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CHINA'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY AND RUSSIA'S CONCERNS

ABSTRACT

The recent trends in Beijing's foreign policy have become a broadly discussed topic throughout the world. China's economic success over the last ten years has led Beijing to take a more assertive approach to China's relationship with the outside world. This shift has manifested itself in a more hard-line approach to China's relationship with her partners, less inclination toward compromise, and a tendency to respond to the external pressure with more pressure, to the external bumps with harder bumps. The new assertiveness of China can be understood. After all, it is merely the natural urge of a new, large, and successful regime to actively pursue its interests. At the same time, it is true that the successful economic development of the last ten years has led to the growth of nationalism among the elite. If the nationalist tendency prevails in the Chinese foreign policy, China's neighbors, including Russia, will have to do some serious rethinking of their approach to the growing giant.

Key words: China, Russia, USA, Nationalism, Foreign Policy, Assertiveness.

BEIJING'S FOREIGN POLICY – A NEW TWIST?

The recent trends in Beijing's foreign policy have become a broadly discussed topic throughout the world. China's economic success over the last ten years has led Beijing to take a more assertive approach to China's relationship with the outside world. This shift has manifested itself in a more

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hard-line approach to China's relationship with her partners, less inclination toward compromise, and a tendency to respond to external pressure with more pressure, to external bumps with harder bumps. It is often stated that these trends in Beijing's foreign policy have accelerated due to the global financial crisis, which, according to the Chinese government, China has endured better than other leading economies. After all, even at the peak of the crisis, China exhibited a 10 percent growth in its GDP. Experts cite numerous examples of China's renewed assertiveness: the hard line toward Tibet, the stubborn refusal to come to a mutually acceptable solution with the Dalai Lama, the unnecessarily harsh prison sentences for some dissidents, an anti-western position in regards to global warming, and the refusal to exert pressure on the North Korean regime or to force Pyongyang to accept the resolution of the UN Security Council (a resolution that Beijing voted for!).

One of the most glaring examples of this trend is the serious deterioration in the relationship between Beijing and Washington. Bill Clinton, a Democrat, and George Bush, a Republican, were both elected under the banner of taking a harder line towards Beijing. In contrast, Barak Obama began his presidency with promises of a renewed partnership with the entire world, including China. He did not emphasize "human rights" and instead focused on the mutual dependency of the two countries and the necessity of cooperation during the global financial crisis. Famous American Political Scientists Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger even put forward the idea of a "G-2": A joint Sino-American partnership for the solutions of global and international problems. Many observers saw this, obviously flawed, proposal as a harbinger of closer relations between the two countries; this view was prevalent despite the numerous contradictions in Washington's and Beijing's goals (which have become apparent today) and entirely ignoring the fact that the idea of a "G-2" was dismissed by Beijing almost immediately upon being proposed.

After President Obama's first year in office many American observers had come to believe that Obama's bonhomie was perceived as weakness in Beijing and, as a result of this perception, China decided that the time had come to put forward a set of new demands. Thus, the process of improving Sino-American relations that Obama begun upon coming into office is took a reverse course.

The downward trajectory began with Washington officially announcing the sale of new weaponry to Taiwan for the sum of \$6.4 billion. Officially, the dispute was caused by a difference of opinion in the interpretation of a bilateral treaty. The United States has not recognized Taiwan as a State since 1979, but the PRC does not object to Washington maintaining an informal relationship

with the island. In a 1982 communiqué, the United States agreed to gradually lower its sale of military weaponry to Taiwan in exchange for Beijing stating that the peaceful solution to the Straits Crisis was its “fundamental policy”. As a result, Beijing never completely denounced the possibility of annexing Taiwan through military means, while the US never totally agreed to completely curtail its sale of weapons. Moreover, the Congressional 1979 Taiwan Relations Act mandates that the President provide Taiwan with defensive weaponry. Naturally, the PRC would prefer that the US not sell Taiwan any weapons at all.

The list of discrepancies between Washington and Beijing does not end with the Taiwan-American military alliance. The US is also not happy with China’s growing role in the international arena, its economic expansion in the near abroad (as well as in such distant places as Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East). The US is also unhappy with China’s position on Global Warming – an area where China claims the leadership of the “Developing World” and has attempted to shift all the blame for the rising temperatures on the “Developed World”. However, the biggest disappointment to the US and Europe is China’s stubborn refusal to allow its currency, the Renminbi, to fluctuate freely. The maintenance of the Renminbi’s peg to the dollar is seen by both the US and Europe as a clandestine method of protectionism that makes China’s exports more competitive and serves to increase the already enormous trade deficit between China and most western countries. Furthermore, the US is unsatisfied with China’s position on a variety of regional issues, namely the North Korean nuclear problem where, in Washington’s eyes, Beijing has not exerted enough pressure on Pyongyang. The same can be said of the sanctions on Iran’s nuclear program, on which both Beijing and Moscow hold a softer line than does the West. However, since the “reset” of the US-Russian relations, Moscow’s position on Iran has shifted closer toward that of the United States. Beijing, on the other hand, prefers not to have any sanctions at all or to weaken them to such a degree that they lose their teeth.

