boosting the limit to $3,000. Or soft money could be capped at, say, $60,000 per election cycle, as GOP senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska has proposed. The idea behind these is to soften the impact of reform.

A conference would provide something else: a role for the White House. The president would have leverage because he must sign (or not) whatever bill emerges. And Bush is bound to be concerned about a bill that bars all soft money. In 2000, roughly $100 million in soft money was used in issue advocacy ads to support his presidential campaign. If that's gone, such TV spots will be left up to independent expenditure groups. Liberal groups backing the Democratic nominee spent far more than conservative groups on issue ads in 2000, and they're expected to do so again in 2004. Without soft money, then, Bush might be at a disadvantage in his bid for reelection. His campaign reform preference is to eliminate *corporate* soft money donations, but not all soft money gifts. In the privacy of a conference, the White House would surely push for this or perhaps a cap.

Scandals often send Congress into a tizzy, and Enron is no exception. Republicans are desperate to show they aren't tools of big business. Democrats can't figure out what the scandal is. First it was the administration's help for Enron. When that didn't materialize, the scandal was the lack of help for Enron employees. That, too, didn't catch on, so the Democratic charge became that Bush let Enron dictate his energy policy. But the Bush policy is the conventional conservative approach with a bow or two to environmentalists. House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt has offered the looniest interpretation. The scandal may be what the administration "avoided doing because it was concerned that campaign contributions created the appearance of conflict." In other words, Enron's campaign contributions assured it would have no influence at all. If that's true, reformers should be seeking less campaign finance reform, not more. ♦

China's Persecution Complex

They think we're using September 11 to encircle them. BY TOM DONNELLY

WITH PRESIDENT BUSH due to travel to Beijing on February 21, Chinese leaders have embarked on a pre-summit charm offensive. Much of this warming of relations has a ritual quality; the release of a Chinese political prisoner with ties to the United States is becoming the traditional prelude to a meeting between American and Chinese presidents.

But China clearly is approaching this summit with a special urgency. Beijing has just pledged $150 million to help rebuild Afghanistan, and so far has made little fuss over the discovery of bugging devices aboard the U.S.-made airplane intended to serve as President Jiang Zemin's private jet. Even more extraordinary, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen went so far as to invite members of Taiwan's fiercely democratic ruling party—previously denounced as "splittists" and "separatists"—for a friendly visit.

Two major events account for China's current smiling face and for the high stakes at the upcoming summit. First, Beijing is absorbed in the long drama of the succession to Jiang Zemin. This process is planned to play out over several years. And Jiang's heir apparent, Hu Jintao, has relatively little foreign policy experience—or backing among the Chinese military.

Second, the events of September 11 have energized the United States and the Bush administration to play a more assertive role internationally, in effect challenging China's strategy for becoming a great power. Indeed, from Beijing's point of view, other than the Taliban, the People's Republic of China has been the biggest loser thus far in the war on terrorism.

"Dispatching Troops to Afghanistan by the United States Is Tantamount to Sticking a Dagger in China's Back!" wails a headline in the Chinese press in Hong Kong. "To consolidate and establish its position as the sole global hegemon," the article asserts, the Bush administration has a three-pronged strategy: "to occupy Afghanistan militarily, support a pro-U.S. puppet regime and stick a dagger in China's back" by creating "a containing chain along east China."

This piece, which appeared less than a week after the September 11 attacks, typifies Chinese fears about where the war on terrorism might lead: to the strategic encirclement of Beijing. "If the United States should attack and occupy Afghanistan," the article continues, "it would impose an extremely big threat to the national security of China, and its objectives of modernization and complete national reunification"—such as gaining control of Taiwan—"would be seriously affected. It can be said that if the United States captured Afghanistan at one stroke, it would directly check and disrupt China's . . . major strategic objectives in the new century."

The initial hysteria of the Chinese popular press has subsided, reflecting both the decision of Chinese leaders to try to exploit American policy to repress China's own Muslim minorities and their recognition that world public opinion sided with the United States. But fears of American encir-

Tom Donnelly is deputy executive director of the Project for a New American Century.

clement and containment of China have remained a hot topic among Chinese strategists and foreign policy analysts. An essay on the *People's Daily* website warns that the war on terrorism gives the United States an "excuse" to "surround and contain China. The U.S. will absolutely not give up such a good opportunity."

