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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

University College
International Affairs

CHINA'S POLITICAL GAME FACE

by

Fendy Yang

A thesis presented to
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	1
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS	2
I. SOCIAL TRADITIONS	9
II: MILITARY PHILOSOPHIES	19
III. NON-INTERVENTION	27
IV: GEO-STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS.....	36
V: DEMOCRACY WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS	51
VI: CHARM OFFENSIVE	65
CONCLUDING REMARKS	77
ADDITIONAL WORKS CITED	84

Foreigners have long been curious about the country that so fiercely safeguards the privacy of its internal affairs, but China's historical reputation for manifesting an aloof and uninterested attitude towards others has left many outside scholars little choice but to study and examine the country from an external perspective. However, given the continuing controversy and speculation surrounding China's rise over the past few decades, it is imperative for scholars in this field to become more well-versed in the foundations of China's social and cultural traditions, to reorient their theoretical approaches to reflect a more relevant perspective in their studies. Of China's various historical institutions, three are identified as salient pillars for the development of its political culture: social traditions, military philosophies, and the principle of non-intervention. Each is discussed and reviewed within the context of Chinese history following the political evolution of Chinese governance, and examined specifically in the post-1949 period. The durability of these various influences are then evaluated in conjunction with three critical elements of modern China's political agenda, namely its geopolitical security, its gradual evolution towards "democracy with Chinese characteristics," and its so-called "charm offensive" to establish international legitimacy. Finally, some concluding remarks comment on the implications that these policies may have, both on the domestic level and within the international sphere.

For most of China's long history, it has striven for self-sufficiency and isolation from the rest of the international community. However, due to its sheer size and demographics, scholars and politicians alike have long been curious about the country that so fiercely safeguards the privacy of its internal affairs. China's historical reputation for manifesting an aloof and uninterested attitude towards others has left many outside scholars little choice but to study and examine the country from a foreigner's perspective. Thus, it should come as little surprise that scholarship on China has always been somewhat limited in nature, focusing more on external interpretations of Chinese events and decision-making.

The past few decades have been especially thought-provoking for those who have kept a watchful eye on Chinese politics throughout its history. Centuries of a relatively quiet, stable, and generally ignored political situation within China were quickly shattered by an astounding military victory in 1949 by the Chinese Communist Party (henceforth "the Party"), an unlikely underdog in a revolution that would pivot and transform Chinese history from that moment forward. As the defeated Nationalists retreated to Taiwan, the Party, led by the charismatic Mao Zedong, took over political power and proceeded to redefine and rewrite the Chinese approach towards military strategies and political agendas. International observers, unsure of what to expect from the unpredictable nascent power, reacted to the sudden turn of events with both awe and apprehension, struggling to make sense of Mao's revolutionary framework and ambitious vision for China's future.

All Chinese text in this study will be transcribed using the pinyin Romanization system, which was adopted as the international standard by the International Organization for Standardization in 1982. Any citations or quotations of external resources that employ older transcription systems (e.g. Wade-Giles) will be cited in their original form.

In the following decades, as China traversed an entire spectrum of political personalities from international hermit to rising economic superstar, the global media, the academic community, and interested policymakers alike all closely scrutinized its every move, casting the historically enigmatic country in various roles, from that of a dangerous ideological enemy to a powerful trading ally for the West and magnanimous benefactor for the rest. As a result, while a multitude of scholarship exists on these various topics, many, especially those regarding the scope and potential impact of China's political and military strategies on the international community, are predicated upon Western views of power, statecraft, war, military strategy, geopolitics, diplomacy, ideology, institutionalism, and democracy to explain China's strategic interests and to project the span of its predicted rise to power.

This study will afford a revisionist perspective and an alternative explanation of China's political strategies as it continues to emerge as an international leader. Contrary to much of Western public opinion, China's magnificent economic growth and political development since 1949, while undoubtedly competitive internationally, do not necessarily reflect malignant intentions to disrupt the global balance of power. This is not to say that China is completely satisfied to simply incorporate itself into an existing international political system—it does challenge the present order of nation-states both politically and economically while simultaneously questioning the distribution of resources amongst states. Despite China's self-claimed position as a champion for the third world, the two statements above are not contradictions; the emphasis is on the semantics of the claim. While it is undeniable that the Chinese have grand ambitions for economic growth, social development, and leadership on a regional, and most likely

global, scale, it is very important to underscore the fact that its intentions are natural and pragmatic for a state of its size (both territorially and demographically), and do not reflect any strategically injurious quest for world domination.

This investigation thus takes the approach of examining customs and traditions throughout China's long history to establish a potential theoretical foundation for modern Chinese political culture. Drawn from a variety of influences stemming from regional social philosophies to endemic military thought, Chinese political theory and values can be observed as a marriage between its strong social, historical, and cultural traditions with a sense of pragmatism. Despite the recent transition of leadership and Mao's determination to overthrow centuries of nearly crystallized Chinese conventions and ideologies, the Chinese way has persevered in an incredible, though unsurprising way, given China's history as one of the world's oldest continuous civilizations. Its political culture is arguably as persistent, with its current identity simply taking on some contemporary twists for adapting to and evolving with the modern international political scene, a trend that is most likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

To set the stage for in-depth exploration of how China's political values has evolved over time, the first section of the study will focus on the ideologies and customs that have formed the durable backbone of both Chinese society and its political culture. Two forms of social philosophies critically influenced the development of Chinese society up to and, as some would argue, beyond the 1949 revolution: Buddhism and Confucianism. Though Western scholars have long categorized both of these ideologies as religious institutions, the term "social philosophy" is used very deliberately to distinguish the minimal role of theology and the limited role of deity worship in society.

Rather, both Buddhism and Confucianism may be construed as frameworks for ensuring social harmony, a core principle of ancient Chinese society. The concept of a harmonious society serves as an idealistic paragon for social behavior and interaction, affecting the entire Chinese populace; its perceived success for maintaining peaceful and productive interactions between all people is demonstrated by widespread adoption elsewhere in East Asia. As Buddhism espouses a stronger theological foundation and embraces more religious tenets than Confucianism, it serves to guide individuals towards finding a greater peace and enlightenment—lessons that would come to transcend the spiritual experience and reorient society on a similar quest towards harmony. Confucianism, on the other hand, emphasizes the rituals and responsibilities to be performed by each individual in society to ensure smooth overall operation. By studying the evolution and subsequent influences of these two interacting ideologies over time, one gains a sense of how tradition was established in China, and how such a rich heritage comes to contribute to and strongly flavor Chinese political culture in the modern age.

The second section of this study will shift focus from the social to the martial, with an abbreviated examination of how military philosophies have developed throughout Chinese history and its impact on modern political culture. No section on Chinese military theory would be complete without at least a reference to Sunzi's¹ academically fashionable *Art of War*, but to incorporate only an analysis on the brief work would be an incomplete approach to the subject. Other key sources of investigation include the traditional Chinese epic, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as well as the popular Chinese strategy game of *wéiqí*, or go. Hence, this study will propose a facelift for the familiar concept of the grand chessboard—as popularized by the eponymous work of former U.S.

¹ Sunzi's name is also commonly Romanized as Sun Tzu or Sun Wu.

National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski—and transform the strategic analogy into a much more suitable Chinese counterpart: the grand *wéiqí* board. This simple tweaking provides significant insight on the formation and execution of Chinese political strategy, and most importantly, how to interpret such actions from an external perspective.

The next section will look at how these social and military philosophies mesh to shape a critical pillar of Chinese political culture: non-intervention. As the self-proclaimed contemporary leader of the developing world, China has strongly embraced the concept of non-intervention, proudly touting it as the catchphrase for its global political agenda in direct contrast to the interventionist mentality espoused by its peers elsewhere. Thus, it makes sense to examine China's commitment to its lauded principle, to conduct a brief survey, the purpose of which is to examine the consistency with which China has conducted itself in world affairs. These accounts, which focus primarily on the Chinese approach towards the often politically questionable developing nations, will shed light onto the reliability of Beijing's word and to distinguish between its propagandist proclamations and its actual diplomatic intentions, a subject that is sure to be of much interest to those who have been keeping a close eye on China's recent and rapid rise.

The second half of this investigation, beginning with the fourth section, brings it back to China's modern era, which henceforth shall be the term used to describe the post-1949 period. The focus is on analyzing the political and strategic implications that the marriage between the philosophies and principles has on the Party's policy formation. Geopolitics, examined as the military control of geographic space, will be utilized as a method for analyzing international affairs, per George Friedman, and used to examine the

core strategic territorial concerns that significantly shape Beijing's political strategies. This portion of the study will be dedicated to re-examining and re-defining the academic realm of geopolitics from the Chinese perspective, and explore, once again, the relevance of the Chinese experience with regards to protecting its territorial integrity. Especially pertinent to this discussion are China's persistent geo-strategic challenges, such as Taiwan, which will be reevaluated in the wake of China's rise as a great power and the responsibilities that this new role may invoke. Similarly, a fresh perspective on China's geopolitical and geo-economic relations with other states may shed some light on Chinese intentions in the defense sector, especially with regards to its ever-widening defense budget as well as its plans for military and naval expansion.

The fifth section will examine and weigh in on the hotly contested issue of democracy within China. The tenets of democracy, as established by centuries of Western thought, will be examined hand-in-hand with applicability to Chinese society. By focusing on the scope of interactions and actual power structure—as opposed to perceived—between the governors and the governed, the concept of “democracy with Chinese characteristics” will be proposed as a viable description of Chinese political institutions; this will be explored from the grassroots level up to relations between Beijing and its citizens. The power structures within the Party will also be briefly explored, followed by an analysis of the Party's approach to issues that challenge its grip on power, such as social inequality and popular legitimacy.

The sixth and final segment will redirect the question of legitimacy towards relations between China and the rest of the world. China's so-called “charm offensive” has already attracted much attention and interest, from both the advanced industrial states

as well as the developing countries. While certain critics in the West are quick to castigate China for its lack of ethical responsibility to the international community, much of the rest of the world embraces the opportunity for financial assistance and much-needed development aid without the bundle of pesky—and often intrusive—moral strings frequently attached to Western deals. The trend has raised many concerned eyebrows over the possibility of China usurping the American hegemonic throne by “purchasing” friends abroad to support its quest for global domination. While the debate remains a controversial albeit unresolved topic in world affairs, this study will focus on the cultivation of Chinese legitimacy abroad, with much of Beijing’s international conduct being heavily influenced by and in relatively strict accordance with the earlier established pillars of its political culture.

Finally, in the concluding remarks, some light will be shed on the forecasting that has been done by global analysts regarding the much discussed rise of China. Of particular significance is the potential impact that growing Western influences and ideologies may have on traditional Chinese values, and whether China’s distinctive culture will be able to evolve and grow with modern trends for several more centuries or be replaced by more contemporary and fashionable ideas in global political culture.

I || SOCIAL TRADITIONS

Social philosophies have often played a very significant role in the formation and structuring of political and civil societies throughout most of human history. Theological doctrines rooted in the monotheistic religions as well as secular tenets such as democracy and liberty are familiar building blocks that have given rise to many of the great empires of Western history. It would be satisfactory to say that China's political development evolved in a very similar manner, with strong foundational roots in historical social traditions, as the politics of governance were customarily viewed as an interaction between the spiritual and the secular; however, in China, unlike in many of the Western empires of the time, no official church or religion existed to compete with the state for power. The typical approach to Chinese political theory is thus predicated on the erroneous implications of this otherwise familiar basis, a method that involves utilizing an inapplicable Western framework for investigating a distinctive and atypical phenomenon.²

Unlike many other societies, the Chinese do not have a creation myth; the origin of their people and country are accepted as a unquestioned reality, with all subsequent creations, such as society and the values it espouses as being distinctly Chinese.³ Such a

² Given the limited space allotted in this study, it is not the intent of the author to scrutinize or analyze millennia of Chinese history in detail. For the purposes of establishing a methodological framework, an extremely abbreviated discussion of aforementioned elements of Chinese history and culture will be presented in the first half of the text. For a more robust and comprehensive narrative on Chinese history, including more in-depth analysis, readers are referred to the following texts: *This Is China: The First 5,000 Years*. Haiwang Yuan, general ed. Knapp, Ronald G., Margot E. Landman, and Gregory Veeck, eds. Great Barrington, Massachusetts: Berkshire Publishing, 2010.; Garnet, Jacques. *A History of Chinese Civilization*. Trans. J.R. Foster and Charles Hartman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

³ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. New York: Penguin, 2011. 13.

self-centered view of the world is reflected in the naming of the Middle Kingdom (*Zhōngguó*), perceived to be the central—and most significant—point in the entire world.⁴ Sino-centrism, with its strong belief in letting non-Chinese come to enjoy the great wonders of China without the Chinese having to travel outside the kingdom to seek external influences, thus forms a critical crux of modern China's insistence on non-intervention in others' internal affairs, an issue that will be further explored in section III of this study.⁵ The absence of a specific creator figure does not denote a lack of spirituality; rather, the entire social structure is based upon a divine Mandate from Heaven that selects an exemplary leader to instruct those below him on the proper behaviors and virtues.⁶

Confucianism, named for the philosophical thinker *Kǒng fūzǐ*, arose early on to become one of the first structural institutions for the organized study and development of social philosophies in China,⁷ one that proved exceptionally durable and influential on

⁴ On this point, it is important to note that China did not perceive itself to be the only kingdom in the entire world. The emperor and his subjects acknowledged the existence of other kingdoms, especially those immediately in the Chinese periphery. However, given the prevailing Sino-centric attitude of the time, these kingdoms were viewed as being obviously inferior to China but having the great fortune of being in close proximity with such a superior and awesome power. As a result, China assumed a suzerain-vassal relationship with its regional neighbors, believing that the desire of these countries to associate with China would negate the need for the Middle Kingdom to export its cultures and values to others. Those who did not wish to engage with China were disregarded as barbaric states that suffered a great loss by opting for a supremely subpar lifestyle.

⁵ While China did view its surrounding states as vassals, the principle of non-intervention still applied, as it did not seek to dominate its neighbors but allowed them a great level of autonomy that essentially resembled complete independence.

⁶ As noted by Chad Hansen in his study on Confucian culture, the Mandate is “not a right to make laws and punish people; it is a command to educate and shape people's characters.” (Hansen, Chad. *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. 61, 126.)

⁷ Ibid. 58.

future cultural traditions.⁸ Due to its attributes and scope of influence on Chinese civilization, Western scholars have often applied the misnomer of “religion” as a form of classification. The term is placed in quotations because of its common academic usage as a label for an institution of belief encompassing the worship of one or more deities, with a heavy emphasis on theological rituals and texts. Though an informal belief in cosmic elements such as demons and ancestral spirits did exist, Confucius concentrated his teachings around compassionate rule, ritual performance, and proper conduct of familial and civil duties to promote social harmony; if each individual were to follow the Way, or *dào*, through learning his or her proper roles and responsibilities in society, chaos could be mitigated or averted altogether;⁹ society was thus measured by “the sum of its roles, not the sum of its individuals.”¹⁰ Since the emperor was the liaison between Heaven and Earth, he was in the key position to maintain moral harmony and ensure the proper adherence to the Way; it thus follows that the structure of traditional Chinese society is often depicted as a hierarchical pyramid, with the emperor at the social pinnacle as the divine link between Heaven and Earth.¹¹ Despite the spiritual justification for social and political power distribution, Confucianism emphasized that the ultimate goal of proper

⁸ Taoism, another social philosophy that referred to the core principles of social harmony and the Way (*dào*), was also a very influential Chinese tradition that came about during this time. However, due to the abbreviated nature of this study with regards to philosophical influences on modern Chinese political culture, its focus is solely on Confucianism, which, incidentally, also incorporates many of the fundamental elements of Taoism.

⁹ Eno, R. “The Doctrine of the Mean.” (2010): Unpublished manuscript. Indiana University.

¹⁰ Hansen, Chad. *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation*. 62.

¹¹ Hansen, Chad. *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation*. 61.

observation of rituals and virtuous behavior was to promote peace on earth, not to earn any sort of assurances or benefits in the afterlife.¹²

One especially influential text that upholds much of the Confucian tradition and presents it in a poetically didactic form is the Greater Learning (*Dàxué*).¹³ The text consists of prosaic though deliberately rhymed verses, presumably to facilitate memorization for the masses. The ultimate goal of the Greater Learning is to guide the disciple towards the Way “in making bright virtue brilliant, in making the people new, in dwelling at the limit of the good” via eight stages:

Those of antiquity who wished that all men throughout the empire keep their inborn luminous Virtue unobscured put governing their states well first; wishing to govern their states well, they first established harmony in their households; wishing to establish harmony in their households, they first cultivated themselves; wishing to cultivate themselves, they first set their minds in the right; wishing to set their minds in the right, they first made their thoughts true; wishing to make their thoughts true, they first extended their knowledge to the utmost; the extension of knowledge lies in fully apprehending the principle of things... [once these have been accomplished in this order] the empire becomes tranquil.¹⁴

¹² According to *The Analects*, Confucius would only vaguely address the issue of spirits to emphasize his teachings on people, in one passage (XI:11) asking his student Tzu-lu “Till you have learnt to serve men, how can you serve ghosts?” and “Till you know about the living, how are you to know about the dead?” (Confucius. *The Analects of Confucius*. Trans. Arthur Waley. New York: Vintage-Random House, 1989. 155.)

¹³ The *Greater Learning* was published after Confucius’ death, presumably by one of his disciples, Zengzi. While the text conveys many of what became the core ideologies of Confucianism following the Master’s death, the interpretations presented by a new generation of neo-Confucians in Late Imperial China may have deviated from the original intentions of the text. (Eno, R. “The Great Learning.” (2010): Unpublished manuscript. Indiana University.)

¹⁴ Gardner, Daniel K. *Chu Hsi and the Ta-hsueh: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1986. 91-4.

As the leader of the state, the emperor was expected to remain impartial in his dealings, lest he “be a disgrace in the eyes of the world.”¹⁵ Ideally, the emperor would best be able to retain his grip on the state by measuring the minds of others and gaining the multitude to maintain the Mandate.¹⁶ Confucianism stressed, above all, leadership through instruction, stating that those who were unable to educate their own households would be unfit to teach others.¹⁷ The emphasis on learning and education to preserve the prevailing social order also undermined the role of the legal system, an institution Confucians believed would “endanger the very root of the *natural* social order... [due to its] interpretative ambiguities,... self-regarding motivations,... [and] the development of glib, clever, aberrant use of language rather than conforming use;” the ultimate result would be a criminal society with limited social motivations.¹⁸ As such, the emperor was heavily discouraged from relying on experts for strategic or leisurely political pursuits, since this type of behavior would obscure the path of the Way and “cause the common people misfortune, unable to enjoy the best government.”¹⁹

Buddhism entered China in the first century CE and burgeoned from the age of the Three Kingdoms (220-280 CE) to the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE). Though Buddhism experienced growth and popularity throughout China during this time, it never achieved the widespread influence of its ancient Chinese predecessors. Ultimately, the practice of Buddhism significantly declined following a massive persecution in 845 CE

¹⁵ Ibid. 115.

¹⁶ Ibid. 116.

¹⁷ Ibid. 110.

¹⁸ Hansen, Chad. *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation*. 64-5.