Beijing’s position on Iran is often explained by China’s commercial interests. Iran really is one of the largest exporters of oil to China. China’s exponentially increasing thirst for oil, caused by an unprecedented economic expansion, and her enormous foreign currency reserves demand good relations with Teheran (which poses the second-largest proven oil deposits in the world and needs investment in order to excavate and refine the black gold). Powerful Chinese state-run oil and gas companies are involved in large projects in Iran and have acquired substantial holdings in some of these. It would seem that

China, as a nuclear power with a fairly small nuclear reserve, should be concerned about that proliferation of WMDs because such proliferation weakens China's relative military capability. Furthermore, Iran's support of Muslim extremists should also worry Beijing which has been preoccupied with the radical Islam in Xinjiang (where it provides the ideological foundation for separatism and terrorism). However, such geopolitical calculations do not play a paramount role in Beijing's views. Rather, a much larger role is played by ideology and the political calculations based on Beijing's views of the future.

A good relationship with Iran strengthens Beijing vis-a-vis the United States and thereby improves Beijing's strategic position in international geopolitics. For China's authoritarian leaders Iran's theocratic regime of the Mullahs is not a political antagonist, but merely one of many forms of nationalistic regimes that are to be found throughout the third world. It is neither better nor worse than other regimes. Furthermore, China has previously experienced the brunt of western sanctions (as has Iran), and thus is highly suspicious of such instruments, viewing them as means used by the west to accelerate a change in the Iranian regime.

Similar explanations can probably be given as to why Beijing has not exerted pressure on its traditional partner, North Korea, who has openly declared its nuclear capabilities. Even the nuclear tests in India, which shares a difficult relationship with the PRC, did not cause consternation in Beijing. China's response to India was limited to a verbal castigation, and Beijing didn't even express this type of criticism when Pakistan tested its own nuclear weapons. In light of such recent history, why should China view Iran as a threat? After all, Iran claims that its nuclear program has only peaceful purposes, a claim that China prefers to believe, while assuaging itself with the notion that Iran is incapable of developing nuclear weapons in the short term anyway and the long-term possibility of such an acquisition is not worth a quarrel with Teheran.

Beijing has also shown displeasure at a whole series of American diplomatic initiatives. Besides the continuation of the military sales to Taiwan, Beijing is also unhappy with American pressure regarding economic issues, and the intervention into the "internal affairs of the PRC" such as the defense of human rights and the meeting between Barack Obama and the Dalai Lama - whom China considers a separatist.

These disputes existed before the inauguration of Barack Obama, but both sides demonstrated an interest in mutually constructive dialogue and did not focus their attention on the disagreements. So why did these disputes suddenly

come into the forefront? To a large extent this is due to the internal political dynamics in both countries. The US views its partnership with China, and with other countries for that matter, in a very unique and peculiar perspective. According to Washington policymakers, the verbal assurance of friendship and cooperation on the part of the United States must push Beijing to make a series of concessions, while Washington was not ready to meet it halfway. As a result, President Obama's November 2009 visit to Beijing did not bring the expected success. Beijing refused to offer one-sided concessions. This strengthened the position of groups in the US which traditionally urge against a closer Sino-American partnership. These groups involve traditional right wing foreign policy hawks, human rights activists, and representative of the military-industrial complex (interested in the continuation of weapons sales to Taiwan). Under the influence of such groups, and due to China's stubbornness, the administration had to take a more hard line approach to China. As a result, in the words of David Shambaugh, the period since President Obama's state visit to China in November of 2009 until the visit of the Chinese Leader Hu Jintao to the US in January of 2011 "has been perhaps the worst period in bilateral relations since the Tiananmen incident of 1989". During the visit of Chinese President Hu Jintao to the US in January of 2011, "both sides took advantage of the opportunity to "reset" the tone of the relationship" said Shambaugh. Although he expresses hope that a new tone can result in tangible cooperation, he immediately remarks that the fundamental contradictions remain: "as both countries have powerful bureaucratic constituencies that remain distrustful of each other with huge budgets aimed at countering the other. Differing political values and systems will continue to be a barrier; volatile nationalism in China remains a wildcard, economic protectionism embodied in low renminbi and competition is not going to disappear; mutual strategic interests in Asia only partially converge and China's military modernization will continue to alter the regional balance of power; respective worldviews differ and global interests are increasingly competitive. These realities are not changed by the successful Obama-Hu Summit".²

A SUDDEN JOLT OF NATIONALISM

The new assertiveness of China can be understood. After all, it is merely the natural urge of a new, large, and successful regime to actively pursue its

2 David Shambaugh, "US-Chinese Relations Take a New Direction?" Part I, YaleGlobal, 24 January 2011 <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/us-chinese-relations-new-direction-part-i>

interests. At the same time, it is true that the successful economic development of the last ten years has led to a growth of nationalism among the elite.

In recent years China has witnessed the publication of articles and books that openly urge Beijing to use any means necessary, including the armed forces, to promote its economic interests. These interests not only include, but depend on the ability of Beijing to control natural resources. In a 2009 Bestseller, *Unhappy China*, the authors are vocal that the Chinese are better than anyone else in the world at controlling and utilizing natural resources. Since China currently has a scarcity of natural resources, the authors suggest that Beijing needs to usurp the world's resources and to utilize them for the good of man-kind. The Chinese army, in the opinion of the authors, must be highly active in helping China obtain natural resources outside of her borders.³ One of the book's authors, Wang Xiaodong, had written earlier that the main problem facing China is the lack of "living space".⁴ Official Chinese representatives and experts usually stated that the ideas propagated by authors of *Unhappy China* are merely the private opinions of citizens, however, when engaged in more open dialogue they admit that these views are also held by influential factions within the military and security agencies.

