence analyst enabled him to play a more influential role than his modest bureaucratic position suggested. Allen was quickly involved in some of the major intelligence controversies of the time, often challenging the prevailing consensus. Time and again, Allen was the messenger with the bad news. He called attention to the growing risks of war between China and India in the fall of 1962, while the US Government was wholly consumed by the Cuban missile crisis. His assessment of the Gulf of Tonkin incident of August 1964 was deeply sceptical about the earliest reports of a Vietnamese attack on the USS Maddox. The date for the first Chinese nuclear test (1 October 1964) failed to take place as he predicted but occurred two weeks later, many months in advance of estimates from the Atomic Energy Commission and the CIA.

His intelligence assessments also repeatedly challenged highly optimistic reports about the Vietnam War emanating from the military command in Saigon as well as from the Department of Defense. Several of his papers drew on a secret trip he took to Vietnam and to Laos in 1966. He also warned of the growing risks of military conflict with China, as US bombers flew ever farther north and as Beijing deployed its own forces into North Vietnam. Many of his intelligence judgments proved uncannily accurate, and were valuable ammunition for the few sceptics within government who dissented from Vietnam orthodoxy, most notably Under Secretary of State George Ball.

Allen hoped that his contributions would enable a higher level position, but these opportunities never materialized. He was highly cerebral and was a dove when the advocates of ever deeper involvement in Vietnam remained ascendant. The assassination of President Kennedy definitively shattered Allen's dreams of a policy position. He never wavered from his belief that (had Kennedy lived) he would have withdrawn from Vietnam in a second term, a contention that remains controversial to this day.

Disheartened and exhausted by President Johnson's expansion of the war effort, in the summer of 1966 Allen accepted the position of Deputy Consul General in Hong Kong. This enabled the Foreign Service appointment that had eluded him at the outset of his career, and he entered as an FSO-1, the top tier of the State Department career system. Except for a sabbatical in Washington many years later, he never returned to a position in the capital.

## Hong Kong

Allen found his return to East Asia highly validating. The position of Deputy Consul General (and, subsequently, Acting Consul General) was a very

important one, especially in the midst of the unfolding Cultural Revolution and the Vietnam War. It was the largest US consulate in the world, replete with the amenities befitting a crucial listening post. By the time of Allen's arrival in Hong Kong, the Cultural Revolution was in full swing, and the paroxysms of violence were greatest in Guangdong. Allen subsequently recounted how he and consular officers tracked the violence in the mainland by the number of headless bodies floating down the Pearl River.

Allen's posting to Hong Kong was an enormously challenging assignment that tested him in ways very different from his tenure in Washington, DC. As the prospect of job rotation loomed in 1968, Allen entertained hopes that the State Department would remove "acting" from his job title and extend his stay in Hong Kong. But the procedures at State were (and remain) very unforgiving. Allen was instead offered the Deputy Chief of Mission post at the US Embassy in Jakarta, where he would have served under Marshall Green, among the premier US diplomats of his generation.

Whether out of pique or misplaced pride, Allen decided to resign from the Foreign Service, thus forgoing what would almost certainly have been higher diplomatic assignments. He instead opted for a professorship at the University of Michigan, enabling Allen to resume an academic career that he had left more than a decade earlier.

## Ann Arbor

Allen's return to university life enabled professional growth and public visibility, sometimes in ways that he could not have anticipated. For the first time, he had the opportunity to train graduate students and to resume teaching at the undergraduate level. He was highly regarded as a teacher and as a mentor. Over the ensuing decade and a half, he chaired the doctoral committees of close to a dozen students entering the China field,<sup>3</sup> and played a major role in the research interests and career development of numerous other then junior scholars in the field.<sup>4</sup> He also produced major publications throughout his tenure at Michigan.

The freedom of the academic world also enabled his return to the public arena. Within months of his arrival in Ann Arbor, he authored important articles in two leading US publications: the *New York Times Magazine*, where he urged major changes in US China policy; and in *Look Magazine*, where he disclosed the virtually unknown story of China's rotational deployment of as many as 50,000 military personnel to Vietnam throughout the mid-1960s and the risks of a

3 His Michigan PhD students included Roy Grow, Nina Halpern, Eric Anthony Jones, Richard Levy, Kuang-sheng Liao, William Mills, Jean Oi, Dan Okimoto, Elizabeth Perry, Jonathan Pollack, Gretchen Sandles, David Shambaugh, Yoshihide Soeya, James Tang and David Zweig. His Arizona PhDs included Han-sheng Chen, Yong Deng, Kristina Sie Mao and Jianfei Xin.