¹⁹ Gardner, Daniel K. *Chu Hsi and the Ta-hsueh: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon*. 84-5.

by the emperor Wuzong. Despite its relatively short-lived era of glory in Chinese history, Buddhism made important contributions to China's growing traditions and institutions of social thought. The practice of martial arts remained a seminal influence in Chinese culture. Confucianism had incorporated some militaristic exercises in its education curriculum for the morally superior man, including archery and charioteering. Taoist forms of Chinese boxing had also previously existed as a form of combat skills training involving the hands and feet to facilitate the use of weapons for defensive or offensive purposes. In combining martial arts with religious practice, Buddhist monks, such as those of the legendary Shaolin Monastery, were hailed for their superior fighting skills and were often recruited by emperors for combat against foreign invaders; martial training thus became highly encouraged as "a form of patriotic resistance to foreign rule."²⁰ Despite an unconventional marriage between combat training with peaceful religious practices, these two faces of Buddhism do not contradict one another. Unlike many other major religions that advocate peace and nonviolence, Buddhism does not call upon its followers to defend against enemies of faith, but does justify defensive militaristic actions in the quest for global peace and freedom.²¹ As written by the Venerable Dhammananda in *What Buddhist Believe*,

²⁰ Henning, Stanley E. "The Chinese Martial Arts in Historical Perspective." *Military Affairs*. 45.4. (1981): 173-6.

²¹ Buddhism fails to address or define situations of just warfare, suggesting that such concepts do not exist in the Buddhist philosophy. War is considered *akusala*, often translated as "evil," referring to acts that lay the foundation for future suffering. This could be one of several plausible reasons accounting for the absence of a Buddhist crusade in the present historic record. As mentioned previously, Buddhist monks, who were recognized for their superior combat skills, were often hired by emperors to constitute a fighting force against foreign enemies. According to Stephen Henning, they "represented the common man's way of uniting against lawlessness, oppressive government officials, and privileged foreigners" (Henning, Stanley E. "The Chinese Martial Arts in Historical Perspective." 176.). However, they themselves were rarely the perpetrators of violence or aggression, observable via the nearly nonexistent record of massive violent incidents instigated by Buddhism, especially in China; as its long history has demonstrated, any occurrences tended to be the exception and not the rule.

Buddhists should not be the aggressors even in protecting their religion or anything else. They must try their best to avoid any kind of violent act. Sometimes they may be forced to go to war by others who do not respect the concept of the brotherhood of humans as taught by the Buddha. They may be called upon to defend their country from external aggression, and as long as they have not renounced the worldly life, they are duty-bound to join in the struggle for peace and freedom. Under these circumstances, they cannot be blamed for becoming soldiers or being involved in defence... it is the duty of every cultured person to find all possible ways and means to settle disputes in a peaceful manner, without declaring war to kill his or her fellow human beings.²²

In general, the philosophy of Buddhism revolves around ideals such as kindness, mercy, and tolerance, rather than focusing on certain rituals and rules, making it especially compatible with the practice of Confucianism. The concept of *nirvana*, or Buddhist enlightenment, was also extremely resonant with Confucian minds, as it strongly mirrored the ultimate stage of mental illumination following years of diligent learning.²³ As a result, Buddhism was readily accepted into mainstream social thought, ultimately taking on a distinctive Chinese identity by integrating with Confucianism and Taoism to form a unique philosophical hybrid.²⁴

Over time, Buddhism and Taoism grew more relevant to personal spirituality, while Confucianism retained the strongest grasp on Chinese governance and the

²² Dhammanada, K. Sri. *What Buddhist Believe: Expanded 4th Edition*. Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society Malaysia, 2002. 383.

²³ From Zhuxi's annotations on Zengzi's elucidation of "knowing the root" and "the completion of knowledge" in Chapter V of *Dàxué*, he comments, "the first step of instruction in greater learning is to teach the student, whenever he encounters anything at all in the world, to build upon what is already known to him of principle and to probe still further, so that he seeks to reach the limit. After exerting himself in this way for a long time, he will one day become enlightened... and the mind, in its whole substance and vast operations, will be completely illuminated." (Gardner, Daniel K. *Chu Hsi and the Ta-hsueh: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon*. 104-5.)

²⁴ "The Buddha and Buddhism: China." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 1995. Accessed online 29 Jan 2012. <<http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/Buddhism/Buddhism%20in%20China.htm>>.

development of its political values. As China reluctantly moved out of international isolation after being forced into economic—and increasingly, militaristic—interactions with other actors, emperors were advised to continue adhering to Confucian doctrines, as “the foundation of an empire rests on propriety and righteousness, not on schemes and stratagems [with] roots [lying] in the hearts of men, not skills and crafts.”²⁵ The intellect-based meritocracy system, with its emphasis on a Confucian education, remained the key institution that recruited bright minds for civil service positions.²⁶ Until modern times, no previous rulers had ever attempted to overthrow the Confucian value system; each successive regime obediently governed by the ancient principles and accepted the Mandate of Heaven, which established legitimacy for their rule. As one scholar notes, it was ultimately this tradition that became the “mechanism of the process of Sinification [and] established Confucianism as the governing doctrine of China.”²⁷ Mao Zedong became the first ruler to challenge convention directly, struggling to promote his own philosophic vision of continuous revolution against the deeply embedded attitudes of his people.²⁸ In his opinion, it was the only way China could effectively break free from the shackles of these outdated institutional philosophies and proceed to regain and rebuild stature in the new world order. However, the tenacity of tradition proved resilient, as not even Mao himself was immune to generations of established standards: armed with

²⁵ Ch'en, Jerome. *China and the West: Society and Culture, 1815-1937*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979. 429.

²⁶ While the meritocracy system did tend to favor the aristocracy, filial piety is emphasized for those who do not have the means for a formal Confucian education. As Zengzi points out in *Dàxué* Chapter IX, “to govern the state well, it is necessary first to establish harmony in the household... no one is able to teach others who cannot teach his own household... the superior man does not leave his household yet his teachings are accomplished throughout the state.” (Gardner, Daniel K. *Chu Hsi and the Ta-hsueh: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon*. 110.)

²⁷ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 91.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 99.

reliance on traditional ways, he expected the cohesion and steadfastness of the Chinese people to endure and eventually overcome the social turbulence that he would unleash on them. Even his Communist philosophy reflected many of the ancient Confucian teachings, with his quest for egalitarianism based on the traditional principles of “each man [diligently putting] forth his utmost effort” toward the greater cause of social productivity.²⁹

Even after decades of Maoist rule, the emphasis on education in leadership is still prevalent in modern-day China; the focus is no longer strictly on Confucian principles but more modern forms of learning, such as physical and social sciences. The selection of two consecutive engineers (electric and hydraulic, respectively) to serve as hand-chosen presidents of China may be viewed as coincidence, but with a chemical engineer—Xi Jinping³⁰—being the favored heir to Hu Jintao’s coveted position for Beijing’s new politburo selection within the next year, mere happenstance is unlikely. As China persists with economic growth and technological expansion, it stands to reason that men of science, especially of engineering and technological sciences, have been selected to lead the country in keeping up with modern industrialization and innovation. The avoidance of socially-trained politicians or law scholars to lead an internationally burgeoning state is certainly peculiar, especially in the Western world; however, this is completely in line with established Confucian traditions, which call upon states to “gain by righteousness and not by interest in gain.”³¹

²⁹ Gardner, Daniel K. *Chu Hsi and the Ta-hsueh: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon*. 81.

³⁰ Fenby, Jonathan. “Xi Jinping: The man who will lead China into a new age.” *The Guardian: The Observer*. 06 Nov 2010. 29 Jan 2012. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/theobserver/2010/nov/07/xi-jinping-china-david-cameron>>.

³¹ Gardner, Daniel K. *Chu Hsi and the Ta-hsueh: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon*. 123.

Recently, in light of China's campaign for international legitimacy (to be discussed in detail later on in Section VI), Beijing has put a lot of effort into making Chinese culture fashionable and appealing to global audiences, whether via soft power offensives abroad to project a positive image of its traditions, or by inviting foreigners into its once-closed borders to experience Chinese culture firsthand. Given the significant role of Confucianism in China's history, it should come as no surprise that the social philosophy has been revitalized and updated for international consumption: official "Confucius Institutes" were founded in cities around the world, and a portion of the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony also acknowledged Confucian scholars. In January of 2011, the Chinese paid homage to the respected thinker with a statue in Tiananmen Square.³² Confucianism has also made a comeback in China's national culture, including a revival of Confucius studies in Chinese schools. As China reorients its academic society in the aftermath of Mao's reforms, growing domestic scholarship, coupled with foreign intellectual interest have reignited focus on many of China's most long-lasting traditions, including its language, its Confucian culture, its rich history, and, in light of China's increasingly significant role in maintaining international peace and security, its enduring military philosophies.

³² "China's Confucius Institutes: Rectification of statues." *The Economist*. 20 Jan 2011. 19 Apr 2012. <<http://www.economist.com/node/17969895>>.

II || MILITARY PHILOSOPHIES

Most Confucian teachings focus on governance and the responsibility of the emperor to maintain the state; not much is written on the subject of war.³³ The Master himself was said to have considered war an evil that may be justified in certain situations as a necessity, provided that “[the] army [is] entirely clear as to why it is fighting and thoroughly convinced of the justice of its cause.”³⁴ That being said, using the principles and jargon of Chinese social philosophy, the concept of war can be viewed as a developed adaptation to the realities of chaos, or *luàn*; a pragmatic response to the absence of virtue and order. War thus follows the ebb and flow of Confucian cyclical theory, where victory and defeat are not viewed as permanent states, but part of a greater cosmic balance.³⁵

With the recognized inevitability of chaos, Chinese philosophy had to adjust its high moral standards to accommodate the restoration of order. Luo Guanzhong’s classic epic from the fourteenth century CE, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sānguó yǎnyì*) presents a Chinese twist on the age-old struggle between good and evil. Though the tale

³³ In passage XIII:29-30 of *The Analects*, Confucius briefly broaches the subject of war: “Only when men of the right sort have instructed a people for seven years ought there to be any talk of engaging them in warfare... To lead into battle a people that has not first been instructed is to betray them.” While the passage does contain a direct reference, he does not offer any sort of commentary on the morality of war or how it factors into governance or the political affairs of the state. Given the time period during which Confucius was socially active, it is possible to conjecture that since large-scale foreign aggression or external invasions were not widely considered a credible threat to the kingdom, Confucius did not devote much of his teachings to addressing the subject; rather, he focused on what he perceived to be the more realistic threat to the emperor, namely the alienation of his subjects, which would then disrupt the cohesion of social harmony. (Confucius. *The Analects of Confucius*. Trans. Arthur Waley. 178-9.)

³⁴ Navrozov, Lev. “Confucius, Sun Tzu, and the People’s Liberation Army.” *NewsMax.com*. 27 July 2007. 31 Jan 2012. <<http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2007/7/27/82553.shtml>>.

³⁵ China’s notable epic, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sānguó yǎnyì*), eloquently captures the Confucian spirit in its famous opening lines: “They say the momentum of history was ever thus: the empire, long divided, must unite; long united, must divide.” (Lo Kuan-chung. *Thee Kingdoms China’s Epic Drama*. Trans. Moss Roberts. New York: Pantheon Books. 1976. 3.)

is classified as a work of historical fiction, it explores many of the prevailing themes that Chinese philosophers at the time were struggling to elucidate, specifically the justification of war within their Confucian moral framework. In the story, two main characters are used to personify each side of the debate: Liu Bei, who represents the paragon of Confucian virtue, and his counterpart, Cao Cao, who takes on a more villainous role by defying morality with practicality. In one passage, as Liu Bei struggles to maintain his faith and righteousness, his strategist, Pang Tong, attempts to temper his master's concerns with pragmatic advice:

Your words, my lord, are in accord with the principles of heaven. **Military force is not the only important thing—except in a time of chaos** (emphasis added). If you now stubbornly adhere to eternal principles you will never advance an inch. It is necessary to take a practical view: annex the weak and attack the deluded, crush the aggressor and protect the law-abiding. **This is the Way... when the business is settled the righteous may be rewarded and a great country justly ruled** (emphasis added). How can this be a violation of faith? If we do not seize the day, we will end up being seized ourselves by someone else.³⁶

Pang Tong is therefore reasserting the moral validity of the ancient principles, yet points out their lack of value in the real world.³⁷ He and Cao Cao thus affirm the evilness of chaos in accordance with Liu Bei's beliefs, but recognize that only an individual who is willing to violate moral standards can restore order, and consequently be commendable

³⁶ I am using the passage cited by Peter R. Moody Jr. in his analysis of the text, as I find it better articulated and more easily accessible with regards to the discussion at hand. Other translations of may also be found in Moss Roberts' translation (Pantheon Books, 1976. 213.) or C.H. Brewitt-Taylor's translation (*Volume One*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1959, 634.). (Moody Jr., Peter R. "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms and Popular Chinese Political Thought." *The Review of Politics*. 37.2. (1975): 189.)

³⁷ In his study, Moody Jr. suggests that the ethical system breaks down during chaos, as the system "was based upon the concepts of *chung* [zhōng] and *hsiao* [xiào], loyalty and filial piety," principles which become "close to impossible" in the absence of order. (Ibid. 184.)

as an “admirable man.”³⁸ However, it is to be noted that even in times of *luàn*, men are still recognized as retaining autonomy over their own morality, so that they are held responsible for their own actions, especially those that may contribute to the decay of family authority or to the decline of the state; consequently, chaotic circumstances cannot be used to legitimize immoral behavior, as those who attempt to do so will “come to grief.”³⁹

Aside from being a cultural literary jewel, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* sheds light on an important shift in Chinese political thought: the emergence of pragmatism as a realistic counterweight to the moralistic ideals that have been practiced for centuries. Force and moral harmony were now both acknowledged as necessary to maintain a stable empire successfully, where limitations on the use of force were kept in check by the virtues of Confucianism.⁴⁰ The ancient philosophy still remained incredibly relevant, as a safety net that prevented the collapse of the entire system to warfare and *luàn*.

For martial matters, the Chinese turned to *The Art of War (Bīngfǎ)*, an ancient manuscript that a military strategist named Sunzi was believed to have authored sometime between the fifth and sixth century BCE. The pithy document is organized into thirteen chapters, each with an emphasis on a particular aspect of warfare, with invaluable military strategies for combat dispensed in short, bullet-point blurbs. It is often referred to as one of the quintessential texts on military tactics, and its influence has vastly expanded across time and space since its composition. However, it is of utmost importance to underscore the notable absence of a theoretical framework that discusses

³⁸ Ibid. 184-193.

³⁹ Ibid. 182-5.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 197-8.

the justification or morality of warfare. In the opening chapter, Sunzi does tip his hat at the prevailing Chinese traditions, asserting that the art of war must be conducted by the “wisdom, sincerely [*sic*], benevolence, courage, and strictness” of a commander who fights for a sovereign embodying moral law, “[that which] causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger.”⁴¹ The lack of space dedicated to military philosophy suggests that Sunzi may have considered the justification of warfare outside the scope of military leadership,⁴² relying on the divinely chosen emperor to wage battles only in proper situations and with methods that do not violate his own moral codes.⁴³

Nevertheless, *The Art of War* remains highly influential on modern Chinese political strategy, especially in the realm of national security and military affairs. Unlike other combat styles that revolve around martial rules of engagement or grandiose gestures of strength to intimidate one’s opponent, Sunzi’s emphasis was on pragmatism:⁴⁴ early on in the text, he suggests that the ideal outcome of warfare should be “breaking the enemy’s resistance without fighting.”⁴⁵ If combat cannot be avoided, he urges generals to strive

⁴¹ In IV:16, Sunzi writes “The consummate leader cultivates the moral law, and strictly adheres to method and discipline; thus it is in his power to control success.” (Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Trans. Lionel Giles. Simon & Brown, 2011. 4, 13.)

⁴² In X:24, Sunzi discusses the ideal military leader as “the general who advances without coveting fame and retreats without fearing disgrace, **whose only thought is to protect his country and do good service for his sovereign** (emphasis added), [such a general would be] the jewel of the kingdom.”

⁴³ In XII:22-3, Sunzi warns that “a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life. Hence the enlightened ruler is heedful, and the good general full of caution. This is the way to keep a country at peace and an army intact.”

⁴⁴ In XII:17, Sunzi advises generals to avoid ritualized performance, opting instead to “move not unless you see an advantage; use not your troops unless there is something to be gained; fight not unless the position is critical.”

⁴⁵ Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Trans. Lionel Giles. 9.

for rapidity in warfare,⁴⁶ using an inexhaustible combination of direct and indirect tactics to surround, attack, or divide the enemy, as to avoid prolonged costly engagements.⁴⁷ There is little mention of reliance on weaponry; rather, Sunzi advises generals to obtain foreknowledge of the opponent's plans,⁴⁸ and stresses the maintenance of a cohesive army, and using a coordinated singular force to then crush one's adversary.⁴⁹ To accomplish this, Sunzi borrows from the traditional Chinese values of filial piety, likening the act of leading an army to that of ruling an empire. In passage IX:43-5, he instructs generals not to abandon their humanity in their treatment of soldiers, despite the necessary enforcement of discipline and obedience;⁵⁰ the sentiment is later echoed in passage X:25, where Sunzi emphasizes that cultivation of the army's loyalty can only be achieved by "regard[ing] your soldiers as your children."⁵¹

⁴⁶ Much like in Confucianism, Sunzi's military strategies reflect the idea that war and peace are merely temporary states. As one scholar points out, the "Chinese style of Sun Tzu strategy...knows no single events, only patterns reflecting an overall design." (Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 467.)

⁴⁷ It should be noted that Sunzi did not advise destroying an enemy, only to divide and conquer him. In VII:36, he re-emphasizes this point by stating, "When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Do not press a desperate foe too hard."

⁴⁸ Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Trans. Lionel Giles. 44.

⁴⁹ Sunzi stresses the importance of group cohesion in several areas throughout the text, including V:21 "The clever combatant looks to the effects of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals;" VI:14 "We can form a single united body, while the enemy must split up into fractions. Hence there will be a whole pitted against separate parts of a whole, which means that we shall be many to the enemy's few;" VI:17 "[on discussing how divided reinforcements signify weakness in an enemy]... If he sends reinforcements everywhere, he will be weak everywhere;" VII:25 "The host thus forming a single united body, is it impossible either for the brave to advance alone, or for the cowardly to retreat alone. This is the art of handling large masses of men." Ultimately, as Sunzi underscores in XI:34 "the skillful general conducts his army just as though he were leading a single man, willy-nilly, by the hand."

⁵⁰ Sunzi's advice for maintaining the balance between respecting one's men and enforcing obedience is encapsulated in verse IX:45, in which he writes, "If a general shows confidence in his men but always insists on his orders being obeyed, the gain will be mutual."

⁵¹ Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Trans. Lionel Giles. 30-3.