This open secret was aired in the open in 2010 through the publication of several books and articles by official military analysts who held similar views. In a highly popular book *The China Dream* published in 2010, a PLA National Defense University Professor, Senior Colonel Liu Mingfu wrote that China must strive to have the most powerful military in the world. If it does not achieve this dream, then the efforts of the United States (a struggle and, perhaps a war, with who is inevitable) will relegate China to the sidelines of the international arena.⁵ Liu carefully lists all of America's insults toward China (Taiwan, Tibet, human rights, trade) and finally claims that the reason for American hostility is not ideology but geopolitics. Therefore as long as China seeks to rise to become world number one "then even if China is even more capitalist than the U.S., the U.S. will still be determined to contain it". It is Liu's

3 Song Xiaojun, Wang Xiaodong, Huang Jisie, and Liu Yang, *Zhongguo bu naoxing: da shidai, da mubiao ji womende neiyourwaihuan (Unhappy China: meeting the challenge of our time, our grand vision and our challenges)*. Nanjing, 2009. See p 80-81, 98-99, 106-108.

4 Wang Xiaodong, "Dangdai Zhongguo minzuzhuyi lun" (Theory of Contemporary Chinese Nationalism), *Zhanlue yu guanli*, 2000, №5, pp. 69-82.

5 Liu Mingfu, *Zhongguo meng: hou Meiguo shidaide daguoxiwei (The China Dream: Great Power Thinking in the Post-US World)* (Beijing: Zhongguo youyi Press, 2010).

opinion that the struggle between China and the US is a struggle for world supremacy and to “save itself, to save the world, China must prepare to become the (world’s) helmsman”. Liu Mingfu thus strongly urges the Chinese government to “turn some money bags into bullet holders”.⁶

Another book, written by the military journalist colonel Dai Xu, is appropriately entitled *The C-SHape: How China can break the blockade in light of internal turmoil and external pressure*.⁷ The same arguments as those presented by Li Mingfu and Wang Xiaodong are to be encountered here. According to Dai Xu, American strategy is to surround China by an iron ring of allied states – Japan, Vietnam, India, and the American troops in Afghanistan. In Dai Xu’s eyes, China’s recent history is a series of battles with one conqueror after another: Great Britain in the 19th century, first Japan and then the USSR in the 20th, and now the United States in the 21st. “I believe that China cannot escape the calamity of war, and this calamity may come in the not-too-distant future, at most in 10 to 20 years,” writes Dai Xu. “If the United States can light a fire in China’s backyard, we can also light a fire in their backyard”.⁸ Dai recommends strengthening the Military, particularly the Navy and Air Force.

One way to counter America’s malicious blockade is by following America’s method of creating a “string of pearls”. Calls for the PLA to take a more active role outside the border of the PRC have been spreading among military analysts. For instance, in November 2009 the former Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies at the PLA National Defense University, Rear Admiral Yang Yi, stated: “We should confidently and overtly tell the United States and other countries that China needs to expand its overseas military power because of... national interests abroad.”⁹ In the beginning of 2010, in an

6 As quoted in: Chris Buckley, “China PLA Officer urges China to challenge U.S dominance,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/03/01/us-china-usa-military-exclusive-idUSTRE6200P620100301>

7 Dai Xu, *C-xing baowei: neiyowaihuanxiade Zhongguo tuwei* (C-shaped Encirclement: China’s Breakout of Encirclement under Internal and External Threats), (Shanghai: Wenhui Press, 2010).

8 As quoted in: Chris Buckley, “China PLA Officer urges China to challenge U.S dominance,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/03/01/us-china-usa-military-exclusive-idUSTRE6200P620100301>

9 South China Morning Post, November 28 2009. As quoted in: Jesse Karotkin, *PLAN Shapes International Perception of Evolving Capabilities Publication*, China Brief Volume: 10 Issue: 3. [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=36008&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=25&cHash=e205399a64](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=36008&tx_ttnews[backPid]=25&cHash=e205399a64).

interview that drew widespread concern of the international community, Admiral Yin Zhuo suggested an establishment of a permanent Chinese base in the Andaman straits for the purposes of fighting piracy.¹⁰

Such statements cause foreign suspicion because they contradict the theoretical doctrine as well as the practice of the Chinese military establishment. After the failure of the Chinese “bloody lesson” in Vietnam in 1979, the Chinese army has not been active abroad except for in a peacekeeping capacity under the auspices of the UN, and in military exercises under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). It was always believed that the main goal of the PLA was Taiwan. According to experts, the modernization of the Chinese military and the purchases of arms by the PLA were both geared toward annexation of Taiwan.

China’s diplomacy was also designed to assure the world that China’s intentions were exclusively peaceful in nature and that Beijing’s external policies were structured to facilitate internal development. Beijing avoided issuing statements about its external interests and did not get involved in international conflicts other than to issue statements that formulated Beijing’s position on the topic at hand (mostly, the Chinese basically called for finding the solution through peaceful dialogue). Officially, Beijing’s foreign policy dictum has not changed, but today it is obvious that there are many critics of this strategy inside China – including a large number of the military brass. Ostensibly, these critics do not challenge the formal policy, but practically their ideas are in direct contradiction to the credo established in the late 1970’s by Deng Xiaoping, that essentially boiled down to “adopt a low profile and never take the lead”.

The main elements of this new ideology can be boiled down to the following concepts:

1. China has historically been insulted and humiliated by everyone: Britain, Russia, France, Japan, then later the USSR and the USA – everyone annexed Chinese territory, stole Chinese wealth, and was unconsidered of China’s interests.
2. China was never, even in Imperial times, a hegemonic power. It never conquered other lands, all peoples and ethnicities willingly joined it as vassals, and China was always considered of others and provided support for their development.

