

NORTHEASTASIAN SECURITY AND CHINA'S ROLE

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At the end of the Cold War, the bipolar structure dissolved. The Soviet Union was disintegrated, while the United States remained as the only superpower in the world. Such dramatic changes not only have a strong impact on the international environment, but also exert a direct influence on the regional situation, particularly Northeast Asia, whereby the superpowers used to be active in the competition of their influence. With the relaxation of the superpower competition, the countries in this region are allowed to focus their attention on economic development. Compared to the Cold War period when the region was characterized by the competition and conflict, it is now witnessing growing economic cooperation and political dialogue between the countries. Except for the nuclear development of North Korea, the Northeast Asian region has been comparatively stable and peaceful in the post-Cold War era. China takes advantage of the favorable external environment, and continues its economic reform and open policy. Buttressed by its rapid economic growth, China expands its influence both in the region and in the world.

Currently in the Northeast Asia, the influence of Russia is not comparable to that of the former Soviet Union. Haunted by its domestic problems, Russia spares very limited energy to the regional issues. Japan, as a leading industrial country in the world, is regarded rather as a US ally and dependant than as an independent strategic player in the region.¹ The regional security, in other words, is most directly affected by the policy and behavior of two countries: the United States and China. Although an outside power, the US plays a unique role in the region: balancing against the Soviet Union in the Cold War era, and balancing against China in the post-Cold War era. Its active involvement in the regional issues of Asia is due to its assessment of the importance of the region for its national interest. As the secretary of the state for East Asian and Pacific affairs has said, "Asia is the key to the economic health of the United States and to the everyday lives of Americans," and "the United States' interests in Asia have been remarkably consistent over the past two centuries: peace and

¹Barry Buzan "Security Architecture in Asia: the Interplay of Regional and Global Levels," *The Pacific Review*, Vol.16, No.2, p.151

security; commercial access to the region; freedom of navigation; and the prevention of the rise of any hegemonic power or coalition”².

As an indigenous in the region, China attracts increasing attention from its neighbors as well as from the United States. China has put economic development on top of its national agenda since the implementation of reform and open policy at the end of the 1970s. The diplomatic task has been to create and maintain favorable external environment for the economic growth. Guided by the economic goal, China has been experiencing an evolution in its diplomatic relations with this outside world. It has established official diplomatic relationship with more than 180 countries and regions and joined most of the important global and regional organizations.

The virtual removal of the Soviet Union/Russia at the end of the Cold War has helped to strengthen China’s influence in regional development. Due to its military modernization and the noticeable increase of its military budget, the perspective of a “China threat” was becoming widely spread at the beginning of the 1990s. In order to counter the negative influence of “China threat”, Beijing has remarkably improved its relationship with other major powers and notably increased its participation in multilateral organizations. With such endeavor, it intends to establish an image of a responsible power and demonstrate to the world that the rise of China would not pose security threat to others. As pointed out by Wang Yizhou, deputy director of the Institute of World Economics and Politics of China Academy of Social Sciences, China’s foreign policy is transforming from inward-looking, mainly concerned about its own development, to outward-looking, concerned both about its own development and the development of the whole population in the world.³

Recently, Chinese government encourages Chinese scholars to develop a theoretical basis for the diplomatic policy of “China’s peaceful rise”⁴. The new theory aims at easing the anxiety of other countries at the rise of China by making known to the world that the goal of China’s rise is to “build an all-round well-of-society” internally and to “maintain world peace and promote common development” externally. In this way, Chinese government intends to show to

² Quoted in Alexander A. Sergounin, “An Age of Uncertainty: Building a Post-Cold War U.S. Security Strategy for East and Southeast Asia,” *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, Summer 1996, Vol.15, No.2, p.2

³ “Zhongguo waijiao qiaoran zhuanxing” (China’s diplomacy Are Experiencing Quiet Changes), March 1, 2004, see <http://news.creaders.net/headline/newsPool/1A195646.html>

⁴ Willy Wo-Lap Lam, “China Aiming for ‘Peaceful Rise’,” *CNN*, Feb.6, 2004, see <http://edition.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/asiapcf/02/02/willy.column/>

the world that China's rise benefits the world⁵. As Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said at the 2nd Plenum of the 10th National People's Congress in March 2004, "China does not and will not seek hegemony."⁶

China's relationship with the U.S is featured by both "competition and cooperation." In order to promote its own national interest, the U.S tries to engage China as a rising power. Also due to the problems in the bilateral relations including trade frictions, the Taiwan issue, and the human rights issue, the development of the U.S-China relations are not without troubles. Motivated by its economic incentives, Chinese government seeks to avoid direct conflict with the U.S government. Particularly after September 11, 2001, the cooperation between the two sides has been remarkably strengthened, leading to a more optimistic security situation in Northeast Asia.

In order to examine how the Northeast Asian security situation has developed and will develop in the near future with reference to China's role in the region, the paper is divided into three parts: firstly, we will examine the bipolar structure with the US as one pole and China as the other in Northeast Asia in the post-Cold War era, to find out whether such structure will evoke conflicts or support stability. Secondly, by studying how China's role and identity have been changing in the post-Cold war era, we will explore whether such changes will obstruct or benefit regional peace. Finally, based on the analysis of the first two parts, we will make the conclusion that China's rise is in favor of keeping a stable Northeast Asia.