Textually, *The Art of War* reads like a typical manuscript on military tactics: there are no overt differences that especially characterize Sunzi's strategies as being specifically Chinese in nature. However, when put into practice, the disparity becomes much more obvious. A simple analogy suffices to highlight the subtle contrasts when one compares culturally preferred strategy games: chess, for Westerners, and *wéiqí* (also commonly referred to as go) for the Chinese. The term *wéiqí* literally translates as "chess game of surrounding," with each player moving to avoid encirclement by their foe.⁵² Given the Chinese penchant for taking the long view, it thus follows that such a strategy would yield a continuously combative existence, where, as Sunzi cautions in passage VIII:11, the Chinese should not "rely on the likelihood of the enemy not attacking, but rather on the fact that [they] have made [their] position unassailable."⁵³

It was precisely this outlook that came to influence Mao Zedong, a Sunzi disciple, in the shaping of his then inchoate theory of continuous revolution and his strategy to rebuild China as a respectable world power. Mao's seemingly contradictory agendas in the post-1949 period followed the classic Sunzi technique of adopting unpredictable strategies to prevent enemy foresight and defeat.⁵⁴ These actions, though confusing to Western observers, were not haphazardly constructed agendas, but the deliberate results of strategic decision-making by the nascent Chinese Communist Party leadership. In matters of security, the Chinese adopted a plan that would resonate familiarly with scholars of Sunzi's work as well as seasoned *wéiqí* players: "thorough analysis; careful

⁵² Unlike in chess, where victory is secured only through the direct capture of an opponent's king, *wéiqí* requires players to adopt a more sophisticated sense of strategy, as victory can only be achieved by surrounding one's enemy and maintaining control over the majority of the space on the board.

⁵³ Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Trans. Lionel Giles. 26.

⁵⁴ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 145.

preparation; attention to psychological and political factors; quest for surprise; and rapid conclusion.”⁵⁵ Incidentally, as many Western scholars are accustomed to an occidental framework for analyzing the East, they are quick to misinterpret China’s political maneuvers. Throughout the Cold War, China adopted a pragmatic military agenda that focused on strongpoint defense against potential antagonist states, the emphasis being to avoid encirclement by powerful states such as the Soviet Union and United States. The fact that China was woefully ill-equipped to deal with its more muscular opponents was something that Mao would neither admit nor allow his enemies to ascertain as an advantage: his strategy thus successfully employed Sunzi’s favored method of dealing psychological blows to discourage unwelcome aggression.⁵⁶

That being the case, the Western concept of a grand chessboard, the catchphrase popularized by Zbigniew Brzezinski’s eponymous work, does not really apply to China’s approach to its national security affairs, as the Chinese are not in the habit of identifying specific adversaries to checkmate. As has been discussed, China is very much aware that its outdated weaponry systems and inferior military technologies are no match for Western muscle, specifically against the superior strength of the United States. It would be imprudent for China to openly engage in hostilities with other states, as defeat would be sure, swift, and extremely costly. China’s advantage lies in its massive manpower, of which tenacity and cohesion, as cultivated by Confucian virtues, are key. Much like in *wéiqí*, China plays to its strengths by relying on a virtually limitless number of indistinguishable players to secure victory through encirclement of enemy territory and

⁵⁵ Ibid. 188.

⁵⁶ In passage VIII:10, Sunzi writes, “Reduce the hostile chiefs by inflicting damage on them; and make trouble for them, and keep them constantly engaged; hold out specious allurements, and make them rush to any given point.”

exhaustion of its opponent's resources while avoiding a similar fate for itself.⁵⁷ The world, therefore, is not so much China's grand chessboard, as its grand *wéiqí* board, with potentially hostile challengers all around, keeping China on guard and in a state of perpetual combat.

⁵⁷ This is in direct contrast to Western chess, where pieces are individually distinguished and given specific roles within the game to assist in the final goal of capturing the king without regard for other pieces extinguished on either side.

III || NON-INTERVENTION

Despite their differences, Confucianism and *The Art of War* synchronized harmoniously to promote stability and relative peace within Chinese society for many centuries. Conventionally, the former focused on each individual's obligation to practice the appropriate rituals to ensure harmony in the community. However, as one moves up the hierarchy of social roles, the concept transitions seamlessly towards the latter philosophy, from a peasant's filial responsibilities of maintaining order within his household to the emperor's duty of preserving peace within his empire. Historical records reflect the royal adaptation of these Confucian ideals to political agendas, in which emperors focused their attention primarily on safeguarding and advancing their civilization without concerning themselves too much about comingling with their international peers.⁵⁸ The one major overlap between these two major schools of thought, however, stemmed from this glaringly myopic worldview that served only to address society as defined by China's territorial boundaries at the time. Given their nearly simultaneous emergences between the fifth and sixth centuries BCE, the lack of scholarship dedicated to foreign enemies is hardly surprising: the absence of significant military threats from any immediate neighbors coupled with the prevailing Sino-centric attitude enabled a strict focus on purely internal affairs. This is not to say that the Chinese were completely ignorant to the existence of a world external to its borders or even beyond its seas, but these outsiders were viewed as curious barbarians, rather than hostile militants.

And so, as the race for power and territory gained massive momentum in the West, even *wéiqí*-inspired military strategies were unable to safeguard China's territorial

⁵⁸ For a more detailed account on China's conduct of foreign affairs in the pre-1949 period, please review Henry Kissinger's *On China* pp. 32-90.

integrity and prevent forced occupation by outside actors. In fact, China's heretofore lack of meaningful interactions with the outside world likely contributed to its technological inferiority and military backwardness, while the celebrated tenacity of its culture had become somewhat of an Achilles' heel for its slowness to adapt to a rapidly changing global order. The resulting "century of humiliation" (*bǎinián guóchǐ*) by the Western world and Japan, as coined by Communist propagandists in the 1920s, proved to be a bitter pill that the Chinese were forced to swallow, its taste still lingering unpleasantly upon the national palate to this day. Despite the shame, the experience left another lasting legacy especially significant to the development of modern Chinese political culture: a foundation for non-intervention as a principle for China's conduct of international affairs.

After centuries of isolation,⁵⁹ China only very reluctantly opened up to the international arena in the years following the end of World War II. However, the lessons of its past interactions with the outside world had left a deep wound on the spirit of the Chinese people, a sentiment that Mao reiterated with his commitment to national autonomy and self-sufficiency. Even with China's initial reliance on the Soviet Union as an established ally in the emerging ideological battlefield, the relationship quickly crumbled as the partnership began to progress from a simple ideological compatibility towards a more involved geostrategic alliance. The mere suggestion of compromising Chinese sovereignty for the mutual benefit of both parties infuriated Mao: in his memoirs, Khrushchev recalled an incident in 1958 regarding a Soviet proposal to allow

⁵⁹ I use the term "isolation" to convey the overwhelming disinclination of China to engage in international relations with its peers due to the dual dominating influences of Sino-centrism and the culture of self-sufficiency, both of which are remnants of China's long historical traditions. I clarify this to distinguish its usage in this context from the common employment in Western texts, which frequently convey a negative connotation of intentional international seclusion due to inability or lack of desire to cooperate with other states.

Chinese access to Soviet submarine bases in the Arctic Ocean in exchange for Soviet access to China's Pacific ports; Mao responded rather vehemently to the request, telling Khrushchev that, "We've had the British and other foreigners on our territory for years now, and we're not ever going to let anyone use our land for their own purposes again."⁶⁰ Mao's firm stance on preserving his country's territorial integrity eventually evolved into a core value of Chinese political culture, specifically in the realm of military security: "Every country should keep its armed forces on its own territory and no one else's."⁶¹

Mao realized that for China not only to restore itself to its former splendor, but also to garner world recognition and respect for its greatness, his Party would have to focus its efforts on rebuilding the state internally with whatever limited resources were available. Despite his highly unpopular—not to mention extremely casualty-ridden and socioeconomically destructive—efforts to incite continuous revolution, one element of Mao's strategy did emerge as a pragmatic guideline for China's future attitude in international affairs: taking the "long view" in political matters by shifting focus to achieving domestic stability and advancement, without being too preoccupied with external affairs, aside from direct threats to national security.⁶² The logic behind the broader vision stemmed from reciprocity: China would play nice with those who treated

⁶⁰ Khrushchev, Nikita. "Playing for High Stakes." Prepared by Gene Farmer and Jerrold Schecter. *LIFE*. 69.25. (1980): 25.

⁶¹ Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeyeovich. *Khrushchev Remembers*. Trans. Strobe Talbott. Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1974. 260.

⁶² As Kishore Mahbubani points out in his book, taking the "long view" also encompassed not focusing on past humiliations, using previous experiences as learning points for China's future political conduct towards others rather than as justifications for vengeance. (Mahbubani, Kishore. *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistable Shift of Global Power to the East*. New York: Public Affairs, 2008. 222-3.)

it with respect and equality while returning the favor;⁶³ later on in history, in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident, Party ideologist Li Ruihuan reiterated these sentiments to former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger:

Since 1840 the Chinese people have been subjected to foreign bullying; it was a semi-feudal society then... Mao fought all of his life to say that China should be friendly to countries that treat us with equality. In 1949 Mao said “the Chinese people have stood up.” By standing up he meant the Chinese people were going to enjoy equality with other nations. We don’t like to hear that others ask us what to do. But Americans tend to like to ask others to do this or that. The Chinese people do not want to yield to the instructions of others.⁶⁴

Even in the realm of great power politics, China was determined not to let ideological differences block pragmatic cooperation with the opposing side; during a conversation on February 22, 1972, between Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and President Richard Nixon, the former points out, “Of course, the world outlook of our two sides are different, basically different, which we do not cover up. But that should not hinder state relations between our two countries from moving toward normalacy [*sic*].”⁶⁵

To this point, one may look at Chinese participation in the Korean War and Vietnam War as examples of hypocrisy, where Beijing’s rhetoric does not match up with its actions. However, a closer examination of the historical record reveals that the Chinese leadership at the time had exercised extreme restraint to intervene in these

⁶³ In a meeting with Prime Minister Zhou Enlai on February 21, 1972, President Nixon captured this sentiment when he candidly told the Chinese, “We know you believe deeply in your principles, and we believe deeply in our principles. We do not ask you to compromise your principles, just as you would not ask us to compromise ours.” (Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 264.)

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 424.

⁶⁵ United States. The White House. “Memorandum of Conversation: Peking, February 22, 1972, 2:10 p.m.-6:00 p.m.” Washington: 1972.

affairs, only taking actions deemed as necessary responses to foreign compulsion.⁶⁶ During an interview with American journalist Edgar Snow in January 1965, Mao reiterated his focus on managing the internal affairs of his country, noting that “fighting beyond one’s own borders was criminal.”⁶⁷ In the event of a military standoff, he unequivocally stated his intention to contain Chinese actions within its own borders, and that China would not face off with the United States in Vietnam unless otherwise provoked. Even as the two superpowers began contemplating cooperation in Vietnam during the Nixon administration, China remained adamant on retaining room to maneuver autonomously: in conversations with then National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, Mao explicitly refused to “make [China’s] cooperation conditional on the cooperation of others,” opting instead for “parallel strategies [as] the bond would be common convictions, not formal obligations;”⁶⁸ as expected in the spirit of Chinese pragmatism, China’s actions would take its own interests into careful consideration but it would not act under any other formal obligations or on the interests of anyone else.

A collective empirical sample of China’s dedication to its non-interventionist principle lies in its voting record as a permanent member on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), a position it has secured since November 25, 1971. As of early February 2012, China had abstained 119 times on 1726 resolutions and exercised a

⁶⁶ During a conversation with President Nixon in Beijing on February 22, 1972, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai addresses the issue of Chinese action in Korea very candidly: “Why did we send the Chinese peoples volunteers during the Korean War? **Because Truman compelled us** (emphasis added). He sent the Seventh fleet in to [*sic*] the Taiwan Straits so that it wasn’t possible for us to recover Taiwan. What was more, his troops pressed straight toward the boundary of the Yalu River, and we declared at that time that if the American forces pressed toward the Yalu River, although China was newly liberated, we could not stand idly by. So when Truman’s forces came to the Yalu River, **we had to show that what even we say counts** (emphasis added).” (Ibid.)

⁶⁷ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 204-5.

⁶⁸ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 275-81.

negative vote seven times.⁶⁹ Of the seven vetoes, five were cast with an eye to precluding interventionism: specifically in Macedonia, Myanmar, Zimbabwe, the Middle East, and most recently, Syria. In speaking with the United Nations Department of Public Information, Chinese representatives had steadfastly defended their national policy of non-intervention in another country's internal affairs, maintaining that the role of the international community is to provide "constructive assistance" or advice on any issues that do not threaten international peace or security, and that the UN needs to heed the limitations dictated by its Charter and respect each country's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.⁷⁰ As noted by Li Baodong, China's representative on the UNSC since 2010, in the aftermath of a defeated draft resolution regarding violence in Syria in October 2011, China's position on principles of intervention had remained "consistent and firm."⁷¹

Usually, China takes a resolved third-world stance while trying to frustrate Western consensus at the expense of the developing world, often viewing the United

⁶⁹ Comparatively, from December 1971 to August 2006, the United States cast a veto 76 times; the United Kingdom 24 times; France 14 times; and the Soviet Union (later the Russian Federation) 13 times. (Shichor, Yitzhak. "China's Voting Behavior in the U.N. Security Council." *Association for Asian Research*. 31 Oct 2006. 05 Feb 2012. <<http://www.asianresearch.org/articles/2947.html>>.)

⁷⁰ U.N. Security Council, 6711th Session. "Security Council Fails to Adopt Draft Resolution on Syria as Russian Federation, China Veto Text Supporting Arab League's Proposed Peace Plan." (SC/10536). New York: Department of Public Information, News and Media Division. 04 Feb. 2012.; U.N. Security Council, 6627th Session. "Security Council Fails to Adopt Draft Resolution Condemning Syria's Crackdown on Anti-Government Protestors Owing to Veto by Russian Federation, China." (SC/10403). New York: Department of Public Information, News and Media Division. 04 Oct. 2011.; U.N. Security Council, 5933rd Session. "Security Council Fails to Adopt Sanctions Against Zimbabwe Leadership as Two Permanent Members Cast Negative Votes." (SC/9396). New York: Department of Public Information, News and Media Division. 11 Jul. 2008.; U.N. Security Council, 3982nd Session. "Security Council Fails to Extend Mandate of United Nations Preventive Deployment Force in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia." (SC/6648). New York: Department of Public Information, News and Media Division. 25 Feb. 1999.

⁷¹ U.N. Security Council, 6627th Session. (SC/10403). 04 Oct. 2011.

States as its main opponent in the metaphorical UNSC boxing ring.⁷² In the case of gross violations by a state against its people, China did concede that limited intervention may be necessary, albeit reserved for concerned parties and local or regional institutions.⁷³ Though the Chinese have frequently opposed “the arbitrary use of sanctions,” they have never disapproved of the notion entirely, nor have they ever promised allies to prevent the UNSC from imposing them on a member state.⁷⁴ However, the Chinese are still especially sensitive to the authorization of sanctions or the use of force, having expressed concern that international involvement would exacerbate an already grave situation at the expense of innocent people,⁷⁵ rather than the government, as the intended recipient of such punitive actions.⁷⁶ That being said, China does not exercise its veto lightly or in a haphazard manner;⁷⁷ as the statistics demonstrate, more often than not, it chooses

⁷² Chai, Trong R. “Chinese Policy Toward the Third World and the Superpowers in the UN General Assembly 1971-1977: A Voting Analysis.” *International Organization* 33.3. (1979): 400-3.

⁷³ Shichor, Yitzhak. “China’s Voting Behavior in the U.N. Security Council.”

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ China has also expressed disapproval at Western presumptions of speaking on behalf of non-Westerners via their political initiatives in the UN or elsewhere. (Buckley, Chris. “China calls U.S. criticism over Syria ‘totally unacceptable’.” *Reuters*. 27 Feb 2012. 27 Feb 2012. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/27/us-china-syria-idUSTRE81Q0AN20120227>>.)

⁷⁶ In the aftermath of a UNSC meeting in April 2006, the Chinese representative, Wang Guangya was quoted as saying ““Past experience shows that sanctions could not reach the expected results and victimized the civilian population.” (U.N. Security Council, 5423rd Session. “Security Council Imposes Travel, Financial Sanctions on 4 Sudanese, Adopting Resolution 1672 (2006) By 12-0-3.” (SC/8700). New York: Department of Public Information, News and Media Divisions. 25 Apr. 2006.

⁷⁷ A newly minted China exercised its first veto on August 25, 1972 regarding the admission of Bangladesh to the UN, an action that the Chinese have already admitted as being motivated more by myopic interests—in this case, relations with Pakistan—than by traditional Chinese political values. Bangladesh was admitted two years later without any opposition from a severely embarrassed China. Since then, China has restrained its use of the veto for matters it considers to be part of a state’s internal agenda, does not exhibit any immediate threat to international peace or security, or has shown promise or progress for being addressed locally or regionally.

abstention and non-voting to casting a negative vote;⁷⁸ this behavior is meant to send a message to its international peers on China's stance without directly taking sides or alienating allies.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Bailey, Sydney D. "New Light on Abstentions in the UN Security Council." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*. 50.4. (1974): 572.

⁷⁹ At this point, it is necessary to include a brief discussion regarding China's voting behavior on three key pieces of legislation from the UNSC: Resolutions 678 and 1973, as well as defeated draft resolution S/10536. China had abstained from voting on 678 and 1973, both of which had invoked the UN Charter's Chapter VII clause to authorize "all necessary actions" to address and resolve international crises in Iraq and Libya respectively. Though such behavior does not necessarily correspond with China's non-interventionist rhetoric, China's abstention on UNSCR 678 has been widely attributed to its unwillingness to further alienate relations with the West, especially the United States, in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident. In contrast, China had not experienced any major public fallout with the international community in 2011-2012, prompting questions as to why China chose to abstain from voting on UNSCR 1973 while vetoing—and consequently strongly alienating Western allies—the draft resolution on Syria in February 2012. The supposed "inconsistency" has a rather logical line of reasoning, based on Chinese rhetoric following UNSCR 1973 and its inherent geopolitical concerns. Foreign ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu commented on the abstention in a statement, saying "[China] oppose[s] the use of force in international relations and have some serious reservations with part of the resolution," urging the UN to exercise restraint, and to respect the sovereignty and integrity of Libya under the its Charter and international laws. (Dasgupta, Saibal. "China opposed UN resolution on Libya." *The Times of India*. 18 Mar 2011. 10 Feb 2012. <http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-03-18/china/29144182_1_libya-resolution-countries>.) Though China has not released official statements explicitly expressing displeasure at how the West—via the UN—has dealt with the situation in Libya, its vetoes for both draft resolutions on Syria is a clear indication as to its stance on UN action thus far—presumably, it is unhappy that the UN has overstepped its Charter limitations and once again, demonstrated an inability to restrain itself when intervening in the internal issues of a member state. Excessive UN meddling in Syria also creates a prominent geostrategic concern for China, as the latter views the Middle Eastern state as a gateway to Iran, which then presents a foothold for Western powers to gain military influence in the Eastern sphere to directly challenge China and Russia. Though China had numerous interests and investments in Libya, the North African state presented less of geopolitical liability than Syria and thus proved an apt "testing ground," so to speak, to assess the integrity of the Western word, via UNSCR 1973. With Syria, it seems that China is unwilling to risk a strategic misstep by inviting Western powers into its backyard, thus choosing to veto the drafted resolutions. It is, however, willing to pursue alternative initiatives for peace, including a presidential statement acknowledging the political transition in Syria and UNSC commitment to end the violence there, as necessary. (Besheer, Margaret. "UN Security Council Backs Envoy's Peace Plan for Syria." *Voice of America*. 22 Mar 2012. 22 Mar 2012. <<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/middle-east/UN-Security-Council-Endorses-Syria-Peace-Plan-143643006.html>>; CNN Wire Staff. "China issues framework for settling Syrian crisis." *CNN*. 03 Mar 2012. 03 Mar 2012. <<http://www.cnn.com/2012/03/03/world/meast/syria-china/>>.) Though various news sources reported on the "disgust" of Western states following the veto on February 4, 2012, one Arab news source, *Jadaliyya*, presented a contrasting list of the American vetoes during the same period (1972-2011), highlighting some similar atrocities that the United States had negatively cast aside during previous UNSC meetings, despite vehemently castigating China for its decision on S/10536. (Haddad, Bassam. "US on UN Veto: 'Disgusting', 'Shameful', 'Deplorable', 'a Travesty' ... Really?" *Jadaliyya*. 05 Feb 2012. 05 Feb 2012. <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4237/us-on-un-veto_disgusting-shameful-deplorable-a-tra>.)

