

## **LETTER**

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FROM THE EDITOR

The Iron Curtain that Winston Churchill declared had descended across the European continent, with “...all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe” behind it, was for decades thought to shield a monolithic bloc of communist control streaming directly out of Moscow. Indeed, Churchill went on in that same speech, “all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow.” If the regime in Moscow was adept at any skill, it was in maintaining appearances, particularly as the Soviet Union’s power and ability to

control its satellite states waned. Whatever stock once lay in Churchill's initial diagnosis of Soviet influence, it never truly matched the West's idea of a single communist bloc intent on geographical expansion orchestrated from a single center: Moscow.

In fact, nearly from the very genesis of international communism, Moscow had competitors. Those competitors offered much in terms of a "third way" for smaller, unaligned countries. Of international communism's major defectors, one stands out: Mao Tse Dong, founder of the People's Republic of China. The first major, internal split in the communist bloc was that between the Soviet Union and the PRC. This opening eventually led to a stunning diplomatic coup between the United States and China, thawing the two countries' relations and leading to a readjustment in superpower posture at the height of the Cold War.

Since that monumental "opening," orchestrated by former US President Richard Nixon and his then-National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, how far has China moved into the international system? The Soviet Union no longer exists and communism is dead in much of the world. The year 2009 is one full of anniversaries important to countless millions around the globe. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the Czech Republic's Velvet Revolution, the violent crackdown at Beijing's Tiananmen Square, South Korea's first free and fair elections—all come back to us now, twenty years later.

At PEAR, we are always concerned with finding themes that best resonate with our readers and that will attract engaging, original contributions. That considered, for our fall season we chose one such anniversary that relates to nearly all those recounted above: China, on its 60th birthday. The Chinese Communist Party skillfully survived the Soviet implosion and historic fall of Berlin's wall. That same regime mercilessly stamped out its own peaceful protests and sat quietly by while democracy flourished in new corners of every region. In just the past year the world watched China host the most spectacular, expensive, controversial and widely-anticipated Olympic Games in history. That giant nation to the east, many say, is no longer the same place Mao ruled with an iron fist. It functions as a capitalist, market-driven economy delivering breath-taking economic growth year on year, lifting millions out of the poverty they knew. Yet terrorism, separatist movements, human rights violations, a lack of transparency and overwhelming environmental problems continue to plague the regime. Europe's Iron Curtain is gone, but Asia's communist giant remains.

While "China at 60" will be highlighted in each section of this season of PEAR, the Journal remains true to the breadth and nature of international studies; we have included a noteworthy selection of other submissions covering topics from free trade to money laundering. Benjamin Schmidt, of American University, explores domestic policy constraints on the actions of former US President Bill Clinton in the Balkans conflict of 1993. Lisa J. Starr, submitting from Victoria University in Canada, explores international education and offers a critique of the International Baccalaureate. A Yonsei graduate candidate, Sandra Choe, adds

record to the historical memory of East Asia's World War II comfort women. Additionally, in a new section added to Reviews, PEAR offers insightful synopses of six books related to contemporary Chinese history and current events compiled by our senior editors. It is our hope that these suggested readings will help readers find more opportunity for original research and source material.

Personally, it has been my great pleasure guiding PEAR through its second season. It was my intention to continue the standard of quality and integrity that was established with PEAR's inaugural issue last spring. I hope our readers enjoy the improvements made, and above all, the outstanding selections for PEAR's fall/winter season. Happy birthday, China and happy holidays, PEAR readers!

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature consists of a large, stylized capital 'C' followed by the lowercase letters 'ade' in a cursive script.

Cade Holleman  
Editor in Chief  
PEAR