10 Malcolm Moore, China may build Middle East naval base. 30.12.2009. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/6911198/China-may-build-Middle-East-naval-base.html>.

3. Today, the main enemy of China is the United States and all the other countries are US puppets who surround China and, enchanted by the American snake charmer, attempt to prevent China from achieving its rightful interests.
4. China is undergoing a boisterous development. China's main problem is the scarcity of natural resources. The future of the world is the future of a vicious competition for Natural Resources and, therefore, China's military must be ready to defend Chinese interests anywhere in the world.
5. China has an ancient culture and an effective economy, a culture and an economy that have proven to be higher and more effective than those of other nations. Thus, it is China's duty to show the world the way into the future, to justly divide natural resources, and to save the world from the hegemonic tendencies of other countries (namely, the United States). For this China must become the most powerful state in the world.

THE LEVEL OF DISCUSSIONS

The most amazing aspect of this new nationalism is not only the disturbing direction of the ideology, but also the lack of intellectual depth in the level of discussion. For instance, here are a few phrases from the book *Unhappy China*:

“From the point of view of effective regulation and distribution of the world's resources, our current gargantuan profit surplus is evidence that our system is more efficient than that of other countries... International natural resources have been better utilized and distributed in the hands of Chinese manufacturers”;¹¹ “Based on practical accomplishments, the Chinese are historically much more successful than are the Jews”.¹² “That is why we must conduct trade with a sword in our hands. We want to lead a trade war, not a real war, but in order to lead a successful trade war one must do so with a sword in hand... Think as though you are a prostitute and you get money for selling your body, don't you need the protection of the Mafia? Basically, many European countries conduct themselves in this manner...”¹³

When reading these lines, one feels that such empty boasting, primitive xenophobia, and simplification of international relations (such as comparing the relationship between the military and external trade, to the relationship between a hooker and her pimp) all sound eerily familiar. Very similar writings can be

11 *Zhonggou bu gaoxing*, pp. 98-99.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 144.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 108.

found in the annals of European countries from the late 19th and early 20th centuries: some ethnicities are better than others, our culture is more ancient and just than is yours, therefore you must submit to our supremacy. In the modern world such ideas are considered to be ignorant and in poor taste at best. In some countries the dissemination of such views can land a person in jail, but not in contemporary China where these views can often be found in the highly censored press and all over the internet.

The goal of this new national ideology is to expand and deepen national pride. On the one hand, the ideology is based on China's traditional worldview. On the other, it is rooted in China's laudable economic success over the last few years. Either way, this worldview is highly dangerous both for China and for the rest of the world. It is highly reminiscent of the political ideology espoused by other revisionist regimes such as the far right in Germany during the Weimar Republic or the Japanese "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere" in the 1940's. Merely the permeation of such ideas is enough to cause widespread consternation throughout the world and will force many state governments, particularly those in China's immediate vicinity, to feel threatened. Even if this ideology never becomes official, the world will still have to deal with an enormous state apparatus whose military and industrial might far exceeds its political consciousness (which is still trapped at early 20th century levels). This is a rather combustible combination.

A foreign policy based on a Nationalist ideology will, first and foremost, be detrimental to China's economy. The PRC today is obviously not strong enough, in either a military or an economic sense, to seriously compete with the United States in a way resembling the US – Soviet competition during the "Cold War". Lest we forget that even the USSR eventually exhausted its potency, overextended its resources, and collapsed. Moreover, contemporary China and the United States have a degree of economic synergy that mutually binds one to the other. Nonetheless, the United States remains more powerful economically and, equally importantly, politically. America can survive without China – US citizens will simply have to tighten their belts. China, on the other hand, is incapable of development without western markets, thus serious economic sanctions can lead to social unrest and even the collapse of the ruling regime.

Not only Washington would be suspicious should China continue the rapid development of its armed forces and begin sending troops abroad for economic development missions. Such politics also increase speculations about China's intentions in Europe, which suffers from a huge trade imbalance with the PRC; in Southeast Asia, which has huge Chinese diasporas; in India, which has a

rather strained relationship with Beijing; and in Russia where Beijing's ambitions to control natural resources naturally causes concern.

The leaders of China are not deaf to these obvious suspicions. This is probably the reason why Chinese officials periodically declare that Nationalist sentiments are not official policy and are merely the opinion of private citizens. The authors of Nationalist books and articles go on record stating that their views are only their own. For instance, after the aforementioned Yin Zhuo interview was criticized by the western press, the transcript suddenly disappeared from the Defense Department website, military personnel were quoted as saying that Yin Zhuo was merely voicing a personal sentiment, and Chinese newspapers, particularly the English periodicals, published essays and op-eds about how "the People's Liberation Army threatens no one". A similar example is the outcry that followed the official acceptance of the theory of China's "peaceful rise" in 2003. Foreign observers began to question whether China's rise would really be so peaceful. This dismay eventually led to the motto being removed and replaced with "peaceful development" and later with the desire to build a "harmonious world".

Despite the government's official retractions, the idea that military personnel on active duty can voice sentiments that violate the Party's official line is difficult to believe. Such an instance would be highly strange in any country, but it is particularly weird in a country that practices harsh censure of literature and newspapers, where not a single article or book can be published without approval from authorities, where the internet is tightly monitored, and where unwanted information disappears from websites moments after its publication. Two explanations are plausible: either the Party lacks genuine control over the army, or the Party shares some of the sentiments voiced by the generals and thus allows the publication of their work so as to gage the reaction from the international media.