In November of 1989, Deng Xiaoping, former leader of the Party, proposed his vision for “the establishment of a new international political order,” consisting of “five principles of peaceful coexistence,” one of which would officially establish non-intervention in the domestic affairs of another state as a core principle of foreign policy.⁸⁰ As Western outrage over Tiananmen reintroduced fears of a new ideological battle with China following Soviet demise, newly elected leader Jiang Zemin calmly reiterated China’s resolute principles, assuring the United States, “We do not export revolution. But the social system of each country must be chosen by that country.”⁸¹ As China began to emerge prominently as a global financial heavy-hitter, it did not allow its economic success to interfere with its political agenda, believing that the positive results of its development strategy will naturally attract allies and admirers. Of Deng’s advice to future generations of Chinese leaders,⁸² two points are especially pertinent to this crucial aspect of Chinese foreign policy: (4) *tāoguāng yǎnghuì* – avoid the limelight; and (5) *shànyú shǒuzhuō* – keep a low profile. In this way, China would assuredly strengthen its relations with all of its global partners without simultaneously alienating any potential allies. Even as China continues to expand its global influence, it still demonstrates little interest in shaping global civilization, opting instead to focus on advancing Chinese civilization.⁸³

⁸⁰ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 427.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 451.

⁸² Deng Xiaoping’s famous twenty-eight characters, as translated by Kishore Mahbubani, refer to Deng’s vision for China’s development: 1) *lěngjìng guānchá* – observe and analyze [developments] calmly; 2) *chénzhuó yìngfù* – deal [with changes] patiently and confidently; 3) *wēnzhù zhènjiǎo* – secure [our own] position; 4) *tāoguāng yǎnghuì* – conceal [our] capabilities and avoid the limelight; 5) *shànyú shǒuzhuō* – be good at keeping a low profile; 6) *juébù dāngtóu* – never become a leader; and 7) *yòusuǒ zuòwéi* – strive to make achievements. (Mahbubani, Kishore. *The New Asian Hemisphere*. 223-4.)

⁸³ In a separate article, Mahbubani observes that, “Each time a new problem surfaces, China looks for advantage in it, assuming that it must adapt to the world, not shape the world as it wishes.” (Mahbubani, Kishore. “Smart Power, Chinese Style.” *The American Interest Magazine*. Mar/Apr 2008. 1 Feb 2012. <<http://www.the-american-interest.com/article-bd.cfm?piece=406>>.)

IV || GEO-STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

From the various notable moments that punctuate China’s multi-millennial history, most scholars agree that the revolution of 1949 is the single most significant event in its contemporary historical period, as the collection of tumultuous internal changes played a pivotal role in propelling China’s political culture towards a new modern age domestically and abroad. However, while the government endured dramatic changes to its dynastic legacy and methods of governance, including a complete reformatting of its leadership system, the fundamental values of Chinese political culture remained largely intact, merely undergoing an adaptive facelift for China’s modern era. Of China’s various historical institutions, three have been identified as salient pillars for the development of its political culture: social traditions, military philosophies, and the principle of non-intervention. While it may be convenient to relegate the study of such ideologies to the realm of esoteric academic inquiry, it is essential to have at least a basic grasp of these concepts so that one may formulate a new theoretical foundation much more suitable for the observation and analysis of China’s political conduct. Therefore, the latter half of this study will shift focus to the application of these conventional values to several aspects of modern China’s political agenda—specifically in the realms of its geopolitical security,⁸⁴ its gradual evolution towards “democracy with Chinese characteristics,” and its so-called “charm offensive” to establish international legitimacy—and the implications that its policies may have, both on the domestic level and within the international sphere.

⁸⁴ In Western scholarship, the term *geopolitics* stems from the Halford J. Mackinder’s original theory from the early 20th century, referring to a territory-based strategy for Western military domination of Eurasia while curtailing Russian and Chinese influences within the region. However, in this study, I deviate from the Mackinderian usage, and use the term simply to convey a military and/or political control of geographic space.

China's debut in the postwar era occurred at a crucial moment, as the traditional balance of power was expanding towards new frontiers on either side. Though it had no victorious bragging rights from the war, China's copious amounts of territory and manpower, combined with a radical change in ideology, gave it the makings of a formidable foe in the new world order. However, fresh off the heels of a stunning victory against the Guómíndǎng (GMD),⁸⁵ the Party prioritized its focus not so much on securing global influence as it did on restoring internal stability—in accordance with classic Confucian principles⁸⁶—and warding off potential threats on its periphery by establishing international credibility.⁸⁷ Though the moniker of the nascent war may have referred to the absence of direct military confrontation between the major superpowers, China was not ignorant to the reality that proxy wars were being waged by the United States and the Soviet Union around the world. Being a prominent neighbor of the USSR put China in a precarious position, both with its predominant ideological ally and enemy; thus, China's main geopolitical concern⁸⁸ has always been, and continues to be, avoiding

⁸⁵ For an insightful discussion on the geopolitics of the Party during the revolution, please refer to Jieli Li's study, "Geopolitics of the Chinese Communist Party in the Twentieth Century." (*Sociological Perspectives*. 36.4. (1993): 317-24.)

⁸⁶ In *The Analects* XIII:13, Confucius notes, "Once a man has contrived to put himself aright, he will find no difficulty at all in filling any government post. But if he cannot put himself aright, how can he hope to succeed in putting others aright?" As Arthur Waley comments, this verse employs a play on words with *zhèng*, which can mean both "to straighten, to put right" and "to govern." (Confucius. *The Analects of Confucius*. Trans. Arthur Waley. 174.)

⁸⁷ The Party was well aware of the fact that it was unquestionably ill-equipped to confront any of its adversaries directly, that its only means to "challenge the prevailing international order [was by] ideological means." (Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 99.)

⁸⁸ For the purposes of this study, an abbreviated selection of China's security interests are highlighted to demonstrate the cohesiveness of its geopolitical strategy with its traditional political values. Prominent areas of concern that are not discussed extensively include India, Japan, the Middle East, South Asia, South Korea, Southeast Asia, and Tibet.

encirclement⁸⁹ by potentially hostile powers, specifically the United States and the Soviet Union (and subsequently, the Russian Federation in the post-Cold War period).

Though the United States is not usually identified as a colonizing power in the traditional sense of the term, its quest for global influence in conjunction with its viable network of military and economic alliances has presented a familiar threat to many regional powers, including China. In the immediate postwar period, the United States had maintained a dominating presence in China's backyard, particularly along the eastern and southern borders, frustrating Chinese attempts to expand its influence throughout these areas.⁹⁰ While both sides have made overt reassurances not to invade the other side directly,⁹¹ tensions remained high as the Americans maintained close military ties with Japan, South Korea,⁹² and the Philippines, amongst others.⁹³ Since 1949, Beijing's

⁸⁹ A common misinterpretation amongst Western and Chinese strategists that has been especially prominent in the postwar era occurs "when the Chinese... [encounter] the Western concept of deterrence [and] a vicious circle [results]: acts conceived as defense in China may be treated as aggressive by the outside world; deterrent moves by the West may be interpreted in China as encirclement." (Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 134.)

⁹⁰ Li, Jieli. "Geopolitics of the Chinese Communist Party in the Twentieth Century." 324.

⁹¹ As Chairman Mao relayed to President Nixon during their secret meeting in February of 1972, "At the present time, the question of aggression from the United States or aggression from China is relatively small... a state of war does not exist between our two countries. You want to withdraw some of your troops back on your soil; ours do not go abroad." (USC-US China Institute. "Memorandum of Conversation: Peking, February 21, 1972, 2:50-3:55 p.m." 02 Feb 2012. <<http://china.usc.edu/ShowArticle.aspx?articleID=2248>>.) The Shanghai Communiqué, which summarized the meeting between the American and Chinese leaders, reaffirmed these principles with an article that read, "Neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony." (U.S. Department of State. Office of the Historian. "Joint Statement Following Discussions with Leaders of the People's Republic of China." Shanghai, February 27, 1972. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*. XVII, China 1969-1972, Document 203.)

⁹² Joint military exercises with South Korea involving simulated war-like events have been conducted annually since 1994. ("South Korea and US to hold joint military exercise." *The Independent*. 11 Apr 2001. 20 Feb 2012. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/south-korea-and-us-to-hold-joint-military-exercise-753360.html>>.)

⁹³ For a more detailed discussion regarding the extent of joint military exercises being conducted by the United States in the Asia-Pacific sphere, please refer to Wen Jiabo's essay, entitled "Joint Military Exercises: The World Knows America's True Intentions" (Trans. Brian Tawney. *Watching America*. 13

greatest challenge had always been pecuniary in nature, centered around figuring out a balance between expensive geopolitical expenditures and crucial internal developments;⁹⁴ as a result, the Chinese leadership relied on centuries of traditional pragmatic wisdom to guide the formation of its foreign policy and security agenda. Military threats were prioritized accordingly based on proximity to its borders,⁹⁵ likelihood to occur within a specified time frame,⁹⁶ and severity of the perceived danger; China was, and remains, especially sensitive to tension along its western and southern borders as well as across the Taiwan Strait.

Taiwan remains one of China's most enduring geostrategic challenges, its ambiguous status as a state notwithstanding.⁹⁷ Throughout conversations with U.S.

Feb 2012. 13 Feb 2012. <<http://watchingamerica.com/News/142767/joint-military-exercises-the-world-knows-america's-true-intentions/>>.) and Chinese Military's article from February 7, 2012 ("US-led Asia-Pacific's largest joint military exercise to prove safety in China." *Chinese Military*. 7 Feb 2012. 13 Feb 2012. <<http://www.cnmilitary.info/us-led-asia-pacifics-largest-joint-military-exercise-to-prove-safety-in-china/>>.)

⁹⁴ Li, Jieli. "Geopolitics of the Chinese Communist Party in the Twentieth Century." 325.

⁹⁵ A prime historical example of this occurred in 1860, when the Chinese were engaged in hostilities with the British and the Russians in the aftermath of internal rebellions in Taiping and Nien. The British were aggressive in their pursuit for a permanent embassy in Beijing, though the Chinese had major reservations regarding foreign presence on their soil. However, despite the insistence of the British, the Chinese de-prioritized the Anglo threat, opting to focus instead on their northern neighbor, believed to be "aiming to nibble away our territory like a silk worm." (Fairbank, John K. and Ssü-yü Têng. *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923*. Harvard University Press, 1954. 48.)

⁹⁶ The Chinese commitment to the long view includes avoiding time pressure: in *The Analects* XIII:17, Confucius advises "Do not try to hurry things. Ignore minor considerations. If you hurry things, your personality will not come into play. If you let yourself be distracted by minor considerations, nothing important will ever get finished" (Confucius. *The Analects of Confucius*. Trans. Arthur Waley. 175.) They are not inclined to make hasty decisions, opting to make comprehensive observations to discern long-term patterns and behaviors, which are then used to determine actions in the short run. Time is not measured in "political quantities", such as by length of administrations or the lifespan of a certain leader; therefore, it is less imperative for a particular goal to be achieved right this moment, so long as it will be achieved at some point in the future.

⁹⁷ According to Article 2 of the "Law of the PRC on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone" adopted by the People's Congress in February 1992, China recognizes Taiwan as a legal entity of Beijing's territory. (Ministry of National Defense. The People's Republic of China. "Law of the PRC on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone." 20 Apr 2006. 13 Oct 2011. <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Database/Regulations/2006-04/20/content_4007735.htm>.)

leadership in the early 1970s, Mao and Zhou repeatedly dismissed the Taiwanese issue at hand, telling the Americans in 1973 that, “We can do without Taiwan for the time being, and let it come after one hundred years.”⁹⁸ However, Taiwan’s insistence on sovereignty, spurred in part by persistent resentment following the revolution, and in part by American determination to establish a rivaling sphere of influence in the area,⁹⁹ has created significant geopolitical concerns for the Party. Repeated U.S. military engagements in the Taiwan Straits (specifically during the three crises of 1954-5, 1958, and 1995-6 respectively) have undoubtedly intensified Chinese determination to maintain political control, if not only in name, over the island nation. For the past six decades, Beijing has been content with granting Taipei a flexible—albeit conditional—right to self-

⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State. Office of the Historian. “Memorandum of Conversation: Beijing, November 12, 1973, 5:40-8:25 p.m.” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*. XVIII, China 1973-1976, Document 58.

⁹⁹ As of January 1, 1979, the United States has agreed to recognition of Beijing as the sole legal government of one China, but insists on maintaining relations with Taiwan within that context (per the second joint communiqué between the two countries). However, relations between the three countries have remained persistently rocky, hindering complete normalization on all three fronts. The United States has consistently declared its determination to oversee a peaceful resolution for the contending debate over sovereignty between China and Taiwan, in spite of Mao’s predictions for a violent conflict between the latter two sometime in the future. The Chinese have not reacted positively to U.S. involvement in cross-strait affairs, since they see the issue as being domestic thus not warranting international engagement. Though the United States argues that its interactions with Taiwan have been in accord with the Taiwan-Relations Act of 1979 and do not violate the tenets of the third joint communiqué, signed on August 17, 1982, the unofficial relationship between the two countries have highly irritated Beijing, especially with regards to continued U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. Per the U.S. Department of State’s country profile on Taiwan, “the Taiwan Relations Act continues to provide the legal basis for the unofficial relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan, and enshrines the U.S. commitment to assisting Taiwan maintain [*sic*] its defense capability,” raising Chinese suspicions regarding the euphemisms describing what seems to be a reversion to a military alliance between the United States and Taiwan against China; if this is indeed the case, this would be a gross violation of Chinese sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the conditions for normalization of relations jointly agreed to by both states via the communiqués. The USDOS profile also cites specific statistics on weapons acquisition between the United States and Taiwan, claiming that American intent, in January 2010, to “sell Taiwan \$6.4 billion worth of various defensive weapons, including Blackhawk helicopters and Patriot missiles, and... an additional \$5.8 billion in September 2011” was “consistent with Taiwan’s reliance on the U.S. for major weapons systems.” (U.S. Department of State. Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. “Background Note: Taiwan.” 08 Feb 2012. 21 Feb 2012. <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35855.htm>>.)

government, much like its stance towards Hong Kong since 1997.¹⁰⁰ However, as long as the United States continues to be active (and at times, with bellicose overtones) in the area, it would be impractical for China to recognize Taiwan as a sovereign state: an American-Taiwanese alliance would be virtually guaranteed, as the smaller country would presumably seek protection from potential Chinese bullying from the world's sole hegemon,¹⁰¹ presenting a severe threat to China only 140 miles from its borders; this would only exacerbate an already menacing American presence in the Asian-Pacific region. Such a move would be extremely detrimental to China's *wéiqí* strategy, as it would complete the American encirclement on the eastern front.¹⁰² As a result, to this day, Beijing and Taipei continue to engage in an incessant jostling for international legitimacy.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ An article by Taipei-based journalist Jens Kastner in the *Asia Times* reveals some of the outstanding issues regarding granting Taiwan status as a Special Administrative Region, under Deng Xiaoping's "one country, two systems" doctrine. (Kastner, Jens. "China blocks Hong Kong-Taiwan embrace." *Asia Times Online*. 16 Feb 2012. 16 Feb 2012. <<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/NB16Ad01.html>>.)

¹⁰¹ In a candid conversation with Henry Kissinger, former Chinese President Jiang Zemin voiced his doubts on "whether China and the U.S. can find common language and resolve the Taiwan question," acknowledging his past remarks "that **if Taiwan were not under U.S. protection** (emphasis added), [China] would have been able to liberate it." (Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 484.)

¹⁰² In the post-Cold War period, scholars generally agree that the United States has become China's greatest adversary politically and economically, as it maintains various military alliances with China's neighboring regions, including Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, and, in an economic capacity, Russia. (Sheives, Kevin. "China Turns West: Beijing's Contemporary Strategy Towards Central Asia." *Pacific Affairs*. 79.2. (2006): 219.)

¹⁰³ A prominent example of this rivalry is through claiming bragging rights for emerging Chinese cultural icons, such as the U.S. basketball player Jeremy Lin or international fashion designer Jason Wu. As there have not yet been many prominent Asians of Chinese or Taiwanese descent that have attained worldwide megastardom, cultural clashes inevitably occur during such rare occasions. Especially relevant to this discussion is Taiwan's ambiguous status, which it struggles to secure by seeking international recognition of its citizens' achievements, especially in the sports, arts, and entertainment field. (Mozur, Paul and Hsu, Jenny W. "China, Taiwan Both Lay Claim to Jeremy Lin." *The Wall Street Journal*. 15 Feb 2012. 15 Feb 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204792404577225010369633998.html?mod=googlenews_wsj>; "Fashion designer Wu credits Taiwan for his success." *Taiwan Today*. 08 Oct 2010. 15 Feb 2012. <<http://www.taiwantoday.tw/ct.asp?xItem=121416&ctNode=445>>.)

Another crucial geopolitical pivot point is in the Central Asian theatre, an area that China has previously shown limited interest due to its instability, internal issues, as well as its proximity to the USSR during the Cold War era. However, in the aftermath of Soviet collapse, China has shown significant interest in the area for predominantly geo-strategic and geo-economic reasons. China's nearly 2,100-mile border with three Central Asian states on its western side is of notable significance, as China's western provinces have traditionally been riddled with turbulence, due to ethno-political instability, and more recently, economic disparities resulting from uneven levels of development throughout the country in the postwar period. Of utmost concern have been the separatist sentiments that have arisen due to increasing influences of Pan-Turkic nationalism in neighboring states,¹⁰⁴ which Beijing point to as instigators for Uighur unrest in its northwestern Xinjiang province. The persistent volatility of the region has also proved counterproductive to the Party's development plans for its western provinces, as the ongoing violence acts as an active deterrent for potential investors and tourists. An additional concern has emerged since the 2001 War on Terror, as the United States, using the international legitimacy it secured post-9/11, began to pursue an aggressive campaign for its presence in Central Asia, predominantly through the establishment of military bases.¹⁰⁵ From China's perspective, U.S. meddling disrupts a lot of the goodwill

¹⁰⁴ As Kevin Sheives notes in his study, many of the Uighur from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan offer a significant measure of moral support for their Xinjiang brethren, relying primarily on kinship connections. The Central Asian Uighur diaspora communities also rally international support to pressure the Chinese government to allow greater Uighur autonomy in Xinjiang. (Sheives, Kevin. "China Turns West: Beijing's Contemporary Strategy Towards Central Asia." 209.)