The bipolar structure in Northeast Asia

The fall of the Soviet power at the end of the Cold War changed the power structure in Northeast Asia. While a number of scholars claim that today's power structure in the region is multipolar,⁷ we, following Robert Ross, argue

⁵ Wang Yiwei, "China's Rise Benefits the World," *China daily*, March 2, 2004, p.6

⁶ "Wen Jiabao: Zhongguo de jueqi bucinzai renhe weixie" (The Rise of China Doesn't Exist Any Threat to Others), March 15, 2004, see <http://news.creaders.net/headline/newsPoll/14A196875.html>

⁷See for example, Aaron L. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry," *International Security*, Vol.18, No.3, Winter 1993/94, pp.5-34; Richard K.Betts, "Wealth, Power an Instability: East Asia and the United States after the Cold war," *International Security*, Vol.18, No.3, Winter 1993/94, pp.34-77; Kent e.Calder, *Asia's Deadly Triangle: How Arms, Energy and Growth Threaten to Destabilize Asia-Pacific* (London: Nicholas Breeley Publishing, 1996); Charles A.Kupchan, "After Pax Americana: Benign Power, Regional Integration, and the Sources of Stable Multipolarity," *International Security*, Vol.23, No.2, Fall 1998, pp.40-79

that it is bipolar.⁸ Contrary to the viewpoint that the rise of China indicates a fundamental shift in the balance of power,⁹ we maintain that China's rise will not pose a threat to the security of Northeast Asia. The interaction between the two poles of the United States and China in the region will not likely create the conditions conducive to major wars.

In the post-Cold War era, China has gained a much more independent strategic position in the region. This has given China more influence to affect the regional security.¹⁰ Compared to the 1980s when China was the weakest in the triangle game with the two superpowers; the 1990s witnessed the rise of China and the decline of Russia in power. To a certain degree, China was "the major strategic beneficiary"¹¹ consequent to the split of the Soviet Union. China filled the vacuum wherever the Soviet influence declined. On the other hand, supported by its allies in the region including Japan and South Korea and backed up by its military superiority, the United States acts as an external power. The presence of more than 80,000 US troops based in Japan, South Korea, and the deployment of the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific, constitute the largest non-NATO American forces outside the United States and the great bulk of American troops in the entire Pacific.¹² In order to protect its strategic interests, the US is closely involved in the regional issues of Northeast Asia. Although the United States enjoys a hegemonic position in the world, it confronts its most formidable rival and potential great power challenge-China in Northeast Asia. In this region, peace and prosperity maintained with the presence of great power rivalry and traditional balance of power politics.¹³

⁸ In contrast to multipolar argument, some other scholars hold that the region is bipolar. Among them, see Robert Ross, "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century," *International Security*, Vol.23, No.4, Spring 1999, pp.81-118; Joon N.Mak, "The Asia-Pacific Security Order," in Anthony McGrew and Christopher Brook (eds.), *Asia-Pacific in the New World Order* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 88-120

⁹ See for example, Richard Bernstein and Riss H.Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China* (New York: Alfred A.Knopf, 1997); Evan A.Feigenbaum, "China's Challenge to Pax Americana," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.24, No.3, Summer 2001, pp.31-43; Thomas J.Christensen, "Posing Problem without Catching Up," *International Security*, Vol.25, No.4, Spring 2001, pp.5-40

¹⁰ Wu Xinbo, "Changing roles: China and the United States in East Asian Security," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, Vol.15, No.1, Spring 1996, p.2

¹¹ Robert Ross, "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century," *International Security*, Vol.23, No.4, p.84

¹² Kent E.Calder, "The New Face of Northeast Asia," *foreign Affairs*, Vol.80, No.1, January/February 2001, p.117

¹³ Robert S.Ross, "The U.S.-China Peace: Great Power Politics, Spheres of influence, and the peace of East Asia," paper prepared for the international conference on East Asia, Latin America, and the "New Pax Americana", Feb.14-15, 2003,p.1

As an external power in the region, the presence of the United States is demonstrated by its naval supremacy. Its resources and technology regarding the development and deployment of the advanced weapons in the region dwarfs the efforts of China's military build-up. China's naval modernization may enhance its coastal security, but may not grant it the power projection capability to challenge the US hegemony at sea. On the other hand, the US's power and flexibility in this region are constrained in the sense that it is incapable to project dominant power onto the mainland. In contrast, China has an overwhelming dominance on the mainland. As Ross points out, "China's status as a continental power not only reflects geography but also the culture of land power."¹⁴ Territorial expansion was motivated by the purpose of seeking arable land in history. Territorial threat came also mainly from the neighbors on the continent. Therefore, it is essential for the Chinese to secure the borders on its entire land periphery. The reform and open policy carried out since the end of the 1970s has remarkably increased China's economic capacity, which allowed the country to modernize its forces. Through the construction of "pocket of excellence", the improvement of training and education, the purchase of relatively advanced weaponry from the international market, China has enhanced its military capabilities. The large infantry and the rapidly developed naval and air forces, make China a land-based power which is orienting toward the sea.