4 A number of these individuals contributed to the commemorative volume in Allen's honour: Johnston and Ross 2006.

second US–China war on the Asian mainland.<sup>5</sup> Though deeply committed to the Kennedy legacy, Sino-American accommodation was far more important to him, even if it benefited Richard Nixon’s re-election prospects.

Out of public view, Allen undertook a crucial consulting role for Henry Kissinger, newly installed as National Security Adviser to President Nixon. Kissinger was a virtual neophyte on China. But the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia; the massive build-up of Soviet forces close to the border with China; and Sino-Soviet border clashes in March 1969 (and a follow-on episode in the summer) lent urgency to the potential of a far more severe crisis between the rival powers.

In the summer of 1969, Allen renewed his relationship with RAND. Santa Monica was less than a two-hour drive to San Clemente, President Nixon’s California home, where Allen briefed Henry Kissinger. One result of his research, a mid-August 1969 paper declassified in 2001, reveals Allen at his analytic best.<sup>6</sup> Allen assessed alternative explanations of possible Soviet actions, and recommended American steps to deter a Soviet attack on China, including the possibility that Moscow might use nuclear weapons against Chinese targets.

Allen also identified the implications for US policy under such highly threatening circumstances, with messages to be simultaneously conveyed to both Moscow and Beijing. He foresaw how the acute hostility between the Soviet Union and China might open doors with the Chinese. These soon came to fruition, culminating with Kissinger’s secret trip and Nixon’s subsequent visit to Beijing. His expertise enabled him to periodically counsel Kissinger prior to the Nixon visit. On the occasion of Allen’s retirement, and quite out of character, Kissinger graciously contributed a lengthy letter in which he credited Allen with greater foresight than his own in grasping the depth of Sino-Soviet hostility and the potential for a Sino-American opening. Allen thus played an important, but largely unacknowledged, role in the US–China *rapprochement*.

The relationship with Henry Kissinger came to a jarring halt with Allen’s 1973 decision to testify on behalf of Daniel Ellsberg, who was standing trial in Los Angeles for his theft from RAND of the Pentagon Papers, the multiple volume classified history of US involvement in Vietnam that had been commissioned by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Allen had known Ellsberg at RAND and their paths sometimes crossed when both served in government, but they were never close.

Allen was deeply troubled by Ellsberg’s theft of the documents. However, at the trial Allen testified that the papers were historical documents that did not pose any risk to US national security, nor did they expose intelligence sources and methods. The charges against Ellsberg were dismissed, and the US Government revoked Allen’s clearances immediately after the trial. Though the prospect of Allen returning to a government assignment already seemed

5 Whiting 1968; Whiting 1969a.

6 Whiting 1969b. The paper was provisionally classified Top Secret, but Whiting’s cover letter to Kissinger noted that the classification was “understated.”

increasingly slim, the revocation of his clearances rendered any such possibilities virtually nil.

The University of Michigan had arguably become the premier institution for contemporary China studies during Allen's years in Ann Arbor, with its status enormously strengthened by the recruitment of Columbia professor Michel Oksenberg to the faculty in the mid-1970s. However, when Zbigniew Brzezinski was named President Carter's National Security Adviser, he selected Oksenberg as his senior aide for East Asia, who then played a vital role in the normalization of Sino-American relations. Allen had probably imagined that he would be deeply involved in the normalization process, but this was not to be. When Oksenberg returned to Ann Arbor after his years at the NSC, Allen – perhaps out of wounded pride – felt marginalized. Not content with a lesser role, and growing increasingly discontent with harsh Ann Arbor winters, in 1982 he accepted an appointment at the University of Arizona, where he remained for the duration of his academic career.

### **Tucson**

Allen's tenure at the University of Arizona capped his extraordinary career, including publication of his final major monograph. He was appointed a Regents Professor, the highest faculty honour in the university system. Allen also served for a time as Director of the Center for East Asian Studies. He continued to teach at the graduate and undergraduate level, adding more PhDs to the roster of those he had trained in Ann Arbor. The university's programmes on East Asia also grew under his direction. The move to Tucson and his love of the desert – quite literally in his backyard – was perhaps a symbolic return to Deep Springs College, where his academic odyssey had begun many decades earlier.

Allen and Alice (who pre-deceased him in 2016) spent their winters in Tucson and summers in Oregon for some years after his retirement, sustaining a vigorous professional life until various physical infirmities began to limit his activities. He and Alice ultimately relocated to a retirement community in Southern California, where he lived until succumbing to the flu last January.

