

# The united states' cultural Diplomacy and China's Strategy after the Cold War

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**Abstract:** Global development has brought cultural exchanges between human societies to an unprecedented level, thus accelerating the integration of culture and diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is conducive to nation-states shaping their national image, ensuring national security, and pursuing practical interests. However, if cultural diplomacy is not implemented properly, it may also have a negative impact on nation-states. Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. cultural diplomacy has been an important tool in shaping its international image and promoting the development of bilateral relations. After the end of the Cold War, the U.S. government realized that cultural exchanges could effectively promote the development of international relations. Out of strategic interests, the U.S. government actively showcases U.S. culture, values, and lifestyle to gain understanding and support from countries around the world. Cultural exchanges are also an important part of China-U.S. relations. China has always been an important direction for U.S. cultural diplomacy. The United States' active promotion of foreign policy toward China can not only serve the needs of the struggle between the two social systems and ideologies, but also help the United States cope with the challenges that China's development brings to the new world order.

**Keywords:** Cold War; United States Cultural Diplomacy Towards China Cultural Soft Power; Countermeasures

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## 1. Introduction

After the end of the Cold War, as the world's only superpower, the foreign policy of the United States occupies a dominant position on the international stage, and its foreign policy trends influence most countries and regions in the world, including China. This article selects post-Cold War U.S. cultural diplomacy with China as the research object, mainly due to the following considerations:

First, after the end of the Cold War, with the continuous acceleration of political democratization, economic globalization and social informatization on a global scale, the realization of national interests can no longer rely solely on "hard power" such as economy and military, but more needs to rely on "Soft power" with ideology and culture as its core(Tong Jun,2008).

Second, the United States has a long history of practicing cultural diplomacy. For a long time, the U.S. government has always used cultural rights as a special tool to realize U.S. national interests by virtue of its strong economic, military and technological strength, and has helped people through planned and implementation of cultural strategies.

Third, after the end of the Cold War, as the influence of cultural factors in national, cultural soft power has become the core element of a country's comprehensive strength, and to a large extent determines a country's position in international competitions. Cultural soft power is not only related to the prosperity of culture and art, but also to the attraction of cultural products, Influence, creativity, and competitiveness are related to the rise and fall of a nation.

## 2. The theoretical basis for the United States to promote cultural diplomacy with China after the Cold War

### 2.1 End of history theory

Since the mid-1980s, as Western bourgeois liberalization ideas began to gain an absolute advantage in international discourse, the public opinion environment of the entire international community began to be filled with the "theory of communist failure" due to the drastic changes in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union(Wu Baiyi,2016). This makes Western countries, facing the end of the Cold War, both officials, scholars and ordinary people express an overconfident optimism.

Fukuyama's "end of history theory" first originated from a lecture he gave in 1988 titled "The End of History." The publication of this

article marked the beginning of the “end of history theory” Officially released. After that, Fukuyama continued to enrich and improve his main ideas.

## **2.2 Soft power theory**

“Soft power”, also known as “soft power”, was first proposed by American scholar Joseph Nye in the early 1990s, mainly in response to the “American Decline Theory” that emerged in American social thought in the late 1980s. In Nye’s view, in the post-Cold War era, although the influence of the United States’ traditional political, economic, and military strength continues to decline, the influence of invisible forces represented by American culture, values, social systems.

Joseph Nye’s “Soft Power Theory” highlights the importance of cultural “soft power” in the composition of national power, and brings a new way of thinking to the United States and other Western powers as they continue to seek global dominance.

## **3. The implementation effect of the United States’ cultural foreign policy toward China after the Cold War**

### **3.1 An overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the United States’ cultural foreign policy toward China after the Cold War**

#### *3.1.1 An evaluation of the goals of U.S. cultural foreign policy towards China after the Cold War*

Generally speaking, the goals of the United States’ cultural foreign policy toward China after the Cold War can be divided into three levels: the first level is to enhance mutual understanding between the United States and China and help the United States seek more material interests in China; the second level is to improve the United States’ relations with China The third level is to seek consensus between the United States and China in many areas, so that China’s national policies can better comply with the United States’ global strategy(Chen Baowen,2008).

