

Mr. David Firestein EastWest Institute



David J. Firestein is the EastWest Institute's (EWI's) Perot Fellow and Vice President for the Strategic Trust-Building Initiative and Track 2 Diplomacy. In this capacity, he oversees EWI's "China, East Asia and the United States" and "Russia and the United States" programs, as well as the Institute's emerging work on U.S.-Iran relations and weapons of mass destruction-related activities. A career U.S. diplomat from 1992 to 2010, Firestein served at the U.S. embassies in Beijing (5 years) and Moscow (4 years) and in a number of domestic assignments at the U.S. Department of State. Firestein speaks Mandarin Chinese and Russian and has interpreted for senior U.S. officials in both languages.

Firestein is the author or co-author of three books on China, including two China-published bestsellers: *Pacific Reflections: Essays on Chinese and American Society and Culture* (1997); and *Here and There: 81 Conversations about China and America* (2004). Most recently, he co-authored a major policy study, *Threading the Needle: Proposals for U.S. and Chinese Actions on Arms Sales to Taiwan* (2013), which former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz has described as "bold and pathbreaking." In 1995-96, Firestein wrote a weekly column for the *Beijing Youth Daily*; he was the first foreign citizen ever to have a column in a PRC newspaper. In all, he has published some 140 articles in major Chinese, Russian and U.S. publications. Firestein taught U.S.-China relations and U.S.-Russia relations as an adjunct member of the graduate faculty at the University of Texas (Austin) from 2006 to 2008. In 2001, he also twice taught "Political Consulting and the American Political Campaign" at the Moscow State Institute (University) for International Relations (MGIMO), Russia's top university for foreign affairs and premier diplomatic training facility. He was the first sitting foreign diplomat ever to garner a teaching position at MGIMO. Firestein's diplomatic career included domestic Foreign Service stints at the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy (as deputy executive director and senior advisor) and at the State Department's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) office and China desk. From 2007 to 2009, Firestein was also an elected at-large member of the Board of Governors of the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), the Foreign Service's union and professional association; in this capacity, he represented about 9,000 State Department Foreign Service constituents. Among Firestein's major awards and honors are the 2006 "Secretary of State's Award for Public Outreach," MGIMO's 2001 "Teaching Excellence Award," the 1997 "Linguist of the Year Award" (for accomplishments in Mandarin Chinese in the U.S. Foreign Service), and designation, in 1997, as one of Peking University's "50 Most Distinguished Foreign Alumni." Also in 1997, the *Beijing Youth Daily* described Firestein as "arguably the most influential American in China" with respect to how Chinese viewed the United States.

Firestein holds a bachelor's degree in international relations from Georgetown University and master's degrees in public affairs and Asian studies from the University of Texas. Firestein is a native of Austin, Texas and current resident of Vienna, Virginia.