

Diplomacy Beyond Empire: Anson Burlingame, Cooperative Policy, and the Reimagining of US–China Relations (1861-1867)

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ABSTRACT

Anson Burlingame, who played a pivotal role in changing U.S.-China ties during imperial expansion and social turmoil in the nineteenth century, is largely neglected in the history of Sino-US relations. Unlike the conventional gunboat diplomacy of his day, Burlingame broke new ground when appointed US ambassador to China in 1861 and again when acting as China's envoy to the West in 1867. He established the "cooperative policy" which might be referred to as today's soft power diplomacy by stressing the need of mutual respect, international law, and peaceful collaboration. This article explores the diplomatic legacy of Anson Burlingame who played a significant role in forging Sino-US ties in the mid-19th century. Using archival evidence and historiography, the study argues that Burlingame's diplomacy envisaged basic concepts of liberal and constructivist IR theory, establishing him as an ethical diplomat in an age of imperial conflict. The paper presents Burlingame as an ethical diplomat who opposed imperial behaviours and advocated for a more equitable international order by analysing his work through the prism of constructivist theory of international relations.

Keywords: Anson Burlingame, Cooperative Policy, Soft power, Sino-American relations, 19th century diplomacy, International relations, Constructivism

"It is no coincidence that one of the most innovative American diplomats ever to serve in China was also one of the most active participants in the US antislavery struggle of the 1840s and 1850s", David L. Anderson has aptly described Burlingame as "a reformer and politician over a diplomat" while he left for China in 1861 with zero diplomatic experience. Burlingame stands out among the group of early American diplomats in China, not because he was the first to live in Beijing, but because of his long-lasting influence on the US policy in China. Regarding Sino-Western relations "Cooperative Policy" was Burlingame's approach, which meant cooperation with the Chinese as well as cooperation among Western diplomats in China. He was the critique of "gunboat" diplomatist and firmly attempted to shift Western policy methods in China from force to forbearance. He did not

follow the British footsteps or other Western policies in carrying out his conduct with China, instead, his diplomatic efforts reflected his background as an active participant in the antislavery struggle back in America in the 1840s and 1850s. After entering China in 1861, Burlingame instantly backfired against the discriminatory attitudes and injustices implicit in the Western aggressive approach towards China. The Chinese acknowledged his conciliatory policy by making him their first official envoy to the Western countries in 1867. As a diplomat in the service of the US and subsequently of China, he portrayed himself to be a conciliator of the Eastern and Western civilisations. In the late nineteenth century, his idealism and innovative approach to the cooperative policy were construed as one of the policy alternatives for the US diplomats in China. After spending over a decade

How to cite this Article: Raj, Chhavi (2025). Diplomacy Beyond Empire: Anson Burlingame, Cooperative Policy, and the Reimagining of US–China Relations (1861-1867). *Internat. J. Appl. Soc. Sci.*, 12 (7 & 8) : 636-644.

working for the Free-Soil movement and the new Republican party, he left for Beijing in 1861 as the first US envoy to reside in the Chinese capital with no diplomatic experience^[1]. He was merely 41 years old when he left for China, and his new cooperative approach to the Sino-Western relations showcased his background. He disagreed with the opinion that prevailed among the Western diplomats in China belittling them as an inferior race and not worth respect either as people or a nation. Using his political and oratory skills, Burlingame made an attempt to change the assumptions and methods of Western diplomacy in China. As an appreciation for his efforts and cooperative approach, the Chinese government in 1867 appointed him as China's first official envoy to the West.

The Political Foundations of Burlingame's Worldview:

Burlingame was born on November 14, 1820, in New Berlin, a farming community in central New York. His father, Joel Burlingame was a farmer, a schoolteacher, and a Methodist lay preacher. The family moved to Seneca County, Ohio, while he was three years old, and then back to Detroit in 1833. After spending only two years in Detroit, the Burlingame family finally moved to Michigan. However, young Anson stayed behind to pursue his study. While he was a student at the Detroit, he demonstrated his maiden lifelong talent for stump oratory at a branch of the newly established University of Michigan. He was a talented student as well as quite prominent in college politics. After graduating he went to work in a law office in Detroit. There, he quickly acquired a large circle of friends among the city's leading citizens and was frequently invited to address meetings and other groups. Later in the town young Burlingame was remembered as "a charming and persuasive figure, who has promising talents as an orator^[2]. "Anson was handsome, jolly and lovable in the childhood, as he was earnest, energetic and devoted in the manhood." according to one of his earliest friends. His high moral principles and political ideals were shaped to a significant extent during his years on the American frontier^[3]. The twenty-two-year-old Burlingame left Michigan in 1843 to attend Harvard Law School and to broaden his horizons. After graduating from Harvard, he remained in Massachusetts as a permanent, and soon as a prominent resident of Cambridge. His winning personality propelled him into the elite circles of society both in Detroit and in

Boston. Many of his closest friends were the Free Soilers, a group of young and enthusiastic antislavery revolutionaries. According to Richard Henry Dana, "Burlingame was a warm-hearted, loveable and an enthusiastic person^[4]. Being an idealistic and self-motivated individual, and a graduate of the Harvard Law School, he was able to establish a law office in Massachusetts. In Massachusetts, only his marriage to Jane Livermore from an established family in Cambridge nurtured a political successful career for him. Consequently, for three terms in the 1850s, Burlingame represented the northern state of New York in Congress. As a northerner and progressive politician, he was a part of the Free-Soil movement, which was strongly antislavery.

During his first congressional term, Burlingame's vibrant spirit and sincere dedication to fair values elevated him to the position of Northern regional hero. In the Spring of 1856, an incident that made Burlingame a hero and a national figure in the political domain was for criticising and confronting Preston Brooks, the South Carolina congressman. Burlingame's friend as well as fellow antislavery activist, Senator Charles Sumner made a significant Senate speech against slavery in Kansas. Portions of the speech, according to Brooks were personally disrespectful to his kinsman South Carolina Senator Andrew P Butler. Brooks retaliated against Sumner by severely assaulting him with a cane as the senator sat at his desk in the Senate chamber. Burlingame condemned Brook's brutal attack in his famous address, "Defence of Massachusetts," saying, "I reject it in the name of the sovereignty of Massachusetts, which was stricken down by the blow. In the name of humanity, I condemn it." "Burlingame denounced in his ringing oratorical style this brutal infringement of Sumner's freedom of speech." Consequently, Brooks quickly challenged Burlingame to a duel. Burlingame accepted Brook's offer, but his stipulations frightened him away as Burlingame chose rifles as the weapons and the Canadian side of Niagara Falls as the site. As expected by Burlingame, Brooks refused to travel to a location so deep in hostile Northern territory. For the act, Burlingame received national recognition and emerged as an instant hero throughout the North. Moreover, Burlingame's skillful handling of "Bully" Brooks gave the American a reputation in the North as "a northern man who would fight"^[5].

Sovereignty, justice, and compassion were major

themes in Burlingame's Defence, as they were throughout his political career. Even as a young man, he used words like "conscience," "mankind," "moral principle," and "civilisation" in his writings and lectures^[6]. His sole assets, since his family was not so wealthy, were "frank, noble, diligent, a charming and persuasive figure, and promising talents as an orator." His academic record in the university was not quite remarkable. He used to come to class on an inconsistent basis since he needed to work to support himself. However, he did excel in one area, *i.e.*, oratory. His platform abilities drew him public attention and a large group of friends that enabled him to quite a figure in the literary group as well as in the campus politics^[7]. An incident that reflects Burlingame's attitude regarding discrimination, while he was in London in 1849 and got the chance to attend the House of Commons. While attending the session he by mistake took a comfortable seat in a gallery reserved for peers, and subsequently, he was asked to leave. One courtly peer indicated that he might remain, arguing Burlingame might be a peer in his own country. "I am a Sovereign in my own country, Sir," replied Burlingame as he left, "and shall lose my caste if I associate with Peers" ^[8]. Burlingame's "manly and honourable" behaviour during the Brooks incident, as well as his attractive personality and speaking abilities, made him one of the new Republican party's most popular and successful orators. In 1860, he was so engrossed in campaigning for Lincoln that he lost his seat from Massachusetts in the Congress, but as a reward for his sacrifice, Lincoln appointed Burlingame "envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Austria. However, before Burlingame could take up his new position, the Austrian monarchy protested to his previous involvement with Kosuth and declared him persona non grata. Later, the Lincoln administration changed his assignment to Beijing, which embarked on a new journey in Burlingame's life to tackle the toughest challenge of bridging the gap between the Eastern and Western Civilisations.