### **Intellectual Contributions**

Allen Whiting was a giant in the study of China's foreign relations and the international relations of Asia. He also contributed to mainstream political science and international relations theory. His scholarly contributions were exceptional, but Allen was also the rare academic who doubled as a public intellectual. Allen felt passionately that scholars had a civic duty to educate the public on critical foreign policy issues.

Allen's roles as government official and policy advisor add to this picture. Allen believed that academics should not become prisoners of the ivory tower. In 1972, he published an influential article in *World Politics*, admonishing his

academic colleagues for eschewing these civic responsibilities, while suggesting how scholars and officials could productively “cross the divide.”<sup>7</sup>

Allen saw the shaping of public perceptions as essential to informed policy debate. He frequently lectured to public audiences across the United States and abroad, gave interviews on radio and television, and contributed numerous op-eds to national and local newspapers. This included the *New York Times*, often advocating improved Sino-American ties, well before this position was widely shared.<sup>8</sup> Allen also influenced public opinion as a consultant to major foundations and public education organizations such as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Asia Society, the National Committee on US–China Relations, and the Stanley Foundation. In addition, he was active in the American Academy of Political and Social Science and edited several special issues of its journal *The Annals*, as well as publishing in *Daedalus* and the *New York Review of Books*.

However, Allen was first and foremost a scholar. He left an enduring mark in five areas: international relations theory; East Asian international relations and security; China’s deterrence strategies and the use of force; Sino-Soviet relations; and Chinese foreign policy, focused primarily on US–China relations, China’s regional relations in Asia, and the domestic sources of foreign policy.

The role of perceptions was prominent in much of Allen’s research.<sup>9</sup> He explained how Chinese *misperceptions* sometimes led to risky and conflictual behaviour, while in other instances China proved capable of very rational cost-benefit calculations before using (or not employing) force. Whiting’s focus on subjective variables distinguished him from many of his political science colleagues then enamoured with the “behavioural revolution.”

Whiting’s first book, *Soviet Policies in China, 1917–1924*, was a *tour de force* on Sino-Soviet relations and the role of the Comintern (Communist International).<sup>10</sup> He offered a sophisticated understanding of the interplay of Marxist-Leninist systems, tactics and worldviews. He deemed Soviet and Comintern tactics generally successful in relations with the fledgling Chinese Communist movement. He closely followed Sino-Soviet relations throughout his career and often foresaw shifts before other analysts.<sup>11</sup>

Whiting’s second book established his bona fides in international relations theory. Co-authored with University of California Professor Ernst Haas, *Dynamics of International Relations*<sup>12</sup> was written as a retort to Hans Morgenthau’s *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, the archetypal realist text of the time. Haas and Whiting offered a far more variegated treatise, taking account of non-state actors; interdependence among states;

7 Whiting 1972a.

8 See, for example, Whiting 1968; Whiting 1972b; Whiting 1975; Whiting 1976a; Whiting 1976b.

9 Indeed, our respective doctoral dissertations were deeply shaped by Allen’s emphasis on perceptions. See Pollack 1976; Shambaugh 1989.

10 Whiting 1953.

11 See, for example, Whiting 1959.

12 Haas and Whiting 1956.

and the role of psychology and perceptions, culture and other intangible factors such as propaganda, subversion, ideologies, demography, class and elites, ethnicity and collective action. As Haas and Whiting pointedly observed: “Power of and by itself does not appear as a meaningful concept under which all major data of international relations can be subsumed... We consider power to be merely a conditioner of means chosen to implement given ends of policy.”<sup>13</sup> Though their textbook was ahead of its time, it never received its due attention.

Whiting’s next book, *Sinkiang: Pawn or Pivot?*, built on his interests in Sino-Soviet affairs and also revealed Allen’s enduring fascination with China’s borderlands and Central Asia, Mongolia and the Russian Far East.<sup>14</sup> He analysed Soviet meddling in Xinjiang between 1933 and 1949, when Stalin sought to foment an Islamic uprising against the Kuomintang military under the command of General Sheng Shih-ts’ai. Allen met General Sheng during his Chinese language study in Taiwan. Stitching together Sheng’s memoirs with various government documents and oral interviews with other Nationalist officials, Allen assembled a multi-dimensional portrayal of this turbulent era. It remains the defining study of those years.

