

Jianbiao Ma
Associate professor of history, Fudan University
Visiting scholar of history, UC San Diego

“Interpersonal History Across Boundary: Paul S. Reinsch and His Three Different Experiences in Sino-US Relations”

Abstract

Paul S. Reinsch is an important American diplomat in China during the period of the WWI. At the end of the 19th century, he became a professor at Wisconsin University. From then on, Reinsch focused on the research of China. He published several influential books about China, which made him a famous expert on China affairs. In the meantime, he became the scholar leader in the politics studying in USA. This scholar experience in East Asia studying made a good foundation for Reinsch to become a diplomat to China.

From 1913 to 1920, Paul S. Reinsch was American minister in China, he established a good relationship with many Chinese elites. As a diplomat, he did represent USA to defend its open door policy, fighting with Japan. As a personal friend of China, Reinsch did a lot to help China, he hoped American government to help China, but President Wilson has much more important affairs to do, so American government can not do enough to help China just as Reinsch hoped. Because of this, Reinsch fell into a great dilemma with President Wilson: to love China and help China; to disobey the order of president Wilson. In the case of Shandong question, Reinsch was so angry with President Wilson's decision to defend Japan, so he resigned. After that, Reinsch was hired as a political consultant for China government until he died in Shanghai in 1923. During the period, he wrote his famous memoir: *An American Diplomat in China*. Furthermore, he did his best to promote the cultural communication between China and America. In the aspect, his behavior looks like a representation of the whole human being. In a word, Reinsch has three different identities in Sino-US relations: Scholar, Diplomat, Friend. These identities of his represented his different personal experiences, which made up of the foreign relations history of Sino-US at that time.