In the mid-nineteenth century, both China and the US were in the midst of severe political crises. The 1860s were a crucial point in the histories of both the US and China, and Anson Burlingame served as a connecting link between domestic events in both countries. In the US, a civil war was in progress backed by the abolitionist and the Free-Soil activist who were firm believers in human equality, the incident was successful in bringing sweeping changes in the American society. Burlingame

carried the same American spirit to China in 1861, and consequently, there also he found a new cause to support.

Burlingame in Beijing: A Context of Upheaval

Though foreign invasions and economic pressures on China began with the Opium Wars in the 1840s however, it escalated in the 1860s with British and French forces storming forcefully into the Forbidden City, plundering and destroying the court's Summer Palace. The Qing Dynasty, which ruled China from 1644 to 1911, was finally succeeding in suppressing the bloody Taiping Rebellion which had raged since 1850. Considering that the Taiping Rebellion was inspired by Christian missionaries and the Old Testament (a division of the Bible), the rebellions envisioned replacing Confucianism with Christianity, hoping it might last for years. The internal disturbances along with the series of foreign invasions on China such as the Opium War of 1839-42, the Arrow War of 1856-58, and the British-French occupation of Beijing of 1860 had brought several near-fatal blows to the imperial government. In an attempt to revive itself, the dynasty embarked upon the Tongzhi Restoration in 1862^[9]. Nonetheless, moreover, the real threat to the dynasty was within, as China had been a place of resistance and rebellion for a long time, and the suppression of Muslim uprisings in the Central Asian region had drained the imperial treasury. The once proud and competent Qing ruling class of Manchus and the Han Chinese people now seemed too tired and corrupt to suppress the rebellion or to defend the country. Moreover, correspondingly in the US, a civil war was under progress and perhaps it was the deadliest and the most destructive war the US ever fought. In 1864, with the revival of the Han Chinese and Manchus alliance, the Qing empire succeeded in suppressing the Taiping and subsequently proceeded with some reforms in their foreign policy. Meanwhile, in the US, Lincoln's armies began their deadly march to victory. China's mid-nineteenth-century political situation can be characterised as a dual threat 内忧外患 '(nei you wai huan) or trouble from within and a threat from outside, since China was striving to suppress the Taiping rebellion at the same time was resisting foreign aggressions. Interestingly, at the same time, the Americans too had their version of "nei you wai huan" as Britain supported the rebellious South diplomatically and even militarily when the North and South were slaughtering each other during the Civil war. The root cause of the war was the status of slavery,

particularly its extension into territory obtained as a consequence of the American-Mexican war. For slightly more than a decade, the restoration leaders tried boldly to establish an agreement with the contemporary West while preserving China's centuries-old traditions as well as its basic values and institutions. The struggle for reform within Chinese tradition appealed strongly to Burlingame's idealistic spirit and it played a significant role in an expedition for transformation within the tradition. In 1861, China was in the midst of an internal upheaval similar to that of the US, a year that also proved crucial in their foreign relations. According to historian Knight Biggerstaff, until then "no influential Chinese had recognized the necessity for adaptation to the Western world, the few concessions that had been made being regarded as temporary measures which would be reversed as soon as China had become stronger."