Great power rivalry is not necessarily characterized by heightened tensions, wars and crisis.¹⁵ As a maritime power in the region, the U.S. is satisfied at keeping the status quo position and ensuring the regional shipping lanes. Whereas China as a continental power, strives to maintain a long-term stable strategic status quo on its land borders to divert substantial resources to naval modernization. To a certain degree, whether the region will be peaceful and stable depends on whether China will be able to challenge the U.S. maritime power.¹⁶ Such a scenario is rather unlikely. First, China remains vigilant to the threats at its border. Sharing borders with thirteen countries on the continent, China is obliged to give considerable attention to the security of the borderlines. Second, even if China would divert substantial resources to develop its naval power, it could not easily approach parity with the U.S. navy. China remains a long way off from being able to seriously challenge the United States. Although

¹⁴ Robert S. Ross, "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century," p.103

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.81

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.102

its conventional forces appear formidable on paper, in reality the PRC's ability to project power beyond the Chinese border is severely limited.¹⁷ Even if Chinese navy were strong enough to complicate U.S. navy, it would avoid to strike first for fear of a fatal retaliatory strike from the U.S. which would destroy its navy¹⁸. Since none of the two poles has the power or the intention to challenge the other in its sphere of dominance, the power structure of the region remains rather stable.¹⁹

There is no doubt that Russia and Japan are important in regional issues. However, in comparison to the two poles in the region, the influence of Russia and Japan is rather limited. During the Cold War period, the Soviet Union tried to challenge the American maritime superiority by establishing a presence of the Pacific Fleet in East Asian waters. But now due to the capital shortage, Russian navy consists of dated vessels in need of repair. In addition, apart from the domestic problems of economic development and political stability, Russia's geography remains a major obstacle to its presence in Northeast Asia. Originally developed out of Eastern Europe, Russia seems not likely to devote its limited resources to gaining a polar status in Northeast Asia.²⁰

Both during the Cold war era and the post-Cold War era, Japan has committed itself as an ally of the United States. Its dedication has not only reduced the maritime challenge to the U.S. power, but also helps increase "the U.S. ability to depend on Japan to expand its own regional military power."²¹ Apart from its dependent status on the United States, its small size and the lack of the strategic resources frustrate its ambition as a regional pole.²² As a result; its most likely role is to adhere to the status quo.²³

¹⁷ Thomas Berger, "Set for Stability? Prospects for Conflict and Cooperation in East Asia," *Review of International Studies*, Vol.26, 2000, pp.411-412

¹⁸ Robert Ross, "The geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century," p.106

¹⁹ Here we refer the low profile approach adopted by the two governments of the United States and China in their solution of the bombing of Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia and the spy plane incident.

²⁰Robert Ross, "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century," pp.89-90

²¹ Robert S.Ross, "The U.S.-China Peace: Great Power Politics, Spheres of influence, and the Peace of East Asia," p.4

²² Robert Ross, "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century," pp.90-91

²³ Barry Buzan "Security Architecture in Asia: the Interplay of Regional and Global Levels," p.167

Thus, the bipolar peace in the region “reflects the ability of China and the United States to dominate the local powers in their respective spheres.”²⁴ The negotiations on the North Korean nuclear weapon programs demonstrate how the security crisis has been dealt with in the bipolar structure of Northeast Asia. Washington demands that North Korea should abandon nuclear programs “fully, verifiably and irreversibly.”²⁵ It prefers to rely on coercive diplomacy to obtain North Korean concessions, but it has limited leverage against the regime of Kim Jong Il. acting as the strategic and economic benefactor of North Korea, China enjoys the leverage that no other countries have in dissuading North Korea from pursuing a nuclear power status. Different from Washington, Beijing is in favor of seeking a negotiated solution to the crisis.²⁶ Affected by China’s stance, the negotiations have continued, first with the four-party talk, then with the six-party talk involving the regional powers of both Russia and Japan. Although there are no tangible results from the six-party negotiations, the Bush Administration has moved to the position that the policy towards North Korea should be based on diplomatic negotiation rather than pre-emptive military actions as carried out in Iraq. North Korea has shown its interest in continuing diplomatic talks after the Bush Administration expressed its willingness to consider the security guarantee to the current Pyongyang regime.

U.S. versus China: rivals and partners

The United States as the hegemonic power eager to defend its unchallengeable position, and China as a rising power ready to increase its influence, are bound to be rivals. Nevertheless, the relationship between the two is not exclusively zero-sum. Rather different from the competitive relations between the superpowers during the Cold War period, the Sino-U.S. relationship is characterized by both competition and cooperation. There exist common interests between the two. While they compete for their strategic influence, they cooperate to maintain regional peace and stability.