Through Beijing's eyes, any recent tour of the strategic horizon is bleak and getting bleaker. Russia has permitted American overflights and now basing in former Soviet republics; India looks for a long-term strategic partnership with the United States and has reacted calmly to terrorist attacks by Islamic radicals; Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf has taken extraordinary internal risks to support U.S. policy; and Japan has played a larger military role. While Taiwan has played no significant role in the war in Afghanistan, recent elections on the island cemented the rule of the anti-reunification Democratic Progressive party. And the war on terrorism is bringing the United States closer to the Philippines—and even perhaps to Indonesia and Malaysia.

The presence of American troops in Central Asia is especially surprising and galling to the Chinese. Not only are U.S. troops going to be in Afghanistan and Pakistan for some time, but the Pentagon recently admitted that it "is preparing a military presence in Central Asia that could last for years," according to the *New York Times*. And the Pentagon is being remarkably frank about what will surely reinforce Beijing's fears of containment. The bases' "function may be more political than military," Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz says. Revealing plans for periodic training exercises in the region, Wolfowitz contends that the larger purpose is to "send a message to everybody . . . that we have a capacity to come back in and will come back in—we're not just going to forget about [the region]."

This message is widely received in China, notably among foreign policy elites. "[T]he action the United States and other countries have taken and will continue to take in the wake of September 11 is of greater significance to the world than the terrorist bombings themselves," writes Jiang Lingfei, a professor of international relations at the Chinese University of National Defense, in the January 2 issue of *Beijing Review*.

"The aim of U.S. global strategy in these early years of the 21st century," argues analyst Zhao Linglin in the Beijing-owned Hong Kong newspaper *Ta Kung Pao*, "is to politically integrate the whole world and act as sole world leader. The fight against terrorism has given the United States a good reason to fulfill this claim. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has gradually expanded its share of influence by launching a series of wars. After the Gulf War of 1991, it assumed control over the Middle East; after the war in Kosovo, it assumed control over East Europe; and over Central Asia through the anti-terrorism war in Afghanistan. Furthermore, after each war, the United States enlarged its pool of allies and organized more and more coalitions."

The U.S. appetite for allies is frustrating China's attempts to balance America's growing global power. In Russia, the apparent westward tilt of Vladimir Putin since September 11 has thrown the Chinese for a loop, calling into question the strategic partnership developed during Boris Yeltsin's rule and nurtured into Putin's term.

The Chinese are particularly flummoxed by Russia's passivity in the face of the Bush administration's plans to withdraw from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and to build a limited global missile defense. Liu Jianfei, a member of the Institute on International Affairs at the Chinese Communist party's important Central Party School, believes that this "undermines the current strategic equilibrium, causing other countries to lose their nuclear deterrence, and at the same time enables the United States to possess absolute superiority in military power . . . and thereby lay down a solid material foundation for building unipolar hegemonism." In reality, the Chinese know well that limited U.S. missile defenses will have little effect on the large Russian nuclear deterrent, while calling into question the effectiveness of Beijing's small arsenal of fewer than two dozen missiles.

China's plan to manipulate the levers of power in South Asia by exploiting the rivalry between Pakistan and India also has all but collapsed. For more than a decade, Beijing paid court to the fractured regime in Islamabad, selling it medium-range missiles and cozying up to anti-American elements in the armed forces. When the Bush administration sent Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to India to discuss a new strategic partnership with New Delhi, the Chinese concern for Pakistan became even greater.

But President Musharraf has seized upon the war in Afghanistan to rebuild ties to the United States and move against the Islamic extremists who are his domestic opposition. One of the few things that India and Pakistan now agree on is that the United States should remain in the region. "I don't think America can give up its Central Asian presence now," Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh told the *Washington Post*'s Jim Hoagland. Musharraf agreed: "'The U.S. presence in the region must remain as long' as it is needed."

Nor is China having much luck in East Asia, where its obvious ambitions are provoking thinly veiled hostility. In Tokyo, the Koizumi government is accelerating progress toward the goals of a more active alliance with the United States and the reassertion of Japanese geopolitical and military influence more commensurate with its wealth. The Chinese see this and don't like it.