Culturally in China, Burlingame observed some of the same racial and social biases that had surrounded the slavery problem in the US. He had always condemned the use of force against one race by another at home, and he continued to do so in China. Before Burlingame arrived in 1861, Western powers, especially the UK and France, had used naval and military forces to force China to sign "unequal treaties" on multiple occasions. The Westerners had established a "treaty system" that began with the Treaty of Nanjing in 1843 and continued through the Treaties of Tianjin in 1858 and subsequently, the Beijing Convention in 1860. The US never technically engaged in any military activities against China, but it did participate in the treaty system through separate treaties that secured the US's most-favored-nation status. These unequal treaties compelled the Chinese to engage in foreign trade that they did not intend. Rates had to be negotiated under the treaties, and the Chinese were not allowed to set their tariffs. Extraterritoriality, or legal immunity, was another clause that safeguarded Westerners in China from arrest and prosecution by the Chinese. After committing many years to the fight for human dignity and social justice, Burlingame could not accept the forceful methods and bigoted attitudes which had created the treaty system^[10]. To defend its interests under the treaties, the Chinese government-initiated measures to modify its diplomatic approach. Only a few months before Burlingame's arrival in Beijing, the emperor's government created Zongli Yamen (Tsunqli Yamen), China's first Western-style foreign office^[11]. Initially, the Zongli Yamen consisted of only three prominent Chinese officials and

had limited and informal roles in the administration. The mandarin in charge of this new office, however, was Prince Kung, the de facto head of the Chinese government. Under his guidance, the Zongli Yamen swiftly established itself as the essential point of communication between Western diplomats and the imperial authority.

Historically, the Chinese assumed that all other nations were morally and culturally inferior to the Middle Kingdom and regarded them as tributary states. In the 1860s, most Chinese officials still had a hierarchical and Sinocentric worldview. In my opinion, perhaps, this implicit Chinese perspective of the world might have placed China into a confrontation with the West. Furthermore, the Zongli Yamen experienced strong domestic opposition because it represented a new, more direct, and egalitarian model of international relations. Burlingame acknowledged Prince Kung's impact on the Chinese foreign policy and became a sympathetic supporter of his reform initiatives^[12]. Burlingame further argued that before effectively handling affairs such as commerce, residency, and other legal issues arising under the treaties, it was pertinent to focus on the method in which diplomacy was conducted in China. Burlingame firmly believed that to move beyond the pattern of Western aggression and Chinese defiance, a new relationship based on mutual respect for their civilisation had to be established. Burlingame critically observed that the basic conflict was one of the cultures. In his perception, the Chinese view of a hierarchical global order structured under a morally superior China constantly clashed with the Western ideal of supposedly coequal nations. Moreover, the values of the industrial as well as commercial West often clashed with those of agrarian China. Subsequently, Burlingame further made the critical assumption that these disparities might be reconciled^[13]. Firstly, so far, the appointment of Burlingame as an ambassador as well as the minister plenipotentiary to China is concerned, scholars like David L. Anderson and Xu Guoqi have argued that "he had not even been considered as a possibility of becoming Lincoln's top diplomat in China. He knew little about China and had shown zero interest in the country previously." Nonetheless, however in his acceptance letter to Seward, he wrote, "I proceed to my new post with diffidence, but still with pleasure for there is a fine field and I am yet a young man." At that time Burlingame was only 41 years old with zero diplomatic experience. Secondly, neither China nor the US were as interested in

or hold much importance to each other. China had no foreign policy until the 1870s and would have refused to even send resident ministers outside the country. Moreover, China showed no diplomatic interest in the United States when Burlingame arrived, and Americans for their part had little interest in China. It is evident if we pay attention to the budget of the US government sanctioned for the diplomatic expeditions during the 1860s. The budget of the American legation was pitiful as the whole amount spent in 1862, excluding wages was merely 400 dollars, compared to 5,750 pounds authorised by the British government for their diplomatic service in Beijing. Consequently, Burlingame even equated the diplomatic mission in 1862 to “a ship without sailors” due to a lack of funds and personnel^[14]. By looking at the Sino-US bilateral relations of the mid-nineteenth century, it can be observed, even the US did not have a defined or independent policy toward China. Before Burlingame’s arrival, the State Department usually asked its ambassadors in China to “cooperate with foreign powers in every manner which is consistent with the US peaceful policy in China and with the open-door policy of equal opportunity for all.” With the country preoccupied with war, Washington was not in a position to issue Burlingame orders, and China might have been the last thing on its mind in any case. Subsequently, these disadvantages such as lack of preparation, lack of interest in each other, and lack of set policy for dealing with each other, eventually gave Burlingame a certain degree of leverage. His only relevant experience with international matters was as a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and his lack of preparation enabled him to approach challenges with an open mind. During the mid-nineteenth century, the US itself was a fragile nation with no fixed policy interests and as far as China was concerned, it had no major rivals. It left scope for Burlingame to cultivate cordial relations with diplomats from other countries. He could also seek for effective cooperation with the Chinese, who did not have a set strategy toward the US. Consequently, at the time Burlingame had room to bring into play his idea of “Cooperative policy” which was the foundation of his approach and policies as far as China was concerned. For Burlingame cooperative policy meant cooperation with China as well as cooperation with the western nations. It was an attempt to replace the existing cultural confrontation with discussions and conciliation.