The first theory is backed by the fact that the Communist Party prefers to discern itself from radical Nationalist sentiments, yet the number and virility of such statements continues to grow. The second theory is confirmed by trends in China's foreign policy that point to the adoption of some Nationalist views.

Both explanations are rather disconcerting, because the victory of a Nationalist ideology will lead to terrible and tragic consequences for both China and the world. The millions of victims who perished during World War II and the harsh fates of Germany and Japan bear witness to the dangers of Nationalism. The broad dissemination of nationalist sentiment may soon lead Beijing to having to make a decision on the future of China's foreign policy:

should China give in to these sentiments and reconsider the basic foundations of China's relations in the international arena, or to continue the currently held party line, namely: craft a careful and deliberate course, try not to damage or destroy relations with partners, avoid conflicts that don't pose a clear and present danger to the interests of the country, and remain steadfast on two or three questions that pose a "core national interest".

Today it is clear that within Chinese society and government serious battles are being waged as to how China should proceed with its foreign policy in the immediate future. Some experts deny that Chinese foreign policy has become more forward and aggressive, and claim that China must merely become more steadfast in stating her positions on certain issues. In regards to the aforementioned books, proponents of this line claim that these publications had no serious impact or influence on the Chinese public and were barely even noticed. As for increasing China's influence on the world stage (and even controlling the world's natural resources), these thinkers explain that the majority of Chinese don't seriously think like this and that the ideas expressed in books such as *The China Dream* should not be seen as calls for Chinese Hegemony. They continue to assure that China's rapid development does not make wars inevitable and that China will continue using methods of peaceful growth. According to them, the modern world is different from the past when the growth of one country sparked unrest and suspicion leading to wars. Today, they assert, global development is based on mutual cooperation – such as that between Russia and China. China needs a strong Russia and, conversely, Russia needs a strong China. In the author's conversations with such experts, he has often heard them state that China now faces two different types of problems: old problems (security, sovereignty and territorial disputes, border issues, Taiwan, the role of China in the international arena) and new problems (the rise of investment by Chinese citizens outside of China, the rise in the number of immigrants moving out of China, PRC's complex role in Globalization, the problem of natural resources, etc). All of these problems must be resolved through cooperation and increased economic integration (including with Russia).

Experts who toe this line point to China's participation in combating the global financial crisis as an example of Beijing's cooperative, non-combative attitude. For instance, China has incrementally increased its contribution to the IMF. At a November 2010 meeting in Shanghai with a group of Russian academics, a leading Chinese military theorist and the former deputy chief of PLA's General Staff, General Xiong Guankai, expressed his open disagreement with the authors of two abovementioned books published by Chinese military

experts. According to General Xiong, the belief that China must become a global leader in all aspects, including the military sphere, is shared neither by the Chinese government nor by the majority of military experts. Rather, most Chinese experts are focused on China's development and not on making China the international leader. According to the World Bank China is a developing country with a GDP of \$4000 per capita. It is only expected to reach the world average per capita GDP in 2020 and will only attain the per capita GDP of \$10,000 in 2050 (the minimum necessary to be considered a developed nation). However, by that time the threshold for developed nations may rise. With this in mind, Xiong Guankai agrees with the opinion voiced by the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Yang Jiechi that China must become merely one of the poles in a multi-polar world.

Xiong Guankai used a variety of examples to illustrate his assertion that most Chinese leaders did not share the nationalist point of view. He mentioned, for instance, that the Lieutenant General Liu Yazhou, son-in-law of former Chinese premier Li Peng and the writer of the introduction to *The China Dream*, told him that he (Liu Yazhou) did not carefully read the book prior to writing the introduction and that upon seeing the full contents of the book made a public announcement saying that he didn't agree with the author's point of view.

When asked regarding the difference between "peaceful rise doctrine" and "harmonious world concept" and whether such notions mean that China is pursuing an expansionary policy beyond its borders, Xiong said the following: in his opinion there is a fundamental difference between the two concepts. The "peaceful rise doctrine" was designed by experts at the Central Party School, but was never officially adopted by the Party. It has not been used in any type of capacity since 2004. The concept of "Harmonious World", on the other hand, was formulated by the CPC and solidified as official party doctrine at the 17th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party during which Hu Jintao clearly outlined the main precepts of this ideology. Xiong recalled how he criticized the term "peaceful rise" in the Central Party School (CPS) journal "Xuexi" while, in the very same issue of the magazine, the editors used the very same term due to "old habits". Still, He gladly admitted that discussion about China's future is open and anyone can voice their opinion.

In regards to Chinese interests, Xiong Guankai split these into three categories: "core", "important", and "ordinary". Only the "core" interests can be protected by all mean and methods at China's disposal (including military means). However, Xiong Guankai made sure to point out that there are no "core" interests existing outside of China's borders, but one must be cognizant

of the fact that borders can be both land based and maritime. As for issues like Chinese business interests, the rights of Chinese citizens traveling abroad, etc – such things fall under the umbrella of “ordinary” interests. Naturally, the Chinese state must also defend these interests, but only through diplomatic means – through formal discussions based on international law. These interests are subordinate to “core” interests.

In summary, based on conversation with Xiong Guankai, the Russian experts gathered that General Xiong had a clear order to alleviate any concerns that Russians may have regarding ultra-nationalist ideas being voiced by people with close connections to the Chinese military. This mandate may be evidence that Chinese authorities are concerned about the reaction that such nationalist ideas are causing in Russia. Moreover, it can be inferred that the Chinese authorities and experts are engaged in a sharp debate about the future of China’s foreign policy and that Xiong Guankai is a proponent of a softer line in Chinese external affairs.