¹⁰⁵ Some of the Central Asian states, notably Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, have attempted to rid their countries of U.S. military presence. However, in most cases, the United States has used financial incentives, such as doubled or trebled financial aid in exchange for retaining their bases in these countries. In July 2005, a presumably Uzbek-led motion (also called the "Astana declaration") established a timeline for the United States to remove their troops, an action that the Americans, at the

measures taken by the Chinese (via the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, or SCO, to be discussed in more detail later in this section) by bolstering Central Asian suspicion and opposition against Russia, China, and Iran;¹⁰⁶ especially irritating are American expectations of being the “ultimate arbiter” of regional affairs in an area the Chinese consider to be in their backyard.¹⁰⁷ While Washington has repeatedly assured Beijing that it has no desire for a permanent military presence in the region, the Chinese view the American presence as a formidable threat to its military security, via encirclement on the western front.¹⁰⁸

In lieu of military force, China has opted for multilateral cooperation¹⁰⁹ with the Central Asian states to tackle the issues of instability in the region, often referred to as the

time, had mistakenly attributed to Chinese and Russian displeasure. (Ibid. 220-1.) Despite a forced eviction in 2005, U.S. troops were allowed to resend troops to Uzbekistan in 2008. (“US troops returning to Uzbek base.” *BBC News*. 06 Mar 2008. 02 Nov 2011. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7280538.stm>>.). In November 2011, Kyrgyzstan’s newly elected president, Almazbek Atambayev stated that his country will not renew the lease for the American military base at Manas Airport when it expires in 2014. (Schwartz, Michael. “Kyrgyzstan Says United States’ Manas Air Base Will Close.” *The New York Times*. 01 Nov 2011. 02 Nov 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/02/world/asia/kyrgyzstan-says-united-states-manas-air-base-will-close.html?_r=1>.)

¹⁰⁶ Chung, Chien-peng. “The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China’s Changing Influence in Central Asia.” *The China Quarterly*. 180. (2004): 997.

¹⁰⁷ Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York: Basic Books, 1997. 123-4.

¹⁰⁸ The Chinese are acutely aware of the United States’ strategic interest to destabilize the Party regime, potentially via ethno-religious conflicts in China, since Beijing has consistently frustrated the progress of the global democratic movement via various channels, such as UNSC voting, while Washington has made nondemocratic regime change a core principle of its foreign policy agenda. As Nyima Tsering, China’s Deputy Governor of Tibet points out, “Some people with insidious aims use religion to carry out activities to overthrow, to split China. Such things do happen. So we must heighten our vigilance. If you use religion as a cover to try to split China or harm national security, then you’re breaking the law. It’s not allowed.” Therefore, conflicts in Xinjiang, as well as strong separatist sentiments and unrest in Tibet, provide alluring opportunities for covert American action to undermine Party rule. (“Freedom and Justice.” *China From the Inside*.” Dir. Jonathan Lewis. Documentary. KQED and Granada Television, 2007.)

¹⁰⁹ There are several advantages for China to opt for multilateral cooperation rather than unilateral action on the issue. Firstly, securing support from its Central Asian neighbors allows China to relax its military commitments in the region, thus allaying threats of Chinese aggression to the other states while simultaneously easing its defense expenditures in the area. Secondly, working with the SCO also affords

“three evil forces of terrorism, separatism, and extremism” (*kǒngbù zhǔyì, fēnliè zhǔyì yǔ jíduān zhǔyì de sān gǔ xié’è shìlì*).¹¹⁰ In 2001, China spearheaded the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization¹¹¹ presumably to expand its national foreign policy regarding the “three evil forces” into a multilateral security strategy with several shared goals in the Central Asian region: regime stability, reduction in ethnic conflict, maintenance of territorial integrity, and economic development. Despite its underlying framework, the SCO was touted as a new form of multilateral cooperation, based on an “open, functional, interest-based” coalition, rather than the outdated European style of a closed, identity-based and ideologically driven society.¹¹² The SCO’s so-called “Shanghai spirit”¹¹³ (*Shànghǎi jīngshén*) and “new regionalism” (*xīn qūyù zhǔyì*) outlook,

China a sense of legitimacy in dealing with violence in Xinjiang province; presumably, should tensions escalate to conflict, China would be able to rely on a cooperative military endeavor rather than unilateral actions, which are bound to arouse close scrutiny and skeptical misinterpretation by regional powers and international observers alike. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, a multilateral framework allows China to maintain its geopolitical interests in the area simultaneously without intimidating its neighbors with its “peaceful rise” (*héping juéqǐ*, later renamed “peaceful development”—*hépin fāzhǎn*—in 2004); specifically, working with the SCO would allow China to avoid alienating U.S. interests in the area and diminish fears of a “China threat.” (Sheives, Kevin. “China Turns West: Beijing’s Contemporary Strategy Towards Central Asia.” 205-14, 221.)

¹¹⁰ Xinhua News Agency. “SCO Cooperation to Combat ‘Three Evil Forces’.” *China Internet Information Center*. 22 Sept 2006. 02 Feb 2012. <<http://www.china.org.cn/english/2006/Sep/181910.htm>>.

¹¹¹ The SCO was an expansion of a previous group known as the “Shanghai Five;” consisting of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and China, the group had first convened on April 26, 1996. Its intent was to provide a forum in which to discuss military matters, specifically to address the potential territorial and geopolitical ambitions of a strengthening China in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse. By the third meeting in July 1998, the member states had expanded the group’s political platform to include regional issues such as “[combating] ethnic separatism, religious fundamentalism, international terrorism, arms-smuggling, drug trafficking, and other cross-border crimes,” paving the way for the eventual creation of the SCO. (Chung, Chien-peng. “The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China’s Changing Influence in Central Asia.” 990.)

¹¹² Chung, Chien-peng. “The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China’s Changing Influence in Central Asia. 993.

¹¹³ Professor Lu Zhongwei eloquently captures the “Shanghai spirit” with his five C’s: confidence, communication, cooperation, co-existence, and common interest. (Ibid. 991.)

as coined by the Party's *People's Daily* (*Rénmín rìbào*) newspaper,¹¹⁴ aptly summarized the innovative trend towards alliances based on mutual respect and commonalities while setting aside differences. Thus, the organization clearly parallels China's traditional policies for non-interference and respect for state sovereignty.

Another prominent element of China's geopolitical strategy is acquisition of and unhindered access to natural resources, spurred on by its incredible growth rate in recent decades. Traditionally, it has relied on the Middle East, Russia, Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia for its energy, with the former supplying the Chinese with as much as 62 percent of its demands.¹¹⁵ However, due to regime instability and erupting violence in the Middle East, coupled with historical tension with Russia,¹¹⁶ China has turned to Central Asia as an alternative energy supplier, especially Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan;¹¹⁷ hence, organizations such as the SCO also help to protect China's economic interests in the area and maintain its relations with other member states. It is also precisely for this reason that the American presence in the area is so irritating to the Chinese: not only has the United States, in addition to Russia, become a serious regional resource competitor, it also deprives China of a valuable alternative to American dominance of sea-lanes from the Persian Gulf to Malacca Straits. Similarly, U.S. intervention in the Asian-Pacific

¹¹⁴ As cited by Chien-peng Chung's study. (Ibid.)

¹¹⁵ Sheives, Kevin. "China Turns West: Beijing's Contemporary Strategy Towards Central Asia." 214.

¹¹⁶ China's reservations about Russia also stem from the latter's warming relations with the United States. In addition, like the Americans, the Russians have troops present in Central Asia, negating the necessity for using the SCO as a cover for military action within the area. Russian involvement in NATO also allows the Russians to act independently of the UNSC, a privilege also shared by the Americans but not extended to the Chinese. (Chung, Chien-peng. "The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's Changing Influence in Central Asia." 1005-6.)

¹¹⁷ For an extended discussion on China's energy strategy in Central Asia, please refer to Kevin Shieves' study, pp. 214-9.

dispute over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea intrudes on China's interests in the area, including access to shipping lanes, oil and gas reserves, and rich fishing grounds, as well as the desire to resolve the issue via one-on-one negotiations with those also laying claim to the islands and the seawaters surrounding them.¹¹⁸

One of the ways in which China has responded to increased American participation in Asian-Pacific affairs is by increasing its armed forces and naval power,¹¹⁹ an agenda which has alarmed U.S. policymakers as well as China's smaller neighbors. However, several factors contribute to the unlikelihood of China's ascension as a belligerent military power. As mentioned earlier, China's super-speed development plans have not been easy given their enormous costs; even with the tremendous economic statistics that China has been commanding in recent decades, the sheer size of the country, both in terms of territory and demographics, not to mention the scope and exigency of long-overdue modernizations and internal advancements, rapidly and exponentially multiplies its expenditures. Of the Four Modernizations (*sì gè xiàndàihuà*) proposed by then Premier Zhou Enlai—agriculture, industry, national defense, science and technology—it was the last to be addressed and developed by the Party, demonstrating their prioritization of economic development.¹²⁰ Hence, China's capacity

¹¹⁸ The United States justifies its involvement in the South China Sea debates on the grounds that the disputes are “crucial for maritime trade.” (Jacobs, Andrew. “Dispute Over Bare Islands Underscores Philippines’ Rocky Relations With China.” *The New York Times*. 15 Nov 2011. 15 Nov 2011. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/16/world/asia/philippines-navigates-rocky-relations-with-china.html?pagewanted=all>>.)

¹¹⁹ Matthew L. Duchinsky's detailed analysis regarding the motivations behind the modernization and expansion of the People's Liberation Army Navy provides a rich source of empirical data that corroborates the unlikelihood of Chinese aspirations to develop an aggressive naval force. (“The People's Liberation Army Navy: Motivations, Modernization, & Operational Expansion.” (2008): Unpublished manuscript. Washington University in St. Louis.)

¹²⁰ Chou, En-lai. “Report on the Work of the Government” *Documents of the First Session of the Fourth National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China*. Foreign Language Press, 1975. Accessed online 23 Feb 2012 via Zhou Enlai Internet Archive. *Marxists Internet Archive*, Feb 2004.

for military expansion is first and foremost restrained by its limited budget. Even with China's annual increase in its defense budget—12.7 percent in 2011¹²¹—it would be exceptional if Chinese military capacities and technologies should seek to match even half of American capabilities in the near future. Without the geographic advantage of the United States, China's military aspirations are also kept in check by wary neighbors, especially Russia and India, thus further limiting its potential for massive growth beyond self-defense capabilities. Additionally, the presence of American troops on all sides, along with sole U.S. naval dominance, serves as a deterrent for ambitious expansion. Similarly, China also has no experience of modern combat, in contrast with the perennial military experiences of the United States, such as the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, and more recently, Libya. As a result, not only is the PLA chock full of Soviet antiques that defy modernization, the Chinese are not yet well-versed in military technologies to be able to develop modern equipment without Russian or American scientific knowledge and assistance.¹²² Therefore, it can be reasoned that China's military expansion is not intended for aggression but serves four core purposes: firstly, to update and modernize its forces so that China may defend its territorial claims and put down internal rebellions without foreign interference;¹²³ secondly, to deter potential external belligerents or to be

<<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/zhou-enlai/1975/01/13.htm>>; Dibb, Paul. "Two geopolitical fallacies: the rise of China and the inevitable decline of America." Lecture. Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. 5 Sep 2011.

¹²¹ Office of the Secretary of Defense. "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China." (2011). 41.

¹²² Dibb, Paul. "Two geopolitical fallacies: the rise of China and the inevitable decline of America." Lecture.

¹²³ Scobell, Andrew. "Chinese Army Building in the Era of Jiang Zemin." The Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. (2000): 1-2.

prepared for a martial response to outside aggression;¹²⁴ thirdly, to secure Chinese access to maritime trade routes and natural sea resources; and finally, to bolster its status as a respectable global power.¹²⁵

Some analysts have speculated that China will use its newfound muscle to sway opinions in its favor or to coerce others into accommodating or even prioritizing Chinese interests before their own. While increased might would undoubtedly afford China more flexibility and room to maneuver in its negotiations with others, China's rhetoric and political conduct thus far has revealed a different trend in its policymaking. Chinese relations with North Korea are a prime example of the Party's restraint in utilizing military options for negotiation purposes. Despite persistent rumors that continue to misgauge the level of camaraderie between the two sides, China's has consistently approached the North Korean question as a part of its geopolitical strategy in the Northeast Asian corridor. Specifically, Beijing fears the collapse of Pyongyang, which would not only trigger a refugee nightmare for the former and regional instability for the latter; it would most likely result in reunification with the South. Given South Korea's strong ties with the United States, a single Korean state would essentially place the

¹²⁴ This point alone may be highlighted as one of the most important motivations behind China's focus on strengthening its armed forces and military capacities. During early conversations between the United States and China in the 1970s, both sides were unable to reach a compromise on the Taiwan issue; on the one hand China was convinced that military confrontation between the two would be a future inevitability, while the United States was determined to avoid armed conflict across the Taiwan Strait. Despite reassuring rhetoric from the Americans, Washington's continued arms sales and friendly security relations with Taipei have not sat well with Beijing. Similarly, though cross-strait relations have warmed, especially with the 2008 election of a pro-Chinese president, Ma Ying-jeou, both sides continue to engage in provocative invasion simulation exercises, as if in anticipation for a future proxy war between the China and the United States (via Taiwan).

¹²⁵ As a congressional report notes, PRC Defense Minister Liang Guanglie had commented in December 2010 that "making the country prosperous and making the armed forces strong are two major cornerstones for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." ("Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China." 9.)

Americans at China's doorstep.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, China still actively encourages a multilateral approach to international concerns regarding North Korea's nuclear proliferation programs, and, since 1995, has been vehemently denying allegations of a secret alliance between the two, in which Beijing would immediately come to Pyongyang's defense in the event of a war; as one Korean scholar notes, "China now places more value on national interest, over alliances blinded by ideology."¹²⁷

Since the Party's assumption of leadership, prominent Party members have consistently reiterated China's disinclination to become a global superpower,¹²⁸ seeking equality with and respect from its sovereign peers. Despite Western skepticism, this is a logical progression of the Confucian ideal of social harmony, where each state does its part to preserve the international peace without trying to outmaneuver one another in a brawn-based game for global domination;¹²⁹ the end result would be China's dream of a multi-polar world. Furthermore, its strong commitment to non-intervention actively discourages potential abuse of military power; however, it will not hesitate to use military instruments to prevent and deter encirclement as well as outside interference in its

¹²⁶ China does take advantage of its great power status as well as its friendship with North Korea as a "useful and effective political tool" to fend off international meddling in its backyard. (Choo, Jaewoo. "Mirroring North Korea's Growing Economic Dependence on China: Political Ramifications." *Asian Survey*. 48.2. (March/April 2008): 369.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 370.

¹²⁸ In a meeting on July 10, 1971, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai candidly told then National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, "when our economy is developed, we will still not consider ourselves a superpower and will not join in the rank of the superpowers." (U.S. Department of State. Office of the Historian. "Memorandum of Conversation: Beijing, July 10, 1971, 12:10-6:00 p.m." *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*. XVII, China 1969-1972, Document 140.) In 1993, then Chinese President Jiang Zemin reiterated these same sentiments to Dr. Kissinger, telling him directly, "I've said over and over that China will never be a threat to any country." (Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 466.)

¹²⁹ This logic does not contradict China's views of a zero-sum competition against the United States, where absence of success equates humiliating failure. Essentially, Chinese realism stems from the fact that the Americans do not adhere to the borders of their region of influence, thus overstepping the boundaries of their duties as a responsible member of the international community, deterring the realization of social harmony on a global scale.

internal affairs; particularly, in both respects, by the United States. However, traditional Chinese pragmatism dictates careful consideration before resorting to the use of force, as any careless act of aggression would most certainly disrupt the peace and stability China so desperately seeks within its own territory and throughout its surrounding neighborhoods.

V || DEMOCRACY WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

Aside from the sheer size of its territory and demography, China's decisive roles as a strategic geopolitical pivot and as a sizeable economic powerhouse earns it an influential position in the postwar global system, eligible for a fast-track entrance into the elite great powers club, despite its evident status as a developing state throughout its modern era. However, its peers have consistently demonstrated reluctance to fully recognize China as one of their own, presumably due to the Party's insistence on autocratic governance while actively suppressing civilian attempts at democratic and political reform. These tensions have generated much friction in East-West relations, especially between China and the United States, and serve to highlight a prominent dichotomy between the political cultures of Beijing and Washington: as the former struggles towards a world order that respects its sovereignty while tolerating a different methodology and timeframe for political and economic reform, the latter focuses its energy on condemning those who do not follow its specific brand of governance; curtailing definitions for already ill-defined concepts such as democracy, human rights, and rule of law, as a means to further restrict membership into the private circle of international society's self-anointed *crème de la crème*.

A key source of contention lies with the conceptualization of democracy, conventionally defined as a government by the majority of those being governed. Historically, as Western nations have monopolized the embodiment of the democratic model, their method of ascertaining legitimacy from the people—free elections held in consistent intervals—has become the golden standard for developing states to emulate as part of their transition from autocracies to democracies, especially in the postwar period.

However, insistence on such technicalities marks the failure of Euro-America to embrace the creative spirit of the democratic tradition, as the subjectivity of the democratic experience has led to its classification as only a “partial institution”¹³⁰ that encompasses a wide range of forms and implementations. Thus, it makes more sense to observe and analyze democratic trends in China from a broader perspective, where the democratic nature of a regime is characterized by established legitimacy from the people and regular changes in leadership at periodic intervals.¹³¹ The Chinese approach to democracy reflects their preferred style for decision-making: pragmatism in the form of thorough assessments, careful preparations, and maintaining the long view. Therefore, political reform and transition to a more democratic form of government has been slow and cumbersome, albeit existent and progressive.

After 1949, and especially in the post-Mao era, the new generation of leaders recognized the importance of obtaining political consensus between a state and its people, as Mao purported with his comment that an imposed government is an unsustainable one.¹³² In the absence of direct elections, the Chinese Communist Party faced the continuous challenge of securing legitimacy of rule from its people. Unlike many other imposed authoritarian regimes, the Party opted for a different, more gradual approach¹³³

¹³⁰ Harrison, Ewan and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell. “The Arab Spring and Global Democratization: The Eclipse of the West?” (2011): Unpublished manuscript. Washington University in Saint Louis, University of Iowa. 22.

¹³¹ Chinese intellectual Hu Shi aptly summarizes the Chinese perspective on democratic politics as an “application of science to promote the happiness of humanity, the liberation of thought, and development of individuality. (Fung, Edmund S. K. “State Building, Capitalist Development, and Social Justice: Social Democracy in China’s Modern Transformation, 1921-1949.” *Modern China*. 31.3. (2005): 334.)

¹³² Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 196.

¹³³ As Wu Qing, a deputy of the Beijing People’s Congress since 1984, commented, “If things change too fast in China, it’ll be like a storm. Huge raindrops don’t irrigate the land. On the contrary, they might wash away fertile top soil. Drizzles seep into the ground, helping seeds take root and sprout. I think change should be very slow, and it must be a combination of people at the grassroots working up and

by following the footsteps of the Confucian tradition: using familiar social rituals and customizing reforms with traditional Chinese sensibilities to generate a system of rewards and punishments¹³⁴ that can offset potential political destabilization from the overwhelming strength in numbers of the masses. Thus, to modernize and to develop the country rapidly and efficiently, the Party sought to retain its power; on the one hand, this would allow it to oversee the implementation of the entire development agenda from beginning to end, adjusting to any unforeseen complications or obstacles along the way; on the other hand, constant singular rule would allow citizens to adapt to dramatic changes without being entirely overwhelmed, thus tempering any potential chaos that may arise from the transition.¹³⁵ In the decades following the revolution, the Party aimed to reform millennia of outdated Chinese traditions gradually, by bringing it up to date with a modern makeover. However, the tenacity of Chinese culture combined with the Chinese people's social cohesion and willingness to endure hardships required a drastic re-evaluation and eventual deconstruction of established social and political norms, a feat that could be accomplished only through Mao's vision of continuous revolution.¹³⁶ Once China had undergone sufficient social and political turbulence, the Party began to introduce new measures in a steady, trial-and-error manner, choosing to focus primarily

people from high up working down. This is the only way to find our own path. ” (“Power and the People.” *China From the Inside*. Dir. Jonathan Lewis. Documentary. KQED and Granada Television, 2007.)