In the Sino-U.S. relationship, it seems unavoidable that a stronger China potentially poses new types of hazards to American interest, regardless of

²⁴ Robert S.Ross, “The U.S.-China Peace: Great Power Politics, Spheres of influence, and the Peace of East Asia,” p.2

²⁵ Ralph A.Cossa, “North Korea: the Brittle Prospects for Six Party Talks,” *International Herald Tribune*, Nov.25, 2003, see <http://www.iht.com/articles/118849.html>

²⁶ Robert S.Ross, “The U.S.-China Peace: Great Power Politics, Spheres of influence, and the Peace of East Asia,” pp.19-21

Chinese intentions. The U.S. is inclined to oppose the rise of major powers in a region of its vital interest. The rise of China, therefore, implies certain inevitable threat to the U.S. goals.²⁷ Moreover, as history shows, the rise of country to great power status has more than once led to war. Confronting the “China threat,” the U.S. hesitated between the choice of containment and engagement policy, and did not make it clear until the Clinton Administration made the decision to establish the partnership with China in 1997. As pointed out by Lieberthal, it is in the interest of the U.S. to develop a strategic approach that focuses on the essentials of mutually beneficial relationship, and to integrate China into Asia and the global political system.²⁸ Nevertheless, despite the partnership with China, Washington is afraid that if it reduces its security engagement in the region, it might encourage Chinese hegemonism,²⁹ therefore, it continues to insist on the need for a permanent American military presence in Asia.³⁰

At the side of China, “even if its attitude towards the U.S. is comparatively benign, China’s interests will never be perfectly aligned with America’s. As China grows in power, its preferences will carry greater weight, and its influence on issues over which Beijing and Washington disagree will increase at American expense.”³¹ China needs to develop. Such development includes multi-dimensional efforts. As an article published in Chinese newspaper claims, “China has a major responsibility to oppose hegemonism and safeguard world peace. We must increase our weight in stabilizing the world situation and this weight is composed of various factors, such a political, economic, and military affairs. Without sufficient military power, it will be impossible to preserve and enhance China’s status as a big power.”³²

It is not easy for China to balance among the three goals in its diplomacy: not to submit to U.S. hegemony, or to allow the U.S. to dominate Asia; not to be

²⁷ Denny Roy, “Rising China and U.S. Interests: Inevitable vs. Contingent hazards,” *Orbis*, Vol.47, No.1, Winter 2003, p.125

²⁸ Kenneth Lieberthal, “A New China Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.74, No.6, November/December 1995, p.36, and p.38

²⁹ Barry Buzan “Security Architecture in Asia: the Interplay of Regional and Global Levels,” p.165

³⁰ William Pfaff, “The question of hegemony,” *foreign Affairs*, Vol.80, No.1, January/February 2001, p.228.

³¹ Denny Roy, “Rising China and U.S. Interests: Inevitable vs. Contingent hazards,” p.126

³² Zhang Guanjun, “The National Defense Concept and the Army’s historical Responsibility in the New Period,” *Jiefangjun bao (PLA Daily)*, July 17, 1987, quoted in Yitzhak Shichor, “Defense Policy Reform,” p.91

drawn into a direct confrontation with the U.S., or be construed as a rival to the U.S.; to increase its standing in international society generally and its integration into the world economy in particular.³³ The first two goals are closely related to China's U.S. foreign policy. The first reflects China's ambition to balance against the U.S., and the second indicates China's intention to maintain peace and stability in the region. The third goal reveals China's pursuit of its economic interest. China needs to maintain its economic ties with the outside world by integrating itself to the international society. To avoid being dominated by the U.S., and in the mean time to ameliorate the relationship with it are important for China to keep its influential position in the Northeast Asia and to create a favorable environment for its economic development. As Jiang Zemin called at his visit to Washington 1997, the two sides should "expand common understanding, increase trust, reduce differences, and jointly create a future."³⁴

Despite the possibility that the rise of China diminishes the previously commanding influence of the U.S., a cooperative Sino-U.S. relationship is not ruled out. As Roy argues, if the rising power brings expanded trade and investment opportunities and promises to contribute to the management of peace and stability, it is "less unwelcome."³⁵ In the two decades and more period of China's economic reform, Chinese foreign trade has grown at a rate of more than 15 percent annually, twice as fast as world trade over the same period.³⁶ As a result, Chinese trading position has risen substantially. From thirty-second in world trade in 1978, China became the fifteenth in the list of the world's top trading countries in 1989, the tenth in 1997, the sixth in 2001, and the fifth in 2002.³⁷

The rapid growth of foreign trade as well as the large number of trading partners from both socialist and capitalist countries and developed and developing countries suggest a more flexible and open approach of the development in China. In contrast to the 1950s when most of the Chinese trading partners were communist countries, over 80 percent of foreign trade is

³³ Barry Buzan "Security Architecture in Asia: the Interplay of Regional and Global Levels," p.161

³⁴ *Liaowang (Outlook)*, Newsweek, No.45, 1997, p.5

³⁵ Denny Roy, "Rising China and U.S. Interests: Inevitable vs. Contingent hazards,"p.126

³⁶ Alan Hunter and John Sexton, *Contemporary China* (Houndmills, Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1999), p.85

³⁷ "Zhongguo chao Yingguo cheng diwuda maoyiguo" (China Exceeded the Britain and Becomes Number 5 in Total Volume of Trade in the World), see <http://news.creaders.net/headline/newsPool/30A167467.html>

with non-communist partners in the reform era.³⁸ Compared to the 1950s when only sixty and more countries and regions had trade relations with China, the number increased to one hundred and eighty in 1980 and two hundred and twenty seven in 1998.³⁹

The rapid economic growth has remarkably increased the degree of interdependence between China and the outside world. The Sino-U.S. trade ties have developed fast over the last two decades and more and have become an important aspect in the relationship between the two countries. The United State is China's second biggest trade partner while China is the fourth biggest trade partner of the United States.