Whiting’s next and best known book was *China Crosses the Yalu*, published in 1960.<sup>15</sup> It was the first detailed reconstruction of China’s intervention in the Korean War, and of the factors that shaped Chinese decision making. Rigorously argued, highly empathetic and drawing on a full array of open sources, Allen concluded that the newly victorious Chinese Communist leadership signalled clearly and acted rationally to protect the country and the new regime.

Allen served in government between 1961 and 1968 and did not produce another book until returning to academic life at the University of Michigan. In 1975 he published the highly influential study, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina*.<sup>16</sup> Building on *China Crosses the Yalu*, Whiting again sought to probe the leadership’s inner calculations and approach to deterrence, coercive diplomacy, threats and the actual use of force. Based on China’s manoeuvring against India between 1959 and 1962 and towards the Vietnam conflict between 1964 and 1968, he mapped out a systematic “ladder of escalation” – a careful calibration of secret diplomatic communications, media statements, public warnings, and military movements – utilized by the Chinese leadership before engaging in limited warfare. This step-by-step escalation of moves – which Whiting termed a “rhythm of signals” – allowed him to posit a set of “deterrence principles” followed by Beijing.<sup>17</sup> His book had a wide-ranging impact on government and academic analysts that persists to this day.

Decades later, Whiting (in light of newly available primary sources) published a lengthy article in *International Security* revisiting his earlier studies of all eight

13 Ibid, vii.

14 Whiting and Sheng 1958.

15 Whiting 1960.

16 Whiting 1975, 2001a.

17 These “deterrence principles” are listed in *ibid.*, 202–203.

instances of China's post-1949 use of force.<sup>18</sup> He concluded that Beijing's actions were intended to demonstrate *political* goals with limited military means, acknowledging that China's leadership was more risk prone than risk averse, but in a rational and carefully calculated manner.

Beginning in the late-1970s, Allen shifted his attention to the three actors in East Asia that long preoccupied him – the Russia–China–Japan triangle – focusing on interactions among all three in eastern Siberia. In the preface to *Siberian Development and East Asia: Threat or Promise?* he recalled how academic colleagues dismissed this endeavour.<sup>19</sup> Despite the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations in 1972, the relations on all three sides of the triangle were deeply hostile at the time. Undeterred, Whiting embarked on the Trans-Siberian Railway with his family and visited as many *oblasts* as the Soviet government would then permit. (Few, if any, Americans had such access at the time.) The book astutely wove together issues of geopolitics; unsettled borders; ethnicity and separatism; military deployments; and rich energy reserves.

During this period, Whiting also partnered with University of Michigan colleague Robert Dernberger on a jointly authored Council on Foreign Relations study, entitled *China's Future*.<sup>20</sup> Written and published just after the death of Mao and arrest of the Gang of Four, but prior to the return of Deng Xiaoping, the authors astutely managed to capture the macro trends, despite the fluidities of the time. As the post-Mao dust settled and Deng Xiaoping returned to power, Whiting then prepared a single-authored assessment of China's "reform and opening" policies (written during the fall of 1978 *prior* to the Third Plenum).<sup>21</sup> Once again, he was ahead of his time.

Whiting's last major scholarly monograph, *China Eyes Japan*, appeared in 1989.<sup>22</sup> This volume combined his career-long preoccupation with the effects of national perceptions and images on China's major relationships. Focusing on the period between 1982 and 1987, during the era of "friendship diplomacy" under Hu Yaobang and Yasuhiro Nakasone, Allen discerned a deep reservoir of animosity under the surface of state-to-state diplomacy. Once again, subsequent events validated his judgments. His findings then contributed to his landmark article on China's "assertive nationalism."<sup>23</sup>

## Reflections

Allen's writings reveal a prescient observer who repeatedly foresaw trends and possibilities that others often failed to see; a painstakingly meticulous scholar who mined all available sources in an information limited environment; an

18 Whiting 2001b, 103–131.

19 Whiting 1981.

20 Dernberger and Whiting 1977.

21 Whiting 1979.

22 Whiting 1989.

23 Whiting 1983.

analyst who truly sought “truth from facts” and avoided any rush to judgment or uncritical assessment of mainstream views; a social scientist who emphasized subjective over objective factors; and a policy advisor who was willing to advocate bold and often risky policy initiatives. He had a keen knack for peering behind the curtain of opaque Leninist regimes and illuminating their inner calculations. As he argued in a reflective lecture following his retirement, “Empathy helps to see the situation as others see it.”<sup>24</sup> He leaves a legacy that few if any can rival and will long endure.

## Acknowledgement

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## Biographical notes

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24 Whiting 2001, 5.

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