There exists another point of view, however. On this issue it is interesting to hear the opinions of researchers from the CPS who first presented the concept of a “peaceful rise” back in November of 2003. Formulated and promoted by the CPS vice dean, Zheng Bijian (who served as deputy director of the CCP Department of Propaganda back in the 1990’s), the concept of a “peaceful rise” was adopted at the highest levels of the Chinese government. However, this theory was soon rejected due to the suspicion in other countries that were triggered by the word “rise” (even a peaceful one). Soon thereafter “peaceful rise” was replaced by “peaceful development” and “harmonious world”.

During a November 2010 meeting between the author and Vice-Chair of the China Reform Forum, a body formed by the CPS to deal with Western scholars, Ding Kuisong, the Chinese expert stated that the PRC continues to develop according to the designs first established in the “peaceful rise” theory. During the conversation he made two remarks which deserve particular attention. In his opinion, there are no differences between the doctrine of “harmonious world” and that of “peaceful rise”. The only reason why “peaceful rise” is no longer the party doctrine is due to poor terminology. According to Ding, the term “rise” is a “western” concept and the Chinese, wanting to clarify that this rise was not a threat, automatically added the word “peaceful” to the notion. Ding Kuisong added, in rather critical terms, that the phrase “peaceful rise” caused havoc among “those egghead scholars at the Academy of Social Sciences”, and thus had to be scrapped and replaced with “peaceful development” and then “harmonious world” – the creation of which is now the ultimate foreign policy goal of the country.

When discussing the aforementioned ultra-nationalist books, chiefly *The China Dream*, Ding Kuisong did not say that it was insignificant or unread, but merely pointed out that the author is just one of many experts participating in a discussion about the framework of the “peaceful rise” doctrine. In other words, the book is part of an official debate. Furthermore, Ding pointed out that China’s interests have, in fact, expanded beyond the borders of the People’s Republic of China. However, according to Ding, it’s important to remember that the methods used to pursue these interests must be exclusively peaceful and all issues must be resolved through discussions with the representatives of those other countries whose interests might contend with China’s.

What one can gather from these discussions is that there is an ongoing heated debate on the question of how to best utilize China’s increasing power in foreign relations. It seems that there are at least two debating factions. The first faction can be called “moderate” – people who are proponents of continuing Deng Xiaoping’s “modest” foreign policy that focuses exclusively on providing China with the materials and investment necessary for internal development. In their opinion, an ornery and aggressive foreign policy can repel foreign countries and reflect negatively on China’s economic interests and further internal development. They are countered by the “radicals” who believe that China’s national interests have grown beyond the borders of the PRC and that these interests must be defended through aggressive diplomacy and, in some cases, armed intervention.

For now, the Chinese authorities favor staying on the course set by Deng Xiaoping. This is evidenced, for instance, by the remarks made by Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao during the third session of the eleventh National People’s Congress in March 2010. The Prime Minister rejected the plea of the United States to adjust the Renminbi’s course against the dollar and blamed Washington for the exacerbation of relations with Beijing but, overall, Wen took a peaceful and cooperative tone. He contested that the course of the Renminbi has been slowly adjusting, called Sino-US relations the most important of all of Beijing’s foreign concerns, and hinted that Beijing’s military policy remains focused on the eventual reunification with Taiwan. According to Wen, China remains steadfast in its policy of peaceful development, will never negatively impact other countries, and has never attempted and will never attempt to achieve hegemony through military power.¹⁴

14 Premier Wen meets the press, <http://english.people.com.cn/98666/99647/index.html>

One should remain hopeful that Beijing's authorities will not be swayed by the proponents of an "assertive foreign policy". A suspicious attitude toward China among her neighbors would not be beneficial to helping solve the multitude of economic problems that China, despite its recent successes, still has to face. Essentially, China is a prisoner of its own economic growth. According to some prognoses, any growth of less than 8 percent would result in serious unemployment and cause severe social problems that, lacking a proper outlet, could result in a national cataclysm. In order for the economy to continue growing, China needs foreign markets for its industrial goods, such markets are not created by military bases in foreign countries, but through good relations with major importers.

RUSSIA

Russia is rarely seen by Chinese nationalists as one of the participants of the "siege" of China. Still, sometimes even Russia becomes the brunt of numerous criticisms and, often, they are of a particularly absurd nature. As an example, one can bring up the reasoning of Ma Dingsheng, one of Hong Kong's most popular military analysts and who currently occupies a number of official posts in mainland China. In critiquing the assertion that China and Russia had never fought a major war, Ma writes of the "terrible envy that Russia feels toward China's economic takeoff, and also the admission that all of Russia's exhibitions at last year's Shanghai World Fair were useless relics that provided no interest for the observers". Ma Dingsheng begins by calling on Russia to account for the usurpation of Chinese territories during the Czarist period and then immediately fast forwards to the present day. Apparently, Russia wants to "utilize the SCO in order to drag China into the Afghan war. [Russia intends to do so] by forcing Beijing to help the western powers in Afghanistan through provision of alternate routes for the delivery of non-military materials". Moreover, Russia has apparently demanded that China rescind its claims to South Tibet, currently occupied by India (South Tibet is the name used in China for the Indian province of Arunachal Pradesh which China claims to be part of its territory). Overall, says Ma, if the polls are correct in revealing that more than half of the Chinese public views Russia as a "most friendly nation", then "they certainly don't know of the condescension with which the Russian Bear treats the Chinese Dragon".¹⁵