The Sino-U.S. trade rose by 30 percent on the basis of the volume of 2002 and reached US\$ 126.33 billion in 2003. As the president and Chief Executive Officer of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Thomas J. Donohue said, the U.S. side is ready to work with China under the principle of "seeking common ground while remaining different" to build up strategic trade and business relationship of mutual benefit.⁴⁰ In Northeast Asia, the US's two most important strategic allies, Japan and South Korea, are particularly benefiting from China's growth. Japan's imports from China surpassed those from the U.S. in 2002, while Japanese exports to China surged by 39.3 percent. As to South Korea, the trade relations with China is developing fast that China has become South Korea's largest trading partner by 2003.⁴¹

In security and anti-terrorist issues, the cooperation between Beijing and Washington has also been strengthened after the terrorist attack to the World Trade centre of New York on September 11, 2001. On September 20 and 21, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan visited the United States, expressing the willingness to enhance dialogue and cooperation with the United States concerning this issue. The governments of both countries then held expert negotiations on anti-terrorism and other security issues in Washington and Beijing. The common cause of combating terrorism brought the two countries together. Bush has readjusted his China policy and treats China again as a

³⁸ Robert Kleinberg, *China's "Opening" to the outside world: The Experiment with Foreign Capitalism* (Boulder, Colorado: West view Press, Inc., 1990), p.136

³⁹ "Duiwai mayoi duoyuan kuoda" (Expansion of Foreign Trade), report by National Statistic Bureau, see <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tfx/ztfx/xzgwsnxlfxbg/200206050044.html>

⁴⁰ "Sino-U.S. economic & trade relations facing best opportunity: Wu Yi," Dec.9, 2003, see http://www.biz-channel.com/php/news/news_detail.php?id=4378

⁴¹ Jane Perlez, "Asian Leaders Find China a More Cordial Neighbour," *The New York Times*, October 18, 2003

strategic partner. On October 19, President Jiang Zemin and President Bush met at the ninth APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Shanghai, where they exchanged views on bilateral ties, anti-terrorism and the maintenance of world peace and stability. Bush stated that his administration made major revisions in attitude toward China as a strategic competitive rival during his election and early days of presidency, and has since adopted a more pragmatic, rational and active stance in its China policy. He said that he considers China a friend of his country, and that the United States will handle the differences between them based on the principle of mutual respect and frankness.⁴² At the same meeting, President Jiang advocated the establishment of a "high-level strategic dialogue mechanism" that would encourage the presidents of both countries to exchange ideas and communicate on important issues in a timely manner, either directly or through their representatives, adding that China and United States can build a "long-or medium-term anti-terrorism cooperative mechanism."⁴³

China: status quo power?

While studying power structure in the region, it is also necessary to examine which way China will choose in its rise. The United States as a status quo power, intends to maintain the order of the region so as to ensure its strategic interest. In the competition of influence with the U.S., whether China identifies itself as a revisionist or a status quo power will have direct impact on the regional security. If China goes for the revisionist policy, its endeavor to change the existent order will threaten the peace and stability of the region. If it chooses a status quo position, it will contribute to maintain regional security. Therefore, a close look at China's identity is helpful to understand the security situation of Northeast Asia.

China has experienced dramatic changes since the Communist regime was established on the mainland in 1949. Rather than taking a static view on China's security practice, one should keep an eye on the changes,⁴⁴ and "the potential for change offers ground for optimism about China's future role in guaranteeing regional stability."⁴⁵ China's dependence on world economy, its

⁴² *China Daily*, October 19, 2001

⁴³ *Ibid*

⁴⁴ Wu Xinbo, "China: Security Practice of a Modernizing and Ascending Power", in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Practice: Material Ideational Influence* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), p.156

⁴⁵ Evan A. Feigenbaum, "China's Military Posture and the New economy Geopolitics," *Survival*, Vol.41, No.2, Summer 1999, p.74

limited military capability, its intention to set up an image of a responsible member in the world, and its newly developed approach relying more on common security, lead to increasing cooperative behavior with the international community on major-arms control arrangements as well as on tension-reducing steps in relations with other countries. Such behavior reveals that China is “gradually leaving its revolutionary oppositionist heritage behind.”⁴⁶

Particularly in the latter part of the 1990s, with the increase of membership in the international and regional organizations, we found significant changes in China’s self-identify, its security concept, and its diplomatic relationship both bilaterally and multilaterally. These changes affected China’s foreign policy, and turned China from a revisionist power to a status quo power, which is not only beneficial to China’s domestic development, but also favorable to the maintenance of security and peace in the region and in the world.