And naturally, the consolidation of power by Chen Shui-bian's Democratic Progressive party in Taiwan's

December elections is a tremendous setback to Beijing's hopes for "reunification." China's strategy of military intimidation and its attempts to appeal to Taipei businessmen anxious for an increased presence on the mainland are backfiring. Although the DPP government is unlikely to declare independence, even small assertions of Taiwanese autonomy—such as the decision in mid-January to add the words "Issued in Taiwan" to the cover of Taiwanese passports—provoke hostility in Beijing. And President Bush's pledge to "do whatever it takes" to defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese attack made it clear that the United States views the island as a key to U.S. security in the Pacific.

Add to all this the bitter fact that the United States with its ever-expanding "pool of allies," while continuing to contain China in South Asia and East Asia, is building its influence in Central Asia. Writes Deng Hou, Eastern Europe and Central Asia director at the China Institute on International Issues, "By using anti-terrorism as the excuse to enter Central Asia, the United States has gained the upper hand in the bid to control Central Asia."

To its credit, the administration thus far has refused to trim its sails to appease Beijing. It has rejected attempts to equate the Uighurs with the Taliban or al Qaeda, for example, and has refused to lift post-Tiananmen sanctions that would improve Chinese military capabilities in Xinjiang. Chinese charm offensives, of course, have proved to be siren songs to American presidents since Richard Nixon, and the foreign policy establishment will be pushing hard to "normalize" relations with Beijing.

It is the defense of our people, our principles, and our genuine security interests that has brought American and allied troops to China's borders—this is now the "normal" state of affairs. While Beijing may see U.S. power closing in, the Bush administration cannot retreat to the pre-September 11 status quo. ♦

Khartoum Violence

With friends like Sudan . . .

BY ELI J. LAKE

Khartoum

When CIA agents landed here in June 2000 to begin what Washington assumed would be secret counterterrorism cooperation with Sudan, the Sudanese foreign minister held a press conference announcing their arrival.

Mustafa Osman Ismail says American officials asked him to conceal the CIA's presence from the public. But he told them that would be impossible. "The media here is fully free," he maintains. "That's why I went on the TV and said, 'You have to know that there is an American security team and they are here, moving freely, exchanging information and cooperating with our security people.'"

Leaving aside Ismail's assertion that his country's press is free (on January 16, the editor of the largest English language opposition paper was fined approximately 1,500,000 Sudanese dinars, about $6,000, for printing an article on slave raids in the south), the notion that Sudan's government is fighting terrorism is peculiar. If terrorism is the deliberate targeting of noncombatants, then a strong case can be made that Sudan's military is itself a terrorist entity.

The Sudanese air force, not to mention the government-sponsored paramilitary groups, makes no distinction in practice between civilians and rebel soldiers. Government forces have bombed marketplaces, hospitals, churches, and schools in their nearly 19-year civil war with the Sudan People's Liberation Army. Scott Hughett, the Africa director for Rev. Franklin Graham's relief organization Samaritan's Purse, said in an interview from Nairobi earlier this month that he had seen the bomb damage himself in the south in a hospital his organization helped found in Lui. "The effect of the bombing is not so much the damage of the bombs themselves, but the terror it causes in the area. Children miss school, sick people are afraid to go to clinics."

The government predictably denies its culpability. "It is quite possible that when you bombard a certain area, bombs stray into attacking civilian installations," explained Dr. Ghazi Salah el-Din Atabani, an adviser to President Omar Hassan al-Bashir on the civil war. "That's a possibility, that happens all over the world. What I'm saying is there is no deliberate policy by the Sudanese government to target civilian installations or civilian populations."

But the adviser's words do not square with facts on the ground. In October, Sudanese fighters accompanying World Food Program planes to the western Bahr Ghazel region dropped bombs on villagers as they approached sacks of food dropped only minutes before, according to western aid workers and U.S. officials. Despite recent incursions into the area by the Sudan People's Liberation Army, Khartoum had approved this food drop ahead of time, making it highly unlikely that the bombardment was accidental. Indeed, the El Obeid airstrip where the World Food Program loads its single-propeller planes with food is also where the military packs Russian-made Antonovs with 500-pound iron gravity bombs for missions in the surrounding areas.

On his way back from the SPLA rebel compound in the south, President Bush's special envoy for peace in Sudan, former senator John Danforth, saw the Antonovs being loaded at El Obeid. In his four-day tour of the country, Danforth had hoped to con-

Eli J. Lake, State Department correspondent for UPI, accompanied John Danforth on his recent trip to Sudan.