¹³⁴ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 237.

¹³⁵ As one scholar notes, “Deng sought to preserve one-party rule not so much because he reveled in the prerequisites of power... but because he believed the alternative was anarchy,” or political *luan* (chaos), a clear contradiction to the Confucian ideals of virtue and order. (Ibid. 337.)

¹³⁶ Mao's vision for rebuilding Chinese society does not contradict the original premise regarding the tenacity and lingering influence of Chinese political culture and social philosophies, because despite his rhetoric, Mao was unable to completely shed his Confucian roots, preserving many of the traditional doctrines and principles as he and others shaped the core of China's new political order.

on the development of an “independent and relatively comprehensive industrial and economic system,”¹³⁷ to be followed by the Four Modernizations.¹³⁸

Though China had opened up considerably to the rest of the world by the 1970s, it still remained extremely private about its internal developments—presumably, to protect its territorial integrity and the domestic legitimacy of the Party. Thus, the most visible part of its reform agenda was primarily economic in nature, starting with state socialism,¹³⁹ which eventually transitioned to an open market economy by the 1980s. In light of its great power status, Beijing was also especially conscious of its backwardness

¹³⁷ Chou, En-lai. “Report on the Work of the Government” *Documents of the First Session of the Fourth National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China*. Foreign Language Press, 1975. Accessed online 23 Feb 2012 via Zhou Enlai Internet Archive. *Marxists Internet Archive*, Feb 2004. <<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/zhou-enlai/1975/01/13.htm>>.

¹³⁸ Based on the development of China’s political culture, it can be surmised that Beijing prioritized economic reform over political changes for several reasons. Firstly, in a truly pragmatic fashion, Party leaders asserted that accumulation of state resources (including capital) and elimination of poverty would alleviate more mass suffering than political freedoms or suffrage, as the former would have a more direct impact on the lives of the average Chinese person—more likely than not, a rural citizen; the post-Soviet Russian experience later confirmed the Party’s view that while political reform was eventually necessary, economic reform must come first. Secondly, given China’s sensitivity to external interferences on its domestic affairs, it thus follows that the Party would be especially reluctant to open up the entire country rapidly and risk retaliation from citizens unexposed to the outside world, swayed by new foreign influences. Memories of the collapse of the central government in the nineteenth century as well as the subsequent quasi-colonialization by the West were still strongly imprinted in the minds of Party leaders during the Maoist and post-Mao eras. Thus, the strategy of pursuing economic reform before, and independently of, political reform, not only allowed the Party to monitor the influx and levels of outside influences, but also gave Chinese citizens a chance to slowly acclimate to external ideas in a less volatile manner, curbing any potential impulsive behaviors that may arise during eventual political transitions. Finally, economic reform served as a better catalyst to rally public support around the Party’s number one agenda item: Chinese unity. In this case, an open economy (and subsequent prosperity) would be a greater incentive for China’s predominantly rural and uneducated populace to welcome outside change. For the urbanites, economic reform would unleash a long-repressed creative and entrepreneurial spirit. In both cases, by improving the lives of its citizens, the Party gains the approval and trust of the people, an essential foundation for eventual political reform.

¹³⁹ Socialist economics made sense in post-revolution China for two predominant reasons. Firstly, Soviet influences on Chinese leadership, specifically Mao’s political philosophies, had made China a natural ideological ally to the Soviet Union after 1949. The concept of state socialism also echoed traditional Confucian ideals of egalitarianism and discouragement of uneven distribution, rather than capitalist concepts like poverty. Thus, it is unsurprisingly that Beijing would want to heed Moscow’s developmental example. Secondly, China’s ambitious development agendas required significant investments and cash flow; rather than opening up the country to outside investments (and thus external influences), the Party imposed state socialism as an ideal way to control and develop vital industries free of foreign obligations or debts.

and poverty,¹⁴⁰ attributing both to underdevelopment. As a result, it utilized the overlap between socialism and democracy—that individual liberties must be temporarily curtailed for the necessary accumulation of wealth¹⁴¹—to modify all existing social and political instruments to serve its economic sector efficiently and improve the well-being of the Chinese people. Drawing strongly upon Confucian principles, while relying on traditional social harmonies to prevent the “evils of capitalism,” the Party focused on leveling the economic playing field, while increasing overall quality of life via ensuring the livelihood of the people (*mínshēng zhǔyì*), providing equal access to education and economic productivity,¹⁴² supporting the community, contributing to scholarship, and promoting Chinese culture. In recent decades, Beijing has devoted much of its developmental budget and efforts to its western campaign, as the area that had only experienced minimal direct benefits from China’s market reforms. For other parts of the country, Party leadership called upon the entrepreneurial spirit of the people, encouraging the Chinese to “emphasize professional competence over political correctness” by taking control of their futures and excelling in a field of their choice.¹⁴³ Even as Western observers heatedly oppugn the Party’s strict policy barring and censoring various foreign ventures, such as Google or Facebook, such initiatives serve to push Chinese entrepreneurs to develop similar enterprises that would specifically cater to Chinese interests. From a business perspective, such a solution is not only pragmatic but

¹⁴⁰ Poverty was considered one of five social evils, along with ignorance, diseases, disorder, and superstition. (Fung, Edmund S. K. “State Building, Capitalist Development, and Social Justice.” 324.)

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 344.

¹⁴² To ensure egalitarian development, Beijing promotes “horizontal linkages,” which allow intra-professional mobility across different areas. For example, the State Education Commission will upgrade teachers at less favored institutions to better ones. (Hayhoe, Ruth. *China’s Universities and the Open Door*. Armonk, New York and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1989. 156.)

¹⁴³ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 325.

incredibly sound: with over one billion customers to draw upon, and more and more Chinese becoming connected via modern technology everyday, these Party restrictions, though irksome to Western capitalists and some Chinese individuals, provide a great opportunity for many Chinese to hone their productive skills and advance technology using Chinese resources. For the companies that do survive the chopping block and are given a chance to expand into the Chinese marketplace, China's enormous consumer base still requires many corporations to reconsider and revise their business models to tailor to Chinese customers, revealing a window of opportunity for budding Chinese entrepreneurs to learn from non-Chinese while also helping these companies adapt to an unfamiliar market.¹⁴⁴ Another Party initiative that draws much ire from its neighbors as well as those in the West is the decision to peg the Chinese currency, or *yuán*,¹⁴⁵ the main domestic sociopolitical goal being the encouragement of export-oriented industries and continued improvements in the day-to-day lives of the Chinese, opting for international censure in lieu of domestic economic meltdown and the social unrest that is bound to ensue.¹⁴⁶

Economic development and capital accumulation was only one half of the challenge; the other half being the extreme rural poverty and underdevelopment. To tackle this, the post-Mao regime experimented with democratic self-government at the

¹⁴⁴ Rein, Shaun. "Why Starbucks succeeds in China and others haven't." *USA Today*. 10 Feb 2012. 10 Feb 2012. <<http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/food/story/2012-02-12/cnbc-starbucks-secrets-of-china-success/53040820/1>>.

¹⁴⁵ Kaiser, Emily. "Analysis: Asia's doubled-edged currency sword." *Reuters*. 02 Jan 2012. 02 Jan 2012. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/02/us-asia-economy-currency-idUSTRE8010DQ20120102>>.

¹⁴⁶ This is an extensive and controversial topic that cannot be comprehensively covered in such a limited space. It will suffice to mention that while Euro-American producers and financial experts are vehemently opposed to what they deem an artificial devaluation of the *yuán*, one should bear in mind the incredible financial risks that the Chinese government has to undertake to maintain the value of its currency, notably in the form of U.S. debt. For additional information, readers are referred to *Currency Wars* by James Rickards (Portfolio Hardcover, 2011).

grassroots level, to address citizens' daily concerns locally. Starting as early as the 1950s, Villager Committees (*cūnmín wěiyuánhui*, or VC) were established for rural citizens to elect leaders directly to represent their interests; urban residents experienced a similar process, with the implementation of Residential Committees (*jūmín wěiyuánhui*), later changed to Community Residents' Committee (*shèqū jūmín wěiyuánhui*, or CRC); the committees were revitalized in the early 1980s, after their reiteration in the Chinese Constitution in 1982, and established in accordance with four democratic principles: democratic elections, democratic decision-making, democratic management, and democratic oversight.¹⁴⁷ The VCs and CRCs were intended to serve several essential purposes. Firstly, the committees set out to lay a solid foundation for developing rule of law, previously nonexistent in China, by teaching citizens of their rights and responsibilities, as well as the importance of holding their leaders accountable. As one official in Hebei Province of Qianxi County has commented, "You cannot separate democracy and the rule of law. Democracy is the foundation and guarantee of doing things according to the law."¹⁴⁸ Secondly, they give people a chance to elect familiar and trusted individuals to promote political stability and economic prosperity, progressing towards greater administrative and financial transparency and accountability, respectively.¹⁴⁹ A series of complementary reforms include increased corruption¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Chen, Jie, and Chunlong Lu, and Yiyin Yang. "Popular Support for Grassroots Self-Government in Urban China: Findings from a Beijing Survey." *Modern China*. 33.4. (2007): 506.

¹⁴⁸ Horsley, Jaime P. "Village Elections: Training Ground for Democratization." *The China Business Review*. Mar/Apr 2001. 12 Nov 2011.
<<https://www.chinabusinessreview.com/public/0103/horsley.html>>.

¹⁴⁹ As succinctly summarized by Jaime P. Horsley, "The VC Law's primary goals are to ensure villager self-government and promote grassroots socialist democracy, material development, and culture, and ideology." (Ibid.)

prevention and supervision,¹⁵¹ such as setting up hotlines and registering civilian complaints, while also allowing greater participation in the legislative process. Thirdly, the committees forge relations between the citizens and neighborhood leaders, which then help to improve relations between local communities and the state; as noted by one commentator, these grassroots committees have allowed the Party to gain credibility without detracting from the overall democratic experiment.¹⁵² Despite international criticisms regarding the insufficiency of these reforms,¹⁵³ the results have been generally positive and promising of more liberalization, though by no means perfect.¹⁵⁴ Though there are those who question the slowness of reform and remain concerned that such democratic reforms are simply a front for the Party's insistent grip on power, Professor Wang Xixin, from the Beijing University Law School, assuages such fears on the grounds that "The process may be very, very long – the development of democracy is step by step. But the continuous progress of an increasingly effective democracy may in

¹⁵⁰ Though corruption is not unique to China, traditional Chinese institutions, such as the practice of gift-giving and the Confucian family structure, have presented distinct challenges for Chinese leaders. However, despite the negative connotations of corruption, a couple of commentators have pointed out its frequently overlooked benefits, especially in a developing society. They can be accessed in the following reference articles: Pei, Minxin. "Government By Corruption." *Forbes*. 22 Jan 2009. 29 Oct 2011. <http://www.forbes.com/2009/01/22/corruption-government-dictatorship-biz-corruption09-cx_mp_0122pei.html>; Wang, Xiaobing. "Regulation and Corruption in Transitional China." (Oct 2009): Unpublished manuscript. The University of Manchester: Economics Discussion Paper Series EDP-0920.

¹⁵¹ Yu, Xie. "China tightens corruption supervision." *China Daily*. 14 Jan 2010. 29 Oct. 2011. <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-01/14/content_9317579.htm>.

¹⁵² Horsley, Jaime P. "Village Elections: Training Ground for Democratization."

¹⁵³ Luard, Tim. "China village democracy skin deep." *BBC News*. 10 Oct 2005. 28 Oct 2011. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4319954.stm>>.

¹⁵⁴ "China issues anti-corruption regulation targeted at village officials." *People's Daily Online*. 14 Jul 2011. 29 Oct 2011. <<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90785/7439329.html>>.

the end succeed in restricting the power of the Party.”¹⁵⁵ Most citizens view the committees as legitimate, generally capable of resolving issues of practical concern, while offering the people more choices than the past elections.¹⁵⁶ Beijing has taken great care to tweak the system and adjust it to changing conditions as necessary: a recent change allowing the people to nominate election candidates directly rather than choosing from a Party-selected and endorsed candidates highlights the Party’s willingness to adapt different factors of the experiment to the Chinese experience, revealing a carefully and meticulously planned trend towards “democracy with Chinese characteristics.”

Though Beijing has yet to open the polls officially for central Party elections, it should be noted that in the post-Mao era, candidates for these offices have become increasingly identified and selected from popular and competent individuals from local elections in the VCs and CRCs.¹⁵⁷ For lower positions, the traditional Confucian system of meritocracy has been revived and modernized for recruitment through competitive examinations. Individuals appointed to the higher offices are carefully hand-selected from a pool of qualified candidates who satisfy a variety of criteria, including age, education (usually opting for individuals who have attained a higher level of education), merit, demonstrated loyalty and overall competency in supporting the Party’s vision and goals, and a generally successful track record at lower levels of government. While this

¹⁵⁵ “Power and the People.” *China From the Inside*. Dir. Jonathan Lewis. Documentary. KQED and Granada Television, 2007.

¹⁵⁶ In one study conducted in the urban CRCs, individuals with stronger democratic beliefs expressed less support for the system due to lack of internal political efficacy, perceived meddling and control by the Party, and the CRCs’ inability to successfully address all local issues, such as integrity of property rights. Similar trends also show that individuals in newly developed housing complexes were less likely to have faith in the CRC than those in traditional housing complexes. (Chen, Lu, and Yang. “Popular Support for Grassroots Self-Government in Urban China: Findings from a Beijing Survey.” 521-2.)

¹⁵⁷ Horsley, Jaime P. “Village Elections: Training Ground for Democratization.”

system fails to conform to global standards for either democracy or autocracy, it caters to a specific brand of Chinese politics that is well-suited for its role in the world order: it was in this spirit, for example, that Chinese Vice Premier Xi Jinping,¹⁵⁸ Hu Jintao's likely successor during projected leadership transitions in late 2012,¹⁵⁹ recently embarked on his highly publicized trip to the United States,¹⁶⁰ presumably to introduce him to significant U.S. officials, while also familiarizing American leaders with China's next leader before the official change in power,¹⁶¹ a diplomatic gesture that would be not be possible under the conventional style of democracy. The established stability of the system has attested to the degree of legitimacy bestowed upon the government by its people, despite the absence of direct election of Party leaders.¹⁶²

The most prominent contemporary example of political unrest in China is, of course, the events that unfolded in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. The international media lambasted Beijing for its seemingly over-reactive response to a peaceful student demonstration, citing the event as a visible manifestation of social unhappiness in China,

¹⁵⁸ Chang, S.C. "Chinese heir apparent's 'seven transcendences'." *CNA English News via Focus Taiwan News Channel*. 15 Feb 2012. 15 Feb 2012. <http://focustaiwan.tw/ShowNews/WebNews_Detail.aspx?Type=aIPL&ID=201202150040>.

¹⁵⁹ "[CEG Translation] Who will be China's next generation of leaders?" *China Elections and Governance*. 09 Jun 2011. 04 Nov 2011. <<http://chinaelectionsblog.net/?p=16282>>. (original Chinese-language article can be accessed here: <http://news.creaders.net/headline/newsViewer.php?nid=474184&id=1068074&dcid=27>).

¹⁶⁰ Wan William. "Xi Jinping visits Iowa, where the diplomatic equivalent of love is in the air." *The Washington Post with Foreign Policy*. 15 Feb 2012. 15 Feb 2012. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/xi-visits-iowa-where-the-diplomatic-equivalent-of-love-is-in-the-air/2012/02/15/gIQAdSebGR_story.html>.

¹⁶¹ "China's Xi Jinping calls for 'deep' US-China ties." *BBC News*. 15 Feb 2012. 15 Feb 2012. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-17047047>>.

¹⁶² Recent events in China also indicate that the popular disdain for alleged Party favor for so-called Communist "princelings" may be unfounded, as the Party has demonstrated its commitment to selecting leaders dedicated to leading China in a positive direction. (Mackinnon, Mark. "Bo Xilai firing saga looks far from over in China." *The Globe and Mail*. 16 Mar 2012. 16 Mar 2012. <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/worldview/bo-xilai-firing-saga-looks-far-from-over-in-china/article2371384/>>.)

specifically with Party rule. However, some scholars better versed with the nuances of the Chinese perspective and more familiar with its long-term cultural trends have since analyzed the situation in retrospect, taking into account the long view of the Party's ultimate development goals. Tiananmen did emerge at the end of a decade of unprecedented economic progress for China and new levels of civil freedoms for its citizens. In spite of such dramatic changes, the majority of Chinese were eager to burst out of the confines of Confucian tradition and freely indulge in Western ideology; as a result, general unhappiness with issues such as political corruption, economic inflation, restrictions on civil liberties, subpar university conditions, and the persistent dominance of the Party at all levels of governance resulted in student-led protests.¹⁶³ However, some scholars have observed that despite massive protests, Tiananmen did not represent a legitimacy crisis, as the Party was able to command the resources of the state and maintain its monopoly on violence.¹⁶⁴ Even Beijing's demonstrated patience throughout the initial unfolding of the crisis suggests that the eventual brutal repression was executed as a last resort, when the situation began to escalate beyond a simple student protest.¹⁶⁵ It

¹⁶³ One commentator, Justin Raimondo, has suggested that the Tiananmen Square incident is a "myth" that has been blown out of proportion by Western-dominated media and scholarship. In a thought-provoking investigation entitled "China and the New Cold War," he laments the fact that modern China analysts "[forget] that the most significant rebellion against the authority of the Party was praised and to a large extent engineered by a wing of the party bureaucracy," followed by a compelling, albeit unconventional, perspective on the Tiananmen Square incident. (Raimondo, Justin. "China and the New Cold War." *Antiwar.com* 17 Jun 1999. 13 Nov 2011. <<http://www.antiwar.com/justin/justinchina1.html>>.)

¹⁶⁴ Li, Jieli. "Geopolitics of the Chinese Communist Party in the Twentieth Century." 328-9.