Burlingame’s Cooperative policy: Strategy and Substance:

In the nineteenth century, the US did not necessarily follow the British footsteps in China. Historians of the Western policies in China, relying primarily on the British archival sources, have emphasised the prominent British role in shaping the course of Sino-Western relations before 1900, and indeed, the British did dominate many aspects of the Western commercial, military, as well as a diplomatic presence in China. The US and the other Western countries found themselves involved in a diplomatic system predominantly governed by London. Nonetheless, the record of American policy in China documented in the US government’s archives demonstrates that, at least throughout the 1860s, the US not only had its policy but also played a leadership position among Western countries. As per David L. Anderson, in the Western discourse, Mary C. Wright’s *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The Tong Zhi Restoration, 1862-1874* stands out as a standard historical work as well as one of the most important scholarly analyses of the cooperative policy. Dwelling primarily on British and Chinese sources, Wright provides an accurate and comprehensive explanation of the meaning as well as the significance of the cooperative policy. She concludes that in the mid-nineteenth century, the term implied “cooperation among countries such as UK, US, France, Russia, and China in order to carry out the peaceful settlement of disputes and the gradual modernisation of China”^[15]. According to Wright, the objective of this cooperation was in the words of Burlingame to “recognise China’s legitimate interests” and “justly enforce treaty provisions.” She claims that the cooperative approach was significant because it allowed the Tong Zhi reformers to seek Chinese answers to the Chinese issues without foreign interference^[16]. The records of the US Department of State support Wright’s basic explanation of the nature and significance of the cooperative policy, nevertheless, they raise some serious concerns about her description of the policy’s origins and its implementation. She argues that the “policy had deep roots in British political thinking, and its specific implementation in China in the 1860s was essentially the work of Englishmen: Frederick Bruce, Rutherford Alcock, and Robert Hart, rather than the Americans, who were accredited for the implementation”^[17].

Burlingame’s achievements were real, however, not just charming illusions. First of all, even though cooperation

and an “open-door policy” had been declared to be the basis of the US presence in China, however, no American ambassador had pursued them to any large extent until Burlingame. Moreover, Burlingame was named “the father of the open-door policy” by Frederick Williams, son of Samuel Wells Williams, which later turned out to be the official US policy in 1898 under Lincoln’s administration. In the words of Frederick Williams, “The real importance of Anson Burlingame lies not much either in the individual or in the endeavour rather it lies in the use of an idea which he considered as the guiding principle throughout his abroad service”^[18]. In the mid-nineteenth century, though the Chinese and Western perceptions of international relations and each other seemed to provide little room for compromise, however, Burlingame felt that some of the compromises were achievable. He helped the Zongli Yamen learn about the Western diplomatic methods and attempted to convince Western diplomats in his words “to substitute fair diplomatic action in China for force,” with his Western counterpart he began to formulate a significant new approach to Sino-Western relations, called the “cooperative policy”, an attempt to replace the existing cultural confrontation with discussions and conciliation. For him “cooperation” represented an enlightened and deliberate alternative to force. Burlingame defined “cooperative policy” as cooperation between the UK, US, France, Russia, and China to ensure the peaceful resolution of problems and China’s gradual development. Moreover, its success relied primarily on cooperation among major countries, particularly Britain, which had a considerable interest in China, and was the most powerful nation amongst them. Securing cooperation from British officials and their government in London was crucial to making the policy succeed. When Burlingame initially came to China, the policy favoured Britain and other major powers which were fortunate for him. It was evident through two Opium Wars Britain had forced China to make the most concessions possible, with a hope that once Britain had secured what it needed it would support the Qing court to stay in power, particularly amidst the major domestic rebellion in China. For the protection of British imperial interests, the cooperative approach was the most successful. William H. Seward the then US secretary of state, used the concepts of power and interest to justify his actions. He opines that as far as China is concerned UK, France, and even the US all shared a similar interest in China, the desire to carry out trade on reasonable terms. According to Seward, the two