Changing identity

National identity transmits “a sense of distinctiveness”⁴⁷ of the state in the terms of its relations to others. Once the national identity is formed, it serves as the fundamental idea of policymaking. Nevertheless, it is not a fixed concept. The identity of a state is adjusted over time in the political and social process of historical development. It is shaped by social change, especially radical change such as “invasion, structural economic transformation and the uprooting of established forms of life bring about”⁴⁸ In the formation of national identities, the external systemic factors take precedence in determining the environment in which national identity enacts, whereas the past experiences set out the basis tone.

The Chinese self-identity is closely linked to its past experience. History is essential in the sense that it is “a process of change that leaves an imprint on state identity.”⁴⁹ What happened in the past and what accumulated as the

⁴⁶ Mel Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China’s Security: the New Rules of the Military* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers), p.305

⁴⁷ Michael Ng-Quinn, “national Identity in Premodern China: Formation and Role Enactment,” in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S.Kim, (eds.) *China’s Quest for National Identity* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), p.33

⁴⁸ Chris Farrands, “Society, Modernity and social Change: Approaches to Nationalism and Identity,” in Jill Krause and Neil Renwick (eds.), *Identities in International Relations* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), p.3

⁴⁹ Peter J. Katzenstein, “Introduction: Alternative Perspective on National Security,” in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security* (New York: Columbia University, 1996), p.23

experience shape the identification of China. National pride certainly has its place in Chinese self-identity. In view of the Chinese, a country's cultural greatness determines its power in the world, so that a state with superior cultural achievements was entitled to esteem and influence among other states.⁵⁰ The bitter experience subsequent to the Opium War shattered the self-superiority and added self-interiority to China's national identity. The unification of China in 1949 not only marked the end of foreign devastation and domestic chaos but also revitalized the efforts to resume China's past glory.

Therefore, China has a dual identity: a strange combination of self-superiority and self-interiority. It sometimes identifies itself as a glorious, promising power in the international system, assuming that it acquires the prestige and capability equitable to the status it asserts. It sometimes views itself as a relatively weak, developing country, treated unequally in history by the colonialists and their imperialists. It needs to redress the injustice.

The illustration of this dual identity is linked to the changes in the international and domestic conditions. During the Cold War era, the conflicts with superpowers as well as the ideologically oriented foreign policy facilitated China's identification with the developing countries. China stressed the shared experience with these countries: "Both the Chinese people and the people of these countries have for a long time been subjected to the oppression and exploitation of imperialism and have suffered long enough."⁵¹ Standing together with the Asian, African, and Latin American countries, China intended to promote revolution all over the world so as to transform the international order. The relaxation of the international environment at the end of the Cold War, and the mission of Chinese leaders to bring power and prosperity to the country motivated Chinese government to improve the relations with the big powers and to join the great power club.

Currently, China's great power identity overshadows its identity as the victim of Western expansion in the 19th century. While managing to keep friendly relationship with all the countries in the world in general, China pays special efforts in its relationship with the United States, European Union, Russia and Japan. The partnership established with these countries in the late 1990s

⁵⁰ Akira Iriye, "Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations," *diplomatic History* No.2, 1979, pp.118-119

⁵¹ Chu June-fu, "Foreign Relations of New China during the Past Five Years," *World Culture*, October 5, 1954, quoted in Joseph Camilleri, *Chinese Foreign Policy: The Maoist Era and its Aftermath* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1980), p.82

demonstrates China's changing identity and its aspiration to the great power status, and conforms to China's policy to promote the multipolar structure in the post-Cold War era. Such policy not only creates for China a favorable external environment, but also improves both China's international status and image. The identification with the leading powers in the world also reflects China's changes from transforming the international system to keeping the existent international system. Reflecting this noticeable change, Chinese leader was for the first time invited to attend a meeting of the eight highly industrialized countries (G-8) in 2003 albeit as a dialogue member.⁵²

New security concept

In 1997, Chinese foreign Minister Qian Qichen proposed China's new security concept at the meeting of Asian Regional Forum (ARF). The Chinese government stated, "Settlement of disputes through peaceful means is a proper way to safeguard regional peace and stability, and dialogues and cooperation are major pillars for regional peace and development."⁵³

China has increasingly come to realize that national security comes from international security. Overemphasis of one's own security and neglect of others' security will stimulate escalation of military development in the world.⁵⁴ As pointed by Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan "it is necessary to foster a new security concept that satisfies the needs of the times and to explore new ways of maintaining peace and security. The core of the new security concept should be mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation."⁵⁵ His view came in line with the White Paper of national defense in 2002, which stated, "Threats to world security... have increased the common interests of countries on the issue of security. To enhance mutual trust through dialogue, to promote common security through cooperation, and to cultivate a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation, have become the requirements of the trend of our era."⁵⁶

⁵² Evans S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, "China's New diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 6, November/December 2003, p. 32

⁵³ Opening Statement by Chinese Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Subang Jaya, July 27, 1997 <http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/security/china/qian-arf-9707.html>

⁵⁴ Wang Yong, "Lun Zhongguo de xin anquanguan" (On China's new Concept of Security), *Shijie Jingji yu zhengzhi* (world Economy and politics), No. 1, 1999, p. 43

⁵⁵ Tang Jiaxuan, "China's Position on Current International Issues," *Beijing review*, Vol. 42, No. 41, Oct. 11, 1999, p. 9