¹⁶⁵ Some new evidence has cast some light on the events that unfolded during the Tiananmen incident. A recent publication of Zhao Ziyang's secret journal discusses the Party's willingness to engage in dialogue with the student protestors, successfully dispersing most of the protestors by the beginning of May 1989. Ultimately, Zhao's account advances the idea that several protest leaders had called for more radical measures, as they believed plans for impending dialogues were political chicanery designed to quell and suppress the students. (Zhao Ziyang. *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang*. Bao Pu, Renee Chiang, and Adi Ignatius, eds. Simon & Schuster, 2009.) Another observer alleges that the Ni Zhifu, the Chairman of the All China Federation of Labor Unions, had "condemned...[and] demanded an end to martial law and a positive reassessment of the student

may also be possible that as tensions mounted in Tiananmen Square, the Party may have suspected covert foreign involvement in the incident, thus warranting a more ferocious response to maintain its international credibility, reiterate its stance on non-intervention, and more importantly, retain control over its own domestic affairs. Ultimately, as one pundit points out, Deng's pragmatic response to the Tiananmen incident stayed consistent with the Party's logic of preceding political reform with economic changes,¹⁶⁶ not so much reflecting insistence on Deng's part to retain power but more of the Party's aims of bettering the lives of its people in the long run.¹⁶⁷

demonstrations... that the government hold talks with student leaders... [and] threatened to lead a general strike if the central committee failed to accept his demands." From these accounts, one can surmise that the events in the days leading up to the Tiananmen incident had escalated beyond a simple peaceful student protest, involving actors who were willing to take more drastic (and perhaps more violent) measures to ensure that their demands were met. During the actual event, the eyewitness account of a Chilean diplomat recalls that soldiers dispatched into the Square for crowd control "did not [mass fire] into the crowds...most of the troops which entered the Square were actually armed only with anti-riot gear—truncheons and wooden clubs." ("Wikileaks Tiananmen Cables." *The Telegraph*. 04 Jun 2011. 12 Apr 2012. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/wikileaks-files/8555896/Wikileaks-Tiananmen-cables.html>>. Further evidence demonstrates that bloodshed did not actually occur in Tiananmen Square, contradicting various accounts of Western journalists at the time, and challenging the veracity of way the incident was portrayed in Western media. (Moore, Malcom. "Wikileaks: no bloodshed inside Tiananmen Square, cables claim." *The Telegraph*. 04 Jun 2011. 12 Apr 2012. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/wikileaks/8555142/Wikileaks-no-bloodshed-inside-Tiananmen-Square-cables-claim.html>>.

¹⁶⁶ It is worth quoting, at length, a section of Mahbubani's contrast between the Chinese experience and the post-Soviet Russian experience to highlight key elements of scholarship now defending Deng's actions in Tiananmen: "In contrast to Gorbachev, Deng Xiaoping well understood the sources of Western strength and power. He had no illusions that Western values were responsible for Western success. Hence, he focused his efforts on introducing free-market economics into China, while trying his best to preserve political stability during the difficult economic transitions. By any standards, this was no easy task. A lesser man would have failed. But Deng had a will of steel. One of the many reasons why Deng would not allow the students protesting in Tiananmen Square to set the agenda for China was because they wanted to follow Gorbachev's example. Had they succeeded, China might have suffered as much as Russia. A billion Chinese people would have seen their livelihoods deteriorate as the Russian peoples did." (Mahbubani, Kishore. *The New Asian Hemisphere*. 44-5.)

¹⁶⁷ Though Party repression of political dissent in China have consistently punctuated world news headlines, even after Tiananmen, the Party has actively, though quietly, taken gradual steps to soften its crackdown on those seeking political reform. (Demick, Barbara. "China poised to limit use of mental hospitals to curb dissent." *Los Angeles Times*. 16 Mar 2012. 16 Mar 2012. <<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-china-psychiatric-20120317,0,4595712.story?track=lat-pick>>.)

Overall, the Party has worked to earn the legitimacy of its people by employing a tailored yet comprehensive development agenda to better the lives of all its citizens; as Deng Xiaoping proposed in a speech to the Central Committee in 1979, “What kind of democracy do the Chinese people need today? It can only be socialist democracy, people’s democracy, and not a bourgeois democracy, individualist democracy.”¹⁶⁸ Though the West continues to view China as a state with a weak legal system, poor system of human rights, and as a stubborn opponent of democracy, China has defied occidental theory by successfully implementing market reform and achieving economic growth despite slower political progress. While ultimately the sustainability and success of the Chinese system is still up for debate, China’s pragmatic leadership has exhibited a strong determination to learn from the mistakes of others,¹⁶⁹ most notably the Soviet Union, and has thus far enjoyed relative success in this endeavor. Compared to its peers in the lower-middle income class, China has made incredible progress and performed spectacularly since 1978. The Chinese people not only enjoy greater civil and political freedoms than previously allowed, China also outperforms the average country in its tier regarding most human rights issues; in fact, as one UCLA scholar points out, it is only when China is evaluated in comparison to other great powers that it disappoints across

¹⁶⁸ Xiaoping, Deng. “Uphold the Four Cardinal Principles.” Speech at a forum on the principles for the Party’s theoretical work. 30 Nov 1979. Republished by *People Daily*. <<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol2/text/b1290.html>>.

¹⁶⁹ In late 2006, CCTV, the Party’s state television network, broadcasted a twelve-part documentary series entitled *The Rise of Great Powers (Dàguó juéqǐ)*, examining the rise of nine historical world powers, many of which were previously condemned by China as imperialists. The series neutrally addresses elements that may have contributed to the triumph and decline of these former great powers, including especially sensitive subjects such as democracy and political reform. Though the episodes were designed to accurately and impartially portray these events as to further Chinese literacy on world history, they have been also been viewed as lessons to be learned regarding future development plans for China. Many foreign observers have also interpreted the production and release of such a series as a sign that the Party has become increasingly open to the idea of discussing political reform and willing to embrace its newfound responsibility as an international power.

the board.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, China's great power status also allows it to stave off international pressure to conform to myopic Western systems, and pursue a "contextualized approach to legal reforms [resulting] in steady progress."¹⁷¹ Though it is tempting to group China with the other economic success stories in the region—namely, the Asian Tigers—it would not be completely appropriate to categorize China as a protégé of the ill-defined "East Asian Path"¹⁷² as its "democracy with Chinese characteristics" is a truly unique model of political reform that may be hard for other developing countries to imitate without the Chinese advantages of size and geopolitical significance. However, China's political values of non-interference and tolerance of different regime types provide a refreshing alternative to western theoretical arrogance,¹⁷³ and may serve as an inspiration to those facing their own developmental challenges.

¹⁷⁰ Peerenboom, Randall. "Law and Development of Constitutional Democracy: Is China a Problem Case?" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 603: Law, Society, and Democracy: Comparative Perspectives (2006): 194-6.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. 197.

¹⁷² Peerenboom, Randall. "Law and Development of Constitutional Democracy: Is China a Problem Case?" 196.

¹⁷³ Henry Kissinger draws a poignant comparison between the United States and China as the two predominant visionaries for developing countries, since both are "not so much nation-states as continental expressions of cultural identities, [where] both have historically been driven to visions of universality by their economic and political achievements and their people's irrepressible energy and self confidence [and both] governments have frequently assumed a seamless identity between their national policies and the general interests of mankind." (Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 520.)

VI || CHARM OFFENSIVE

Since the end of the Cold War, China has striven to shed its image as the villainous ideological antagonist and taken on the daunting task of reinventing its identity as a rising global power with a responsible agenda for peaceful development. To reverse decades of stubborn perspectives—including international hostility towards its perceived suppression of Taiwanese statehood—and to command respect and admiration from its peers, Beijing draws upon its domestic influences to help shape its strategy for securing or strengthening relations beyond its territorial borders. The combination of Chinese hospitality and ceremony as part of its psychological strategy overseas has been often dubbed by Western media and scholars as China’s “charm offensive,” its ultimate goal being to further China’s quest for international legitimacy and to accomplish its core foreign policy objectives,¹⁷⁴ namely maintaining a peaceful international environment, assisting the developing world as needed in accordance with Mao’s still-influential “Three Worlds” theory, and securing unhindered access to raw materials to fuel continued economic growth.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Despite necessarily adjusting its foreign policy for current world affairs, China’s agenda has been largely consistent since the end of World War II. It is nearly impossible to empirically demonstrate this claim in such an abbreviated space, but even from a brief overview of Chinese international relations in the modern era, one can discern a prevalent strategy of catering foreign policy as a reaction to external forces, such as balancing against hegemony and promoting multilateralism, rather than active attempts to export Chinese ideals abroad. (Ng-Quinn, Michael. “The Analytic Study of Chinese Foreign Policy.” *International Studies Quarterly*. 27.2. (1983): 204.) That being said, evidence that China has been specifically aiming to counter-balance the US has been “murky” at best. As one Harvard scholar points out, both sides have engaged in ethnic blame and propaganda. (Johnston, Alastair Iain. “Is China a Status Quo Power?” *International Security*. 27.4. (2003): 48-55.)

¹⁷⁵ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 490.

As foreign businessmen have come to learn in conducting commercial relations with their Chinese counterparts, China's history and traditions play a decisive role¹⁷⁶ in shaping its conduct with other actors in the international system. The concept of relations (*guānxi*) is especially important, as the Chinese have always valued the personal aspect of a relationship¹⁷⁷ rather than formal documentation of camaraderie; in fact, China has gained somewhat of a reputation for unwavering loyalty to its allies, albeit not with an unlimited price. However, in line with its principle of non-intervention, Beijing also insists on cooperative relations that do not inhibit the sovereignty, flexibility, or maneuverability of all involved parties. Thus, in keeping with this paradigm, negotiation deadlocks are therefore not only accepted, but also anticipated as an inevitable part of doing business.¹⁷⁸ To set it apart from some of its great power peers, especially when wooing developing states, China emphatically highlights its tolerance of political differences and its lack of desire to impose its views or perspectives on others. In fact, post-Mao politicians have repeatedly asserted China's role as a humble student of all,¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ In a speech to the Japanese Diet on April 12, 2007, Premier Wen Jiabao reiterates the role of history in guiding—but not hindering—China's approach to the future, saying, "The Chinese government and people have always been forward-looking. We consistently call for reflecting upon history while focusing on the future. To emphasize historic lessons is not to continue the hatred, but to draw upon the historic lessons in order to improve the future." ("Chinese Premier Address." C-SPAN Video Library. Online video clip. C-SPAN Video. Accessed on 12 Feb 2012. <<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/197579-1>>.)

¹⁷⁷ The term "personal" is employed here to emphasize the role of people in the negotiation process and not the actual intimacy of a relationship based on compatibility of personalities. In this respect, as the Chinese view political relations as an aspect of strategy rather than simply fulfilling social purposes, they tend to gravitate towards relations with allies with which they have long-term historic, cultural, and national ties. As such, candor and mutual respect in political negotiations are highly coveted values, as Chinese diplomats view such qualities as indicative of relationships that are predictable, stable, and reciprocal. Similarly, gestures of diplomacy, such as gifts or goodwill are appreciated *only* if they play a significant role in the negotiation process. (Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 221, 245.)

¹⁷⁸ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 221.

¹⁷⁹ A early 2012 visit by Hu Jintao's slated successor, Xi Jinping to the United States serves to highlight China's humility and its acknowledgment of world "teachers." During the highly publicized trip, Xi made a stop in Muscatine, Iowa, a small rural community that he had stayed for a week in the 1985 as

including smaller nations; urban Chinese are also actively encouraged to learn about the world, especially in the wake of China's economic growth.¹⁸⁰ This pragmatic take on international relations, heavily reinforced by Deng Xiaoping's vision for China's modernized development, has undoubtedly contributed to what Kishore Mahbubani hails as China's "[restrained] and remarkable diplomatic skills," which he gives a near-perfect ranking on an ascending scale of geopolitical competency.¹⁸¹

Nevertheless, during the last few decades of the 20th century, ideology trumped tradition, as China's international relations presented an alternative to American ideals worldwide. Initially, during the mid-1990s, Chinese attempts to undermine U.S. influence in the Asian-Pacific region flopped, as increased Chinese military aggression actually drew American allies in the region closer to the United States, in effect, tightening the geopolitical encirclement of China.¹⁸² As a result, China re-routed its strategy to appeal to states that relied on the support of great powers to guarantee their interests without antagonizing their sense of freedom or integrity. China's "new security concept" of the late 1990s¹⁸³ reflected this change in thinking as it strove to emphasize the role of multilateral institutions in achieving "win-win" situations for those sharing mutual interests. Beijing's rapid adjustment of its foreign agenda could not have happened at a

part of his rural training. Xi's symbolic visit to his "American hometown" not only paid tribute to his former stay, including his hosts, but more significantly, signaled the longevity and importance of loyalty in Chinese personal relations. (Pitt, David. "Why is China's Xi Jinping going to Iowa?" *The Christian Science Monitor*. 15 Feb 2012. 15 Feb 2012. <<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Latest-News-Wires/2012/0215/Why-is-China-s-Xi-Jinping-going-to-Iowa>>.)

¹⁸⁰ Kurlantzick, Joshua. *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007. 17-22.

¹⁸¹ Mahbubani, Kishore. *The New Asian Hemisphere*. 219.

¹⁸² Kurlantzick, Joshua. *Charm Offensive*. 38.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* 44.

more advantageous moment: at a time when the United States was bent on utilizing its ideals and hegemonic position to validate intervention in world affairs, China swooped in with a pledge of political friendships free of strings and conditions¹⁸⁴ with regards to individually-determined institutions, such as sovereignty, economy, mode of governance, or political values. China's successful transformation from an impoverished, peasant-based society into a *nouveau-riche* great power captivated the imaginations of many who had become disillusioned with Western charm, challenging the global perceptions of "the promised land," traditionally designated as American or European.¹⁸⁵ China's adamancy on privacy for its internal affairs also contrasted directly to the American experience, where issues such as Party errors or ongoing developmental challenges, especially lingering poverty, are not exposed to the international public for scrutiny, furthering glamorization of China as the exotic new frontier.

In particular, China predominantly appeals to developing countries, including emerging democracies, because it, unlike the West—specifically the United States¹⁸⁶—refrains from lecturing others on issues such as democracy, human rights, or rule of

¹⁸⁴ In a 2004 speech, President Hu Jintao specifically stated that, "Providing African countries with aid without any political strings within our ability is an important part of China's policy toward Africa." (U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights, and International Operations. "Testimony of Carolyn Bartholomew, Commissioner; U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing on China's Influence in Africa." *U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*. 28 Jul 2005. 13 Mar 2012. <http://www.uscc.gov/testimonies_speeches/testimonies/2005/05_07_29_bartholomew.php>.)

¹⁸⁵ Kurlantzick, Joshua. *Charm Offensive*. 135-9.

¹⁸⁶ In the mid 1970s, during talks with the United States regarding Most Favored Nation (MFN) status, China had rejected the Jackson-Vanik amendment based on the conditions attached. Originally, American politicians had advocated the inclusion of stipulations regarding both human rights and democratization, but had removed the latter, so as to not alienate their Chinese counterhalves. Despite their efforts, China still rejected the provision on the principle of conditioned negotiations, regardless of what the provisos actually were.

law.¹⁸⁷ Its breezy “sign first, talk later” style contrasts with tedious negotiations with the West, often weighed down by bureaucratic technicalities and procedural difficulties. China’s Deputy Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhong succinctly captured this point when he said, “Business is business. We try to separate politics from business.”¹⁸⁸ This pragmatic strategy is extremely effective especially in the short run simply because Beijing has yet to obtain the financial clout of Washington, Brussels, or Tokyo, to incentivize developing states. It also allows China to collaborate with developing states, particularly in Africa and Latin America, to work towards increasing a positive balance of trade by reversing financial instability or to help them pay off their own debts, often resulting from conditioned negotiations with the West.¹⁸⁹ What is more, China’s highly successful economic growth has motivated developing nations to improve the standards, quality, and overall efficiency of their own development agendas. Chinese businessmen and politicians have also taken incredible care to be well-versed in potential areas of investment, learning foreign languages and local cultures as necessary. Most importantly, Beijing strives to align its mutual interests with that of the developing state; combining diplomatic instruments, financial incentives, peace-keeping, and military cooperation as a

¹⁸⁷ Chris Alden, from the London School of Economics’ Department of International Relations, likens the conditionality of Western aid agreements to the humiliation of unequal treaties that were historically conducted between the West and China. (Alden, Chris. *China in Africa*. London and New York: Zed Books, 2007. 20.)

¹⁸⁸ Lyman, Princeton N. “China’s Rising Role in Africa.” *Council on Foreign Relations*. 21 Jul 2005. 10 Oct 2011. <<http://www.cfr.org/china/chinas-rising-role-africa/p8436>>. According to another source, the principle of “mutual noninterference in domestic affairs” has been touted by Chinese leadership since the Asian-African Bandung Conference in 1955. (Brautigam, Deborah and Adama Gaye. “Is Chinese Investment Good for Africa?” *Council on Foreign Relations*. 20 Feb 2007. 15 Nov 2011. <<http://www.cfr.org/china/chinese-investment-good-africa/p12622>>.)

¹⁸⁹ William Easterly’s book, *The Elusive Quest for Growth* (MIT Press, 2002) presents an excellent analysis for how various Western developmental models, such as investment in family planning or education, have failed to achieve their stated goals in developing states.

comprehensive package for bilateral relations.¹⁹⁰ Thus, China's approach focuses on shared goals for local-based needs, such as regional socioeconomic development, rather than solely on Chinese interests.

As the West faces increased competition for influences in regions that it has traditionally monopolized, it has begun to condemn China vociferously for the latter's blatant disregard for moralistic considerations, such as human rights, in its insatiable quest for raw materials and resources; of especial Occidental concern is China's exports of its own poor governance standards abroad, such as lack of transparency or violations of basic civilian privileges. However, three points serve to contradict such notions. Firstly, the truth is that China's conduct differs little from Western behavior in these regions, especially in former Western colonies, as recently as half a century ago; despite Western reforms in its interactions with these areas, it can be argued that such changes have come about mostly due to the West's near-absolute, if not already complete, development. That being said, China does not employ these historical precedents as justification for completely disregarding its current responsibilities; in fact, Beijing strives to cooperate with Western institutions in shaping its engagements in the developing world, so as to remain accountable for its actions while, more importantly, not undermining Western political or security interests. In light of its growing international responsibilities, China had quietly rescinded its declaration to stay uninvolved in general world affairs and began participating in peace-keeping missions sanctioned by the United Nations, most of which are located in Africa; as a result, Beijing is actually the largest contributor of peace-keeping volunteers of all the permanent members on the UNSC.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Alden, Chris. *China in Africa*. 27-35.

¹⁹¹ Alden, Chris. *China in Africa*. 26-7.

To qualify its unconditional aid, China has also been partnering with several aid donors as to avoid stepping on the toes of international institutions such as the World Bank or International Monetary Fund. It is also contemplating the creation of a Chinese version of USAID, with the goal that such an institution would adopt a more accountable attitude towards development projects than the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, which has been overlooking such ventures thus far.¹⁹² Furthermore, friendly engagements with regimes traditionally hostile to Western powers grants China an indispensable role in serving as a mediator to promote peace and stable development in territories beyond the scope of American and European influences, such as North Korea and Burma.

Secondly, China's efforts to portray itself as a "responsible great power" requires an upgrade of its own domestic standards, so as to avoid projecting an image of hypocrisy. As a result, the Party has taken active steps to tackle sensitive issues back home, such as establishing a solid foundation for rule of law, encouraging good business practices, and installing anti-corruption legislation. Finally, it can be argued that China's investments, though not up to par with Western standards of morality, are still contributing massive benefits to struggling states, especially in areas of development traditionally neglected by Western investors, such as infrastructure. Within the confines of China's own neighborhood, Beijing has compiled an impressive list of accomplishments such as improving railways for transportation, paving roads to adjacent countries, building border gates, and upgrading highways.¹⁹³ Specifically throughout parts of Africa, China has contributed to local development by undertaking "prestige

¹⁹² Kurlantzick, Joshua. *Charm Offensive*. 202.