European nations, France and Britain possessed authority (troops and ships) in Asia, whereas the US did not. He expected that other countries would take the initiative on policy and that the US would simply follow their lead. Seward’s approach could have been different if the US naval warships had been available for duty in China. However, with the US administration fighting a war for survival at home, he felt that cooperation was the only feasible option for the country^[19]. Burlingame was pleased with Seward’s instruction, but the minister’s eagerness for cooperation contrasted dramatically with the secretary’s acceptance of the policy. Burlingame argued from a philosophical standpoint that Political and social beliefs, not power and interest formed the policy standards of the US, a long-time champion for freedom and democracy. He believed morality and friendship required cooperation in China, not only with other Westerners but also with the Chinese. Furthermore, Burlingame refused to defer to the representatives of any other countries in deciding what US policy in China would be, moreover, in acknowledging Seward’s instruction, Burlingame agreed to cooperate with the Europeans but not necessarily follow them. In order to achieve his goal of peaceful East-West accommodation, Burlingame established a formal system of cooperation among Western countries in China in June 1863. He obtained an agreement from ministers Bruce of England, Jules Berthemy of France, and L. D. Balluzeck of Russia in a panel discussion to respect China’s territorial integrity and to help China in joining the family of nations. Although many Western merchants and missionaries in the treaty ports attempted to take advantage of the volatile situation in China caused by the Taiping Rebellion. however, “the four Bs,” namely, Bruce, Burlingame, Berthemy, and Balluzeck opined that their nation’s interests were best served by a stable government in Beijing Under Burlingame’s leadership, and subsequently, the ministers sought cooperation with the officials of the new Tong-zhi emperor. Burlingame specifically obtained the agreement of his three Western colleagues in Beijing to the following: (1) to claim only their nations treaty rights in the ports and not to claim any concessions that violated China’s sovereignty or territorial integrity; (2) not to interfere in China’s internal affairs; but (3) to jointly defend their treaty rights against any who violated them, including the Taiping rebels; and (4) to provide moral support and military advice to the government, but (5) not to place foreign officers on the field of battle; (6) to assist the government in defending

its revenues against pirates with a cosmopolitan naval force led by the Englishman Sherard Osborn; (7) to assist China in organising a national army based on European principles; and (8) to support the Chinese custom-house system as it had been administered by the Englishman Horatio Nelson Lay. These were the first apparent signs of the cooperative policy in China^[20]. The Cooperative Policy, which was a new coordinated Western attempt to meet the Chinese government halfway did not signify the end of Sino-Western enmity. Although the newly formed Chinese Foreign Ministry, the Zongli Yamen, seemed conciliatory, but many Chinese officials remained firmly anti-foreign. In 1863, the Western countries were represented by a special group of individuals who trusted each other and the Zongli Yamen. Burlingame wrote to the secretary of state that “our only chance” for better Sino-Western relations is “forbearance and absolute cooperation among ourselves.” In response, Seward said that he was fully aware that the cooperative strategy was dependent on the personalities of Beijing’s “enlightened representatives. in order to perpetuate the policy, Burlingame hoped that the four Western nations would somehow formalise the agreements made among their ministers. He even urged Seward privately to “sustain the policy we have agreed to and do what you can to secure its adoption by the other treaty powers at home.”

Several instances from the State Department archives reflect how Burlingame put his concept of cooperation into practice. One example is the case of the American merchant ship *Lucky Star*. In June 1863, the ship ran aground on the Chinese coast, and the locals on the beach looted the wreck. The ship’s master, Charles Nelson, attempted to file a claim against the Chinese government for his damages. Burlingame declined to take the matter to the Zongli Yamen, claiming that Nelson lacked adequate proof to justify the amount of his claim. Furthermore, Nelson had not complied with Article XII of the American Treaty of Tianjin, which required the petitioner to provide proof of official misconduct by local authorities. Burlingame in these and other instances has shown his admiration for China as a sovereign nation^[21].