15 http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_470071c90100grf2.html

Interestingly, such views are expressed not only by ultra-nationalists, but also by pro-democracy activists. For instance, the well-known commentator Cao Weilu wrote of his views in an article published by a foreign internet site: “In the modern era, the worst humiliations which China had to endure were perpetrated not by Japan and certainly not by the United States, but by Russia and the USSR. It’s well known that Russia stole 1.5 million square miles of Chinese territory; during World War II Russian policy forced China to become Russia’s buffer in its battle with Japan; it provoked internal unrest through its puppet the CC and ultimately organized a coup that removed the rightful government - in other words, Russia’s crimes are immeasurable”. Cao Weilu also hates the fact, according to opinion polls, that the majority of China’s population sees Russia as a “most friendly nation”. He writes: “As far as I know, the only proponents of this view are Communist stooges and only the CC has kind feelings toward Russia and the USSR. Ordinary Chinese disdain the Russians, are highly unhappy with the Russians, and hate them even more than they hate the Japanese devils”.¹⁶

What’s interesting about these harangues is not that they are completely convoluted and incorrectly interpret Russia’s position, but that they caused a serious stir in the Chinese public because of the author’s quoting Mao Zedong’s statement that “Russia usurped all of China’s land east of the Baikal”, that “the account has not been cleared”, and that Russia will have to “pay for her old sins”. It is now proven through newly de-classified documents that Mao said this phrase during a discussion with Japanese representatives in July of 1964 with the intent of putting pressure on the Russian delegation during the ongoing border demarcation talks. Later, he often explained that he did not intend to demand this land back, and these words have never been officially published in China. As a consequence, China never had any official pretensions about Russia’s Far Eastern regions. Furthermore, during his 1989 summit with Mikhail Gorbachev, Deng Xiaoping stated that on the question of the territory “all historical accounts have been settled and the problem has faded into obscurity”.¹⁷

The final resolution of the border demarcation situation (the last lingering issues of which were settled in 2004), is one of the fundamental foundations of the current bilateral relationship. Today, according to the official position of both countries, the Sino-Russian strategic partnership and coordination are

16 www.fireofliberty.org/article/6425.asp

17 Sergej Goncharov and Li Denghui. “Pogranichnyy vopros zakryt navsegda” (The Border Issue is Closed Forever). *Asia i Afrika segodnya*. #8, 2004. pp. 6-11.

entirely equal and mutually beneficial. Historical disagreements of the past (the interpretation of which by Chinese scholars is highly questionable) should not serve to disturb the tranquility of the present. However, this reality only exists in theory. Conversely, according to the writings of Chinese nationalists, the insults to China on the part of Tsarist Russia, on the part of the USSR (some of them made up, others more real), and on the part of the Russian post-communist administrations, are all directly descendent from and correlate with one another. As such, Russia is ganging up with a slew of other countries that all wish ill upon China.

What should Russia do in light of such opinions? There are some who believe that the relative growth of China on the world stage and its more active military policy (with the goal of strengthening the military and even distributing the PLA outside of the PRC's borders) are natural consequences of China's economic success and the overall growth of China's power. Thus, other countries should deal with the situation and treat China's policy with understanding. One can agree with such views, but only under one condition – if China's politics really will aim to strengthen international peace and stability. In case of a victory by the nationalist ideology on the national stage and at their seizure of the highest levels of government, the laudable goals of today will be replaced by other, more dangerous goals: the seizure of natural resources to be spent by the Chinese government for “the good of the world”, a struggle to obtain world hegemony in order to save the world through Chinese methods, the resurrection of old debates about “historical injustices”, including, among other things, on territorial issues.

One should not forget another thing. China is still a country run by an authoritarian regime with no real elections, no supremacy of law, no separation of powers, where people are put to jail for years only for writing articles critical of the government or posting them on the internet. In this area China has nothing to be proud about. While this kind of regime behaves modestly in foreign policy at the same time solving a most difficult task of China's economic modernization, it is possible to develop working relationships with it. However, if nationalists come to power in Beijing and begin to seriously lecture other countries on how they should rule themselves according to the ideas of Confucius and Mao Zedong and claim that Chinese should control and distribute world resources because they can do it better than other nations, this will fundamentally change the situation.

In this case, China's neighbors, especially Russia, will have to do some serious thinking on a variety of questions. Where, in fact, are those resources

that some Chinese would kindly like to use for the good of the rest of the world, located? Should Russia participate in the Sino-American struggle for hegemony and add oil to China's engine by selling newest military technology to Beijing? To what limit must Russia decrease its nuclear arsenal through treaties with the United States while considering that China refuses to be a party to such limitation treaties. And, generally, do Russians want to live in a world that is salvaged through CPC methods or, just maybe, they can figure out their own way to decide about their future and about their resources? Basically, Moscow would have to re-examine the entire structure of Sino-Russian relations and even the very basis of Russian foreign policy.