#### *3.1.2 Evaluation of the U.S. Cultural Diplomacy Approach to China after the Cold War*

Generally speaking, if a country wants to achieve good implementation results in its foreign policy, it needs to adhere to flexible, diverse and mutually complementary policy means within the framework of a centralized and clear policy goal. A single policy means will only lead to the rigidity of the country’s foreign policy. undermine the achievement of policy objectives. Throughout the post-Cold War U.S. cultural foreign policy towards China, it has attached great importance to the diversity of policy means during its implementation and has always insisted on promoting cultural exchange through cultural exchange projects, cultural exchange agreements, cultural groups, performances of literary(Zeng Xiangming,2015).

### **3.2 The impact of the United States’ cultural foreign policy towards China after the Cold War**

The cultural foreign policy pursued by the United States towards China after the Cold War has had a certain positive impact on both the development of China and the United States themselves and on the development of China-U.S. relations. On the one hand, it has improved the national image of the United States in China to a certain extent ; on the other hand, it has also promoted the modernization process of Chinese society to a certain extent and enhanced the understanding .

The continuous advancement of the United States’ cultural foreign policy towards China after the Cold War has not only brought many achievements of Western civilization to China, but also opened a window for China to understand the United States and even the entire Western world.

## **4. China’s future response to the United States’ cultural diplomacy with China**

### **4.1 Enhance the core competitiveness of China’s cultural soft power**

#### *4.1.1 Strengthen the construction of socialist ideology and enhance the appeal of mainstream ideology*

Different ideologies will emerge in any society during its development process, but there is also a mainstream ideology. This dominant

ideology constitutes the soul and latitude and longitude of the spiritual culture of the entire society . Although there are many ideological components in China now, the socialist ideology guided by Marxist thought undoubtedly occupies an absolute dominant position and is the mainstream ideology in contemporary China.

#### *4.1.2 Carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture and enhance the self-confidence of Chinese culture*

The progress and development of any country or nation in the world is inseparable from the inheritance and development of its excellent traditional culture. China's excellent traditional culture is "the sum of the spiritual achievements of the Chinese nation that have continued and developed over thousands of years to maintain the common ideas, mental state, thinking, lifestyle and value pursuit of the entire society".

In the construction of cultural soft power, Xi Jinping emphasized that "it is necessary to clearly explain the historical origins, development context, and basic trends of China's excellent traditional culture, to clarify the unique creation, value concepts, and distinctive characteristics of Chinese culture, and to enhance cultural confidence and value confidence."

## **4.2 Enhance China's ability to communicate with foreign countries**

Foreign cultural communication is a basic strategic means to achieve the goals of national cultural foreign policy, rather than a tactical means. Foreign cultural communication and cultural diplomacy are not the two wheels of a car, but the relationship between the wheels and the car.

Therefore, in order to effectively use cultural diplomacy to influence the ideas and behaviors of people in other countries, we need to pay attention to the sustainability characteristics of cultural diplomacy activities(Chen Manna,Songzhou,2016).

## **Conclusion**

After the end of the Cold War, with the democratization of international politics and the continuous acceleration of the globalization process of economy, science and technology, and culture, the realization of national interests can no longer rely solely on "hard power" such as economy and military, but needs to rely more on the "Soft power" with ideas. It has increasingly become a post-Cold War sovereign state's way of improving its national image, enhancing its international influence.

In short, the United States' post-Cold War cultural diplomacy strategy toward China, which is mixed with hegemonism and power politics, is destined to bring new challenges to China and the development of China-U.S. relations in the future. Moreover, China and the United States have different cultural values. The fundamental differences determine that the struggle between the two countries in the cultural field will continue in the future.

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