⁵⁶ Information office of the state Council of the PRC, *China's National Defense in 2002* (Beijing: New Star Publishing House, 2002), p. 5

In recent years, Beijing has conducted a series of diplomatic efforts to assure its neighbors as well as other countries of its peaceful intentions. It has established an intensified program of military-to-military diplomacy with other countries so as to ease regional concerns of China's military modernization. For example, China sent high-ranking military delegations to visit sixty countries between 2001 and 2002. The members of the delegation were from the CMC, the General Staff, General Political and Logistics Departments, and the PLAN and PLAAF. In return, more than one hundred and seventy high-ranking delegations from all over the world visited China.⁵⁷

The diplomatic efforts made by Chinese government reveal to the world that China has been developing toward an accommodative, cooperative, and responsible military power. It's increasing degree of involvement into the international community, serves both as a restraint to its behavior and a propelling force for it to pursue security in a collective sense. China has become increasingly positive to the function of multilateral regimes. As Assistant Foreign Minister Chen Jian states, "a multilateral framework seems to be the order of the day, both in the economic and security fields."⁵⁸ With the idea that "self-help approach alone is inadequate-as well as politically untenable-for ensuring a peaceful and stable international environment,"⁵⁹ Chinese government has gradually come to bring its national security into line with global security interests.

Achievements in the bilateral and multilateral relationship

In the PRC's history of more than five decades, it experienced the changes from ideology-guided diplomacy hostile to the West and disenchanted to the Soviet Union and its followers, to the reemphasis on the principle of peaceful coexistence and the dropout of the role of ideology in bilateral relations, from a sceptic observer on the negative impacts of multilateral organizations on China's development to an active participant learning to fulfill its national interest through accommodation to the regional and international institutions.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp.80-97

⁵⁸ Chen Jian, "Challenges and Responses in East Asia," text of speech delivered at the council for Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific (CSCAP) Annual Meeting, Singapore, June 4, 1997, quoted in Alastair Iain Johnston and Paul Evans, "China's Engagement with Multilateral Security," in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (eds.), *Engaging China: the Management of An Emerging Power* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p.258

⁵⁹ Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser, "Chinese perspectives on Nuclear Arms Control," *International Security*, Vol.20, No.3, Winter 1995-96, p.76

By carrying out peaceful and friendly diplomacy in the region, China has gradually transformed “from a country to be feared to one that beckons”⁶⁰ in the region. Especially since the Asian Financial Crisis, China has been increasingly valued by its neighbors as an active partner in regional cooperation instead of a threat. The neighbors have come to believe that this vital power “is trying to please, assist, accommodate its neighbors.”⁶¹ The strengthened interdependent economic and security interests between China and its neighbors made China attach increasing importance to its neighborhood relationship. As Hu Jintao said in April 2002, “China’s development would be impossible without Asia, and Asia’s prosperity without China.”⁶²

China’s increasing participation in other international institutions demonstrates the same tendency of convergence. In the human rights field, China has by far acceded to nine UN-sponsored multilateral human rights conventions. It participates in the UN Human Rights Commission, and has states its respect for international human rights law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It signed in 1997 the International Covenant on economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in 1998 the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In the economic field, China’s membership in global and regional economic organizations extends together with its economic growth. The modernization drive motivates more than ever the contacts with the global and regional economic institutions, the help from which strengthens China’s economic achievements and stimulates China to increasingly participate in the international economic activities. China became a member of both the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA) in 1980, a member of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 1986, and has been active since 1991 in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). China started the negotiations for the access to the GATT from 1986, and finally joined WTO in 2001.

In the military field, China entered the Conference of Disarmament (CD) in 1980. It joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1984. It

⁶⁰ Jane Perlez, “Asian Leaders find China a More Cordial neighbours,” *The New York Times*, Oct.18, 2003, see <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/18/international/asia/18CHIN.html?ei=1&en=3a98924af6a7425e&e>

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² quoted in Cheah Chor Sool, “We Are Good Partners,” *New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), April 25, 2002

announced that it would no longer conduct tests in the atmosphere in 1986, which is a de facto acceptance of the PTBT. It joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1992. As Garrett and Glaser noticed, an important shift has occurred in Chinese perceptions of the NPT, which represents a “growing appreciation in China of the value of arms control in enhancing Chinese security.”⁶³ It ceded nuclear weapon explosive testing and signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in September 1996. It signed in 1993 and ratified in 1997 the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). It joined the Zangger Committee in 1997. China promulgated, respectively in September 1997 and June 1998, the *Regulations on the Control of Nuclear Export* and the *Regulations on the Control of Nuclear Dual-Use Items and Related Technologies Export*. On March 28, 2002, China entered into force the *Protocol Additional to the Agreement between China and IAEA for the Application of Safeguards in China*.