The increase of nationalistic sentiments in Beijing will have to be counterbalanced by Russia's better relations with other players in the region (Japan, South Korea, ASIAN) and in the world (US, the EU, India). Today, many leaders in Asia already harbor serious suspicions towards China. In Seoul, particularly acute concerns have been precipitated by China's support for North Korea and, in particular, Beijing's virtual refusal to apply pressure on Pyongyang to abide with the UN resolution. Tokyo, meanwhile, is panicking as a result of the concessions that the Japanese had to make in the outcome of last autumn's case involving the arrested Chinese trawler captain. The Japanese are worried that the US, a democratic regime, is too calm about the coming change at the top of the Chinese government (although the outcomes of this transition may have a highly pernicious effect on all East Asian countries, particularly Japan). There is a widespread sense of discomfort in Japan due to the fact that a neighbor, which has a significantly different political and democratic values than does Japan, is experiencing a fierce progress in development. Many in Japan believe that if the PRC continues to grow and becomes a regional or even a global leader, Beijing will not be able to resist the temptation to exert a strong influence on its neighbors in terms of lifestyle, culture, and territorial disputes. In this respect, Seoul and Tokyo have a strong interest in cooperation with Russia. The views of a "Right-wing" Japanese specialist on Russia, Shigeki Hakamada, are characteristic of the aforementioned urge to cooperate with Moscow: "I believe that the opinion that Russia as a country is essential to Japanese interests is a correct one. Russia does not view Japan with the same hostility as does China – Russia has no wish to enslave Japan. Of course, it's undeniable that Russia sees Japan as a small country and follows an aggressive foreign policy. Still, this is far preferable to China's mean-spirited remarks. Russia has the same natural resources as does China. Even though the

enormous Chinese market is important for Japan, the country with whom Japan must “stick together” is, first and foremost, Russia”.¹⁸

The experts in India are also extremely concerned about the rise of China. Professor of Madras Christian College Laurence Prabhakar has stated at a recent Russian-Indian conference that China’s desire for a continental hegemony and America’s hegemony over the high seas will lead to the formation of a bipolar world. Under such conditions other regional powers like Japan, Korea, India, and Australia will be forced to choose whether to form a union with China or with the United States. In the opinion of the Indian experts, neither option is a good one since the US influence in the region is waning and China had numerous territorial and border disputes with a plethora of other countries. Thus, India and Russia can and must become the third pole that stabilizes the situation in the Asia Pacific.¹⁹

Due to the current conditions in the region, Russia should consider the following steps:

1. The suspicions that China’s rise has triggered in the countries of Asia, even if they may be exaggerated, have created a beneficial opportunity for the development of tighter relations with such key partners as Japan, South Korea, India, and ASEAN. Under these circumstances it is essential to actively develop commercial and political ties with major powers in the East Asia such as the US, Japan, South Korea, and India while, simultaneously reaching out to the Chinese. The aforementioned powers are not interested in a major paradigm shift resulting from a stronger China and a weaker Russia. These states could, therefore, provide Russia with technology and investment, under the condition that these resources would be rationally and wisely utilized. It thus seems apposite to begin a strategic dialogue on recent development in the East Asia under such auspices as: Russia – Japan – Korean Republic, or Russia – Japan – Korean Republic – India. The main goal of this forum would be to devise a mutual agreement on how to proceed in light of the recent growth of China. Due to the sensitive nature of this issue, it might be wise to begin such a dialogue on an expert level.

18 http://blog.goo.ne.jp/rujax_secret_id/e/572137676be14d5645dca09c5c3d6459

19 Laurence Prabhakar, *India’s Strategic Role and Influence in the Evolving Regional Security Architecture in the Asia-Pacific*. Paper Presented at the ICWA-MGIMO Conference on “Evolving World Order: India Russia Perspectives,” 9-10 December 2010, New Delhi. Manuscript, pp. 2-5.

2. Support the initiative of other countries and/or implement Russia's own initiative for the formation of a multilateral system of security in the Asia Pacific. There exists the possibility of a regional international formation that would guarantee that the game is played according to mutual and identical rules, respect for all Asian Pacific countries, and the formation of trust on all sides.
3. In consideration of the debate raging within the PRC regarding the future of China's foreign policy, it is important that the Russian academia is unified in its opinion of the situation and that we take advantage of meetings with Chinese colleagues so as to voice Russia's concerns regarding the rise of nationalistic tendencies in China. The argument can boil down to the fact that aggressive diplomacy on the part of China and particularly the PLA will result in repulsing many foreign countries and that these countries will naturally react by taking preventative, defensive measures. Such developments will seriously stymie China's continued economic growth as such growth is based directly on cooperation with the outside world.

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Dr Alexander LUKIN

**NOVA SPOLJNOPOLITIČKA STRATEGIJA KINE
I ZABRINUTOST RUSIJE**

APSTRAKT

Najnoviji trendovi u spoljnoj politici Pekinga postali su tema o kojoj se široko raspravlja u svetu. Ekonomski uspeh koji je Kina postigla tokom poslednjih deset godina doveo je do toga da ona zauzme asertivniji pristup u svom odnosu sa spoljnim svetom. Ova promena se ispoljila u tvrdem pristupu odnosa Kine sa njenim partnerima, manjoj sklonosti ka kompromisu i naginjanju ka tome da se na spoljni pritisak odgovori većim pritiskom, na udarce spolja jačim udarcima. Nova kineska asertivnost se može razumeti. Uostalom, ona predstavlja samo prirodnu težnju novog, velikog i uspešnog režima koji aktivno nastoji da ostvari kineske interese. Istovremeno, tačno je da je uspešan ekonomski razvoj tokom poslednjih deset godina doveo do porasta nacionalizma među elitom. Ako naginjanje ka nacionalizmu preovlada u kineskoj spoljnoj politici susedi ove zemlje, uključujući Rusiju, moraće ozbiljno da preispitaju svoj pristup u odnosu na ovog rastućeg džina.

Ključne reči: Kina, Rusija, SAD, nacionalizam, spoljna politika, asertivnost.