Foreign aggressions in China such as the Opium War of 1839-42 and the Arrow War of 1856-58 had demonstrated to Westerners the efficacy of negotiations at the gunpoint. Subsequently, every foreigner in China felt that the Chinese would be unable to resist the might of Western warships and armies. Consequently, many Western merchants, diplomats, military personnel, and

even missionaries constantly supported the use of the aggressive approach to the issues related to China. Unsurprisingly, Burlingame, a long-time opponent of injustice, strongly opposed this “tyrannical element” that would treat the Chinese as “quasi-slaves”^[22]. His entire career in China is proof of his opposition to the use of force for imposing demands on the Chinese. However, he acknowledged the necessity for some Western military and naval forces in China for the protection of foreigners. When a Taiping army invaded Shanghai in 1861, he became apprehensive that the Chinese government might not be able to safeguard foreigners effectively. Whenever antiforeign violence erupted in China, Burlingame especially deplored the dependence of Americans on the British navy for protection. He even expressed dissatisfaction to Seward that it is quite a shame for an American to be told by an Englishman, ‘You are indebted to the British force for any protection you have on the coast of China.’ At the beginning of the cooperative policy, he warned the secretary of state that British and French power is creating a “huge temptation to aggress” against China, and subsequently, he had made attempts to make restraint on that desire as far as the US participation in the policy is concerned.

The greatest evidence of Burlingame’s constantly cooperative and conciliatory attitude toward the Chinese came in November 1867, when the imperial government designated Burlingame as its first diplomatic envoy to the West. Prince Kung and his government colleagues displayed the same faith in Burlingame that he had in them. They were exhibiting their understandable approval of his cooperative approach over the coercive methods of other Westerners. Burlingame’s acceptance of this unprecedented appointment as an envoy to the west brought an end to his diplomatic service in Beijing and opened a new chapter in his life and the history of the cooperative policy. It was difficult to anticipate the future of Burlingame as well as of his methods, he perpetually remained optimist, however many others, both Chinese and Westerners were skeptical about his ability to persuade others to follow his peaceful ideology. Despite the uncertainty of the future, the effect of the New England reformer on American and Western policy in China was already visible^[23].

The Implications of Constructivism on Norm Entrepreneurship:

IR defines a “norm entrepreneur” as someone who

establishes new norms of acceptable conduct, and Burlingame matches this description. Liberal internationalist standards were implied by his stress on sovereignty, treaty compliance, and peaceful engagement. He questioned the underlying racial beliefs and imperial power politics rationale of Western operations in Asia through his cooperative diplomacy. In keeping with constructivist theory, Burlingame aimed to alter the social connections of state actors in order to remodel their identities and interests. Beyond their pragmatic nature, his attempts to bring China into the global community were driven by strong principles, including a commitment to moral advancement and institutional equality.

The Cooperative Policy was met with scepticism despite its novel approach. Both Chinese conservatives and several Western governments regarded Burlingame's reforms with scepticism, seeing his idealism as innocent. Lack of official backing for Burlingame's efforts in Washington and limited US's influence in Asia were two fundamental flaws that hampered the policy's long-term impact. But under his presidency, the US made its most serious effort of the nineteenth century to treat China as a civilised partner.

Conclusion:

Burlingame served as US minister plenipotentiary to Beijing from 1861 to 1867. During his tenure, he constantly strived to defend the interests of the few American merchants and missionaries in China by international law and treaties rather than territorial acquisition and intimidation. In the mid-nineteenth century, Britain and other imperialist powers maintained their warships and had their colonies too, however, on the contrary US believed in safeguarding its interest through moral and legal means. To Burlingame, cooperation was more than simply an expedient policy necessitated by America's limited influence and interests in Asia. It was rather an expression of the liberal Western ideas of peace, freedom, justice, and self-government, which he believed the US had championed since 1776. For Burlingame, American interests and ideals coincided. For instance, in a report to Seward in 1867 regarding the increase in China's foreign trade, which he regarded as "so creditable to the Chinese and so favourable to the US, Burlingame declared that this growth in commerce was "an indication of the faith of those who believe in reason and kindness more than brute force. In the words of David L. Anderson, Burlingame was the epitome of the cooperative