Ten years in the reform era clearly suggests a changing China, which tends to be more cooperative and responsible. The accommodation to the outside world was originally taken by China as a means to realize its goal of being both powerful and prosperous. However, the commitment works as a constraint on Chinese foreign policy. Participation into the activities in the international society has encouraged Chinese leaders to reconsider Chinese interests. China’s interaction with the external world modifies and complies its behavior with others, and has been slowly eroding Beijing’s dedication to its narrowly defined national interests. Its global and regional interests are becoming progressively more complex, and the struggles over their definition are becoming more protracted. China has moved towards a perception of common interests and the acceptance of the rules and norms of the international institutions. The calculations of national interests produce progressively more cooperative behavior.⁶⁴

Image concern has also played an important role in eliciting China’s cooperative behavior. A responsible major power is measured in part by its participation in the international institutions. Beijing strives to show itself as actively involved participant in the international institutions. It stresses the

⁶³ Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser, “Chinese perspectives on Nuclear Arms Control,” pp.50-51

⁶⁴ David M. Lampton, “China’s Foreign and national Security Policy-Making Process: Is it Changing and Does It Matter?” in David M. Lampton (ed.), *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978-2000* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001), p.36

responsibilities of a great power shaping a stable international order, and endorses a relationship with the outside world based on mutual interest, cooperation, and shared long-term commitments to stability.

Consideration of the costs of commitments restrains China's behavior as well. As China becomes more interdependent, it becomes progressively constrained, and the costs of withdrawal become increasingly higher. In other words, if the PRC and its subordinate administrative units do not conform to the norms acceptable to the international system, the investments will flow to more congenial sites.⁶⁵ Because China has defined economic modernization as its primary goal, conformance with the international standards in the long-run will serve China's interests, and such gesture would put it in a favorable competitive position to obtain capital from abroad.

After more than two decades after reform, China has found itself increasingly market oriented and deeply involved in the international society. The continuous interaction with the outside world is a process whereby policy feedback simulate adaptation and learning by the initiators of policy.⁶⁶ In the process of learning, policy and behavior have been gradually modified, and the modified behavior guided the Chinese leadership to develop broader view of where their interests lie.⁶⁷ As Samuel Kim pointed out, "Post-Mao Chinese global learning does not have clearly demonstrated starting and ending points in time. Instead, it can be better explained as a form of learning process itself, an ongoing cognitive and experiential re-evaluative process in which both domestic and external variables interact and mediate between actors' perceptions of national needs, interests and beliefs."⁶⁸

Conclusion

In the first two parts of the paper, we have first examined the regional material structure of Northeast Asia, and then we have studied the changes of China from its self-identity, its security concept, and its bilateral and multilateral relationship, and found out that: The balance of power between the United

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.26

⁶⁶ Carol Lee Hamrin, "elite Politics and the Development of China's Foreign Relations," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh (ed.), *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p.73

⁶⁷ David M. Lampton, "China's foreign and National Security Policy-Making Process: Is It Changing and Does It Matter?" p.24-25

⁶⁸ Samuel L.Kim, "Thinking Globally in Post-Mao China," *journal of Peace Research*, Vol.27, No.2, 1990, p.198

States in the region promotes a stable Northeast Asia. The Sino-U.S. competitive and cooperative relationship on the one hand, reflects the clash of strategic interests of Beijing and Washington in the fight for influence in the region; on the other hand, shows the existence of common interests in maintaining regional peace. With the region free from military conflicts and wars, the United States is able to defend its shipping lanes and to promote its economic interests. Asia is important to the United States. As the Secretary state for East Asian and Pacific affairs says, "It is the most lucrative terrain for American jobs and exports."⁶⁹ The regional peace is of the same importance to China. A peaceful environment is essential to China's development. The economic reform is targeted at "basically realizing modernization and raising China's per capita GDP to that of an intermediate-level developed country by the middle of the twenty-first century, when the PRC celebrates its hundredth anniversary."⁷⁰ Without a guarantee of a favorable external environment, it is difficult for China to fulfill its target.

The economic goal initiated the changes in China's foreign policy and behavior. To be sure, China's efforts to present itself as a responsible and cooperative power in the international society originally resulted from the calculation of its national interest. In Mao's era, the Chinese government understood that the overturning of the existed international system conformed to China's national interest. This interpretation led to China's revisionist behavior lasting from the founding of the PRC until the late 1970s. The fact that Deng's government put economic development as the paramount task initiated the changes in China's behavior from challenging the international system to working constructively within the international framework. In order to create a favorable context for economic development, China needs to make both bilateral and multilateral efforts to show to the world its commitment to peace and development

While experiencing the dramatic changes from a revisionist power to a status-quo power, China has found a way to realize its national interest by integrating and accommodating to the international society. The changes have already occurred both in China's understanding of the international politics and its behavior will most probably further its convergence to the international

⁶⁹ Quoted in Alexander A. Sergounin, "An Age of Uncertainty: Building a Post-Cold War U.S. Security Strategy for East and Southeast Asia," p.2

⁷⁰ Qin Shi, *China 1997* (Beijing: New Star Publishers, 1997), p.69

society in the future. The deeper the involvements becomes, the stronger the constraint to China's behavior grows. In this process, affected by the international pressure and China's own aspiration, the country is moving toward a closer convergence to the international society.

The analysis of the strategic interests of the U.S. and China leads to a scenario of a stable and peaceful Northeast Asia. Checked by the balance of power between the two countries, maintained by China's effort to keep a favorable environment for its economic modernization, and encouraged by China's evolution to a status-quo power, the regional security is rather promising.