¹⁹³ Holslag, Jonathan. "China's Roads to Influence." *Asian Survey*. 50.4. (2010): 645-9.

projects” such as the construction of public buildings and stadiums, as well as sending technical teams to train and assist local groups; even China’s heavily-criticized arms suppliers contribute by taking on meaningful civil engineering projects.¹⁹⁴ As one academic has noted, China’s engagement in Africa serves to fill in many of the gaps which Western sources are either “uninterested in or unwilling to provide,”¹⁹⁵ such as expansion into “inhospitable” war-torn neighborhoods.¹⁹⁶ Though China is fully aware that its relations with rogue regimes not only endanger its workers¹⁹⁷ but also its reputation, it considers these risks as “part of the learning curve and price of ‘going global’¹⁹⁸” and consistently seeks to cooperate with the United Nations and similar multilateral institutions, as well as the governments of the states in question. China’s reluctance to use military force¹⁹⁹ to respond to security challenges it has encountered in

¹⁹⁴ Alden, Chris. *China in Africa*. 23-5.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. 135

¹⁹⁶ Robert Keohane presents an interesting theory that is applicable to gauging preferences by Western agents for development agendas and interventions. Since the West typically emphasizes liberal idealism in conjunction with its aid (i.e. democratic values), Keohane’s theory of good versus bad neighborhoods for democratic development may serve as a useful indicator as to whether a Western state is willing to engage with a certain region of the developing world. On the other hand, since China proclaims no interest in spreading its political values via what it deems “business” operations, it does not have the same concern for neighborhood reputation and receptivity. (Keohane, Robert. “Political Authority After Intervention: Gradations of Sovereignty.” *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal, and Political Dilemmas*. J.L. Holzgrefe and R.O. Keohane, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 275-98.)

¹⁹⁷ Gettleman, Jeffrey. “Rebels Free Chinese Workers in Sudan, Red Cross Says.” *The New York Times*. 07 Feb 2012. 07 Feb 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/08/world/africa/sudan-rebels-free-chinese-workers-red-cross-says.html?_r=2>; Higgins, Andrew. “Abduction of Chinese workers in Sudan stirs criticism of Beijing.” *The Washington Post with Foreign Policy*. 01 Feb 2012. 07 Feb 2012. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/abduction-of-chinese-workers-in-sudan-stirs-criticism-of-beijing/2012/02/01/gIQADcxJiQ_story.html>.

¹⁹⁸ Spegele, Brian, Peter Wonacott, and Nicholas Bariyo. “China’s Workers Are Targeted as Its Overseas Reach Grows.” *The Wall Street Journal*. 01 Feb 2012. 07 Feb 2012. <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204652904577194171294491572.html#>>.

¹⁹⁹ It should be noted that in an extremely uncharacteristic maneuver, China did militarily intervene in Libya in early 2011 to rescue 30,000 of its citizens. (“China’s rescue mission to Libya: Push factor.” *The*

Africa (e.g. most recently in Egypt and Sudan), though consistent with its non-interventionist nature, has generated much criticism, especially from the Chinese people; regarding the recent Sudanese kidnappings, one Chinese blogger vented, “If it was the United States or Russia, they would have air dropped in special commandos by now.”²⁰⁰

Undoubtedly, China’s ventures have created tensions with developing and advanced economies, as commentators have called China’s dual roles as benefactors and competitors into question. In particular, China’s candid attitude about prioritizing its own national interests has perturbed those who believe that China’s actions may serve to undercut their own interests. One of the most common complaints lodged against Chinese investors is their reliance on importing cheaper domestic labor, rather than utilizing workers from the country in which they are conducting their business.²⁰¹ Cui Janjun, secretary-general of the China International NGO Network, addressing the issue at 2007 seminar on Chinese affairs, offered an angry retort to such accusations, stating, “We Chinese had to make the same hard decision on whether to accept foreign investment many, many years ago. You have to make the right decision or you will lose, lose, lose.

Economist. 03 Mar 2011. 07 Feb 2012. <<http://www.economist.com/node/18291549>>; Meidong, Hu. “China begins evacuation of 30,000 from Libya.” *Newsnx, The NanxiongDaily English*. 25 Feb 2011. 07 Feb 2012. <<http://en.newsnx.com/2011/02/china-begins-evacuation-of-30000-from-libya/>>.)

²⁰⁰ Jacobs, Andrew and Jeffrey Gettleman. “Kidnappings of Workers Put Pressure on China.” *The New York Times*. 31 Jan 2012. 07 Feb 2012. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/01/world/africa/china-says-29-workers-still-missing-in-sudan.html>>.

²⁰¹ This kind of trade protectionism is not unique to China. For example, U.S. politicians are constantly clamoring for their constituents to support American-made products and to encourage domestic production while condemning those who shift their manufacturing abroad, especially to lower-income countries. In my opinion, this is parallel to the Chinese strategy, the main difference being each state’s notion regarding whether or not the location of the factory (domestic versus abroad) should determine the origins of the workers powering it; either way, the state is trying to capitalize on its comparative advantage while curbing the investment benefits for the developing state.

You have to decide right, or you will remain poor, poor, poor.”²⁰² However, as one scholar points out, China’s foreign policy regarding Africa has, from the outset, “conformed to the interests and needs of Africans to a greater degree than any other external power.”²⁰³ As another academic observes, not only do the Chinese have factories that present African people with jobs and African entrepreneurs with production techniques and technologies, China’s business model also incentivizes the African upper class to return some of their foreign-held capital back to the continent.²⁰⁴ Similarly, China’s local conduct within its own neighborhood reiterates its commitments to mutual interests, as China strives to promote the economic integration of Asia by working with different states in the region to strengthen their respective comparative advantages, rather than by undermining one another through competition. A primary example of this, according to one expert, regards China’s emergence as an important customer in the Central Asian oil business: though China has effectively terminated the Russian monopoly in the area, it is by no means an indispensable customer, as the oil suppliers are constantly looking to diversify their customer base.²⁰⁵ In line with this argument, it would be logical to presume that China’s emergence on most other markets can be interpreted in a similar manner, where China’s status as a financial heavyweight certainly incentivizes suppliers to conduct business with Beijing, but not necessarily at the cost of curtailing business with other economic powerhouses. Even China’s trade with financially

²⁰² Bello, Walden. “Beijing’s Turbo-charged Diplomacy Sparks Debate in Africa.” *Pambazuka News*. 08 Feb 2007. 15 Nov 2011. <<http://pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/39694>>.

²⁰³ Alden, Chris. *China in Africa*. 126.

²⁰⁴ Brautigam, Deborah and Adama Gaye. “Is Chinese Investment Good for Africa?” *Council on Foreign Relations*. 20 Feb 2007. 15 Nov 2011. <<http://www.cfr.org/china/chinese-investment-good-africa/p12622>>.

²⁰⁵ Holslag, Jonathan. “China’s Roads to Influence.” 655-60.

disadvantaged states, such as with many of its African partners, have been advantageous for African citizens, giving them access to a lifestyle previously unattainable by their modest incomes, and helping their governments manage outstanding debts owed to Western creditors. A separate study presents evidentiary support for the claim that despite Hu Jintao's 2003 proclamation of oil and finance as two components of Chinese national economic security, Chinese ambitions in the Middle East have not undermined U.S. efforts towards attaining peace and stability within the region.²⁰⁶ With imported oil still constituting a minor portion of China's energy consumption, and Beijing's focus on developing renewable energies, there is simply no need for China to discard its pragmatism in its quest to secure raw materials, so long it does not perceive external meddling with regards to its access of resources. Hence, as part of its primary agenda of maintaining world peace and stability, China continues to cooperate with major powers,²⁰⁷ such as the United States, India and Pakistan, in areas or territories of contention, opting for solutions that mutually benefit all parties involved. In areas of international concern, China also serves as a mediator between the West and developing states, encouraging the former to lessen its pressures (e.g. sanctions) on the latter in exchange for better cooperation on Western-led initiatives.

Overall, China's charm offensive is, in the words of one *Los Angeles Times*' reporter, "no longer limited to just ping-pong scrimmages and gifts of pandas,"²⁰⁸ but has evolved to encompass a broader mix of political and economic hardball with softer social

²⁰⁶ Lai, Hongyi Harry. "China's Oil Diplomacy: Is It a Global Security Threat?" *Third World Quarterly*. 28.3. (2007): 520-5, 530-1.

²⁰⁷ AFP. "China says it is committed to peaceful development." *Channel NewsAsia*. 07 Mar 2012. 07 Mar 2012. <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/1187621/1/.html>.

²⁰⁸ Pierson, David. "As Yao Ming retires, China reflects and celebrates his legacy." *Los Angeles Times*. 21 Jul 2011. 21 Jul 2011. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/21/world/la-fg-yao-ming-retired-20110721>>.

and cultural influences. Beijing's overall strategy not only includes cooperating with political allies and trading partners by looking for solutions that cater to the mutual benefits of all parties involved, it also aims to use Chinese traditions and culture to entice international actors to engage with China. Despite drastic changes in the international system throughout its modern era, one of China's biggest challenges continues to be the struggle to find its proper footing for balancing its responsibilities as a great power and its agenda as a developing state. Though Western observers have expressed displeasure at China's way of conducting business, it would be unfair to expect China to supererogate at the expense of its limited resources and capabilities. Chinese pragmatism has remained consistent throughout its engagement with the developing world; even when recent events have called for China to re-evaluate its commitment to non-intervention, Beijing has been reluctant to dispose of, or even redefine, its dearly-held principles. Therefore, even if one may disagree with China's way of doing business, China's unwavering approach to its foreign policy, as well as its loyalty to both its traditional ideals, values, and friends remain a commendable aspect of its successful overall strategy to secure global legitimacy and maintain a peaceful international system.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As China braces itself for a new generation of Party leaders, international observers and Chinese citizens alike cannot help but wonder about the future of China's continued developments in economics, geo-strategy, and perhaps most importantly, political reform. Specifically, even before the time Hu's successor assumes his role as China's next president, there are already speculations as to whether or not this individual will be the visionary to lead China towards the next step of its political liberation. Nevertheless, despite the lingering question marks, China's future is far from being uncertain. The trials and tribulations it has undergone since the inception of Party rule have attested to the strength and tenacity not only of the Chinese people but its cultural values and historical traditions as well. Though some scholars have observed a consistency in Beijing's foreign policy from 1949 onwards, few have investigated the source of this regularity. It may suffice to say that every nation may draw upon its culture to provide a frame of reference for interpreting the world, and that subsequently, states also draw upon these cultural traditions to shape their political values. However, given the continuing controversy and speculation surrounding China's rise over the past few decades, it is imperative for scholars in this field to become more well-versed in the foundations of China's domestic political culture and reorient their theoretical approaches to reflect a more relevant perspective. This slight shift in perspective also offers tremendous implications, especially for those who wish to engage in forecasting, as the Chinese experience presents a much more cohesive and comprehensible narrative when examined in the context of its history

Of the three pillars deemed critical to the foundation of China's political values, its social philosophies are perhaps most vulnerable to assault by Western ideals. As China gradually opens itself up to the rest of the world, foreign values, such as capitalism and individualism, have taken the Chinese population by storm, as a novel alternative to millennia of monogamous adherence to traditional schools of thought. The explosion of Christianity has also drawn millions of followers away from historically-favored institutions, further complicating what Premier Wen Jiabao had once supposedly referred to as a "spiritual crisis" in the country. The growth in the number of Chinese Christians serves not only to challenge predominant social trends, but has put forth economic implications as well, posing questions about the role of religion in perpetuating Western-style capitalism in a country that is looking to embrace market reform on its own terms.²⁰⁹ While it would be imprudent to disregard completely the capacity of these new influences to alter persistent Chinese values, the demonstrated pragmatism and long view approach espoused by the Party thus far have given scholars and observers alike some indication as to the degree and pace of change to be anticipated from penetrating ideologies.

For instance, although China's Constitution openly declares for "citizens of the People's Republic of China [to] enjoy freedom of religious belief," the clause is qualified with a stipulation that "religious bodies and religious affairs are not [to be] subject to any foreign domination,"²¹⁰ tying into Chinese themes of non-intervention. As such, the Party has taken careful measures to ensure that theological imports consist of purely religious

²⁰⁹ Gardam, Tim. "Christians in China: Is the country in spiritual crisis?" *BBC News Magazine*. 11 Sep 2011. 11 Sep 2011. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-14838749>>.

²¹⁰ Constitution of the People's Republic of China. Chapter II. Article 36. Accessed online 28 Aug 2011. <<http://english.people.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>>.

thought by sanctioning official state-sponsored institutions to be free of allegiances to foreign agendas. Though such Party initiatives are to be expected, as well as subsequent citizen defiance by supporting unofficial underground churches, they seem rather redundant, as Chinese Christianity has confirmed operation as a religion, rather than a social philosophy. Therefore, it is hardly surprising to see Christianity as being complementary, rather than in competition, with traditional institutions such as Confucianism. Specifically, both institutions work well together to temper the rampage of other foreign values, such as materialism and capitalism, which have taken the mainland by storm. In this sense, Christianity offers not so much an attack on domestic cultural institutions, but presents a refreshing attempt to reorient the Chinese towards the traditional values touted by their ancient philosophies, without employing the Confucian imagery and terminology that many Chinese have come to label as outdated and no longer applicable to modern China.²¹¹ Christian emphasis on social work and service also help to bolster and to reconstruct the idea of the “harmonious society” (*héxié shèhuì*), a primary focus of Chinese public life that had been overwhelmed by fixations on economic prosperity and material indulgence.

China’s Christian experience underscores the malleability of the Chinese paradigm to adapt to modern world experiences, much as it has done over the past few millennia, extracting ideas and influences from other institutions to augment and improve itself as needed. In the absence of a standardized theological framework, the Chinese choose to rely on natural paragons and pragmatism to interpret the world around them. Thus, as exhibited by its steadfast foreign policy agenda in its modern era, China’s

²¹¹ Doctoroff, Tom. “Modern China’s Spiritual Crisis: Does it Exist?” *The Huffington Post: HuffPost World*. 22 Jan 2012. 22 Jan 2012. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tom-doctoroff/china-materialism_b_1222589.html>.

political culture also tends to follow the natural ebb and flow of current world events. In this sense, its political attitudes can be figuratively expressed as a flowing river, where the course and direction of the waters are predetermined, but the obstacles along the way will require adaptations. The analogy can further be extended in two ways: preparation for, and ultimately, eradication of the anticipated obstructions. In terms of the former, difficulties are not always visible from a distance. Therefore, while the Party embraces the long view that will undoubtedly involve several stumbling blocks along the way, no drastic measures are employed until the obstacle plays a direct role in obstructing progress (as opposed to a vague figurative role, riddled with uncertainty). In terms of the latter, the Chinese do not respond to their obstacles with swift, brutal obliteration. Rather, they seek to work around their difficulties with as little disruption to both parties as possible, seeking not to disturb the natural balance of the world. This is especially manifested by China's dedication to transitioning its Confucian ideal of social harmony from its domestic sphere to the international arena, further emphasized by its dedication to principles of non-intervention and multilateralism.

Thus far, China's extraordinary capability of preserving internal institutions of thought against unrelenting Western efforts to impose their ideals on others, has commanded exceptional international respect, especially from its peers in the developing world. Its achievements are further enhanced when one takes into consideration China's ability to accomplish these goals not only on such a short timeline but also during a period of inchoate development and on a relatively modest income. For some, China serves as an exemplary counterweight to the Western model, specifically against perceived American cultural and ideological imperialism, an alternative ideology

available for subscription. For others, China's experience functions as a tremendous source of inspiration, a testament to the fact that nation-states can and do successfully stand up to Western domination by resolutely committing to their own political culture and values. However, despite the commendable praise following its success thus far, it is important to note that China occupies a relatively atypical position in world affairs, replete with multitudinous factors that would be difficult for others to replicate, especially those wishing to follow in China's development footsteps. On the economic end, it is China's massive internal consumer base, a statistic that hardly any other country in the world claims, that has allowed for socioeconomic experiments such as VCs and CRCs, as well as Party encouragement of domestic entrepreneurial initiatives. Politically, it is China's rather exceptional statuses as a geopolitical and economic heavyweight as well as a developing state that grants it a greater sense of flexibility and wider range for maneuvering free from intrusive Western influences. To this end, China's leaders are quick to advise others not to follow directly in their footsteps, stating, "If there is any experience on our part, it is to formulate policies in light of one's own national conditions."²¹²

Beijing's quest to understand the rise of past great powers via its 2006 televised documentary series²¹³ may not have uncovered a fail-proof formula on how to achieve and retain hegemonic status, but it has gleaned much insight on how China might manage its own rise towards the top. For starters, China's vision of a harmonious multi-polar

²¹² Zoellick, Robert B. "Remarks for the High-Level China-Africa Experience-Sharing Program on Special Economic Zones and Infrastructure Development." Beijing, China. 14 Sep 2010. *The World Bank*. Web. 13 Dec 2011. <<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/2010/09/14/remarks-high-level-china-africa-experience-sharing-program-special-economic-zones-infrastructure-development>>.

²¹³ "The Rise of the Great Powers (*Dàguó juéqǐ*)." Dir. Ren Xue'an. Documentary. CCTV, 2006.

society fundamentally differs from the Western (read: American) definition for a balanced world order, spearheaded primarily by the United States and others in the elite democracy club.²¹⁴ While the former would not voluntarily and magnanimously relinquish the special privileges afforded by its great power status in the name of world egalitarianism, it has made solid efforts to ensure that its actions do not infringe upon another state's legalistic privileges and territorial integrity, no matter the size or geopolitical significance of the latter. To this end, China's actions, while solely focused on serving its self-interests, do not reflect an ill-intentioned agenda to undermine others. Such a liberal point of view may seem to contradict China's realist attitude towards the United States, with whom, some have argued, it is engaged in a zero-sum game, but various empirical sources, as highlighted throughout this study, demonstrate that this is not necessarily the case; in political and economic manners, Beijing has more than demonstrated its willingness to cooperate with Washington, taking care to pirouette around U.S. interests overseas, as to not step on American toes. Such a pattern of behavior lends credence to China's *wéiqi* approach to promote peaceful international relations, rather than opting for a crushing triumph in the form of a Western style checkmate. China's ability to cultivate a strong sense of legitimacy, both from its populace and from the international community, attests to its willingness to listen to input and factor in necessary changes, despite the Party's seeming obstinacy to change. Ultimately, it seems as if China has learned a most vital lesson from observing the rise

²¹⁴ The question that Harrison and Mitchell insightfully pose and seek to answer in their study asks how the West, especially the United States, can be expected to react in light of a global transition to a post-Western world order, where more and more states are embracing democratic style governance and clamoring for membership in the "cozy gentlemen's club" that consists thus far only of advanced, developed states. (Harrison, Ewan and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell. "The Arab Spring and Global Democratization: The Eclipse of the West?" 16-24.)

(and potential downfall, in the eyes of some commentators) of the United States: while an open society is undoubtedly courageous and admirable for its transparency, it lends itself to external definitions, lessening its control over its own responsibilities and accomplishments. From the Chinese perspective, the real act of bravery consists of defining one's own destiny, and working towards the perpetuation of one's vision, even in the face of extreme adversity and international stigmatization. Thus, as it has for most of its long history, China will, at least for the foreseeable future, continue to adhere to its values and use its beloved traditions to guide and shape its path towards the future.

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