policy and its outlines were determined by his personality and background, rather than the relative power and position of the United States in China. Before heading to China, he spent his entire political career in the US, actively campaigning for individual liberty and freedom for oppressed people. In China too he found another principle to fight for, as during the mid-nineteenth century, China was humiliated at the hands of imperialist powers through a series of unequal treaties. Although practical issues such as trade and concessions were important to him, the primary objective of his policy was to change the way, in which foreigners dealt with China as well as with the Chinese.

After Burlingame passed away in 1870, his legacy continued until the 1868 Burlingame Treaty, which momentarily benefited Chinese interests in the United States and was the pinnacle of Sino-American friendship in the nineteenth century. Although the treaty's intentions were quickly thwarted by exclusive legislation and changing geopolitics, Burlingame's strategy is nevertheless an attractive example of early soft power diplomacy based on common values, appreciation, and understanding between cultures. International relations experts may learn from his example about the importance of ideas and agency in a world where interests and force are often dominant.

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 8. Burlingame Family Papers. (1903, April 11). *Correspondence of Edward Burlingame*. See also Hoar, G. F. (1903). *Autobiography of seventy years* (Vol. 1, p. 153). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
 9. "Tongzhi" (T'ung-chih) was the reign name of the emperor who assumed the throne in 1862.
 10. See, Tong, T.K. (1908). Treaties, conventions, etc., between China and foreign states. Shanghai. United States Diplomacy in China, 1844-60 (Seattle, 1964), 223-234, 280-285
 11. Zongli Yamen (Tsunli Yamen) was the office of general management and the government body in charge of foreign policy in imperial China.
 12. See, Anderson, D. L. (1979). Anson Burlingame: Reformer and Diplomat. *Civil War History*, **25**(4) : 293-308. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cwh.1979.0010>, It should be noted that Burlingame was America's first resident minister in Beijing and not America's first minister to China. Three of Burlingame's predecessors in China were, Caleb Cushing, William B. Reed, and John E. Ward, held the rank of envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary.
 13. See, Anderson, D. L. (1986). "Fair Diplomatic Action: Anson Burlingame and the cooperative policy in China" In *Imperialism and Idealism: American Diplomats in China, 1861-1898*; (1st ed.) Indiana University Press, pp-18-19
 14. Koo, T. H. (1922). *The life of Anson Burlingame* (Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University), p. 44.
 15. Anderson, D. L. (1977). Anson Burlingame: American architect of the cooperative policy in China, 1861-1871. *Diplomatic History*, **1**(3) : 240-245. In the period before 1861 the United States had no explicit policy of cooperation, although some American diplomats in China had occasionally advocated various types of diplomatic cooperation among the Western nations. None of these schemes involved cooperation with the Chinese government.
 16. Ibid, pp-241
 17. Ibid, pp-242
 18. Xu Guoqi (2014), *Chinese and Americans: A Shared History*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts London, England
 19. Anderson, D. L. (1986). "Fair Diplomatic Action: Anson Burlingame and the cooperative policy in China" In *Imperialism and idealism: American diplomats in China, 1861-1898* (1st ed.). Indiana University Press, pp-24
 20. Anderson, D. L. (1977). Anson Burlingame: American architect of the cooperative policy in China, 1861-1871. *Diplomatic History*, **1**(3) : 240-245.
 21. See, Moore, J. B., Williams, F. W. and Kent, P. H. (1913). Anson Burlingame and the first Chinese mission to foreign powers. *Political Science Quarterly*, **28**(1) : 159. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2141210>
 22. See, Anderson, D. L. (1986). "Fair Diplomatic Action: Anson Burlingame and the cooperative policy in China" In *Imperialism and Idealism: American Diplomats in China, 1861-1898*; pp-18-19, (1st ed.) Indiana University Press, pp-35
 23. Xu, G. (2014), "Anson Burlingame China's First Messenger to the World," In *Chinese and Americans: A Shared History*, Harvard University Press. pp-38.
