The Demise of the ‘New Diplomacy’?  
*Assertive China & The Australian Case*

A Sub-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree for *Master of Arts (Asian Studies Majoring in East Asian Studies)* at the *Australian National University (ANU)*

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It is dedicated to everyone in my life that has always been supportive and loving, especially my family.
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Many thanks must be extended to Ben Croxon and Pedro Iacobelli for their timely support and encouragement. Also, big thanks must go to Tanya Graham and Jens-Christian Weber for always being there for me.
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this sub-thesis is a piece of original work and all illustrating sources have been cited (following the Hispanic American Historical Review Referencing style), to the best knowledge of the author, at the time of the writing. Also, this sub-thesis has not been submitted for any other qualification.

Wen JIA

ANU, Canberra
29th October 2010
ABSTRACT

15 years since introducing a kinder, softer, more nuanced approach known as 'new diplomacy' for shorthand, a series of recent assertive acts on the part of China suggest a departure from this approach. This apparent shift is puzzling to scholars of Chinese foreign and security policy, who for some time now have been pointing to the tremendous benefits that China has accrued through its pursuit of its 'new' diplomatic approach, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

Two broad schools of thought have been identified in this investigation to account for this apparent puzzle. The first 'Strong China' school argues that the departure from the 'new' diplomatic approach is quite a natural and inevitable consequence of China's growing strength and its desire for greater international influence and eventually, hegemony. This school of thinking suggests that the 'new diplomacy' was a temporary adaptive measure adopted for purely instrumental purposes by the Chinese government. It is thus already becoming a thing of the past as China's power grows.

An opposing 'Weak China' school suggests that China's assertive behaviour is a reflection not of China's growing strength, but of internal weaknesses that are yet to be overcome. The 'Weak China' school predicts that the departure from the 'new' diplomatic approach is likely to be a temporary phenomenon. As China's power and confidence grows, and as China gains greater exposure to international norms and institutions, a more consistent adherence to the 'new' diplomatic approach seems a more likely outcome.

This thesis examines three cases from Australia's recent experience with China's apparent departure from its 'new' diplomatic approach – a novel research contribution in its own right given that none of these cases have been subjected to rigorous scholarly analysis – to argue that the answer to
the puzzle outlined above actually lies somewhere between the 'Strong China' and the 'Weak China' schools.

On the one hand, it argues that advocates of the 'Strong China' school are correct in asserting that China's apparent departure from its 'new' diplomatic approach has been a direct outcome of its growing power. On the other, they are also incorrect in identifying China's growing power being the underlying cause for that departure. Rather, it argues that China's growing power is actually exacerbating China's internal fragilities in line with what advocates of the 'Weak China' school suggest.

However, where supporters of the 'Weak China' school argue that this departure is a temporary phenomenon, this thesis argues that they have underestimated the quite deep and enduring nature of those internal fragilities. As China's power grows, those fragilities will likely be emphasised, not reduced, hence leading to more rather than less assertive behaviour on the part of China.

The thesis therefore sides with the 'Strong China' school in arguing that China's recent departure from its 'new' diplomatic approach is more likely to be a lasting one. However, it sides with the 'Weak China' school in emphasising that the departure is a reflection not of China's inherent strength and international ambition, but its growing weaknesses that are being exacerbated by China's continuing rise. Hence, in order to adequately account for China's recent departure from its 'new' diplomatic approach, the thesis concludes that a synthesis of the arguments associated with seemingly opposing 'Strong China' and 'Weak China' schools of thinking is called for.
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<tr>
<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asia Nations</td>
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<td>CCP</td>
<td>Chinese Communist Party</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>ETM</td>
<td>East Turkistan Movement</td>
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<td>IOC</td>
<td>International Olympic Committee</td>
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<td>PRC</td>
<td>People's Republic of China</td>
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<td>SCO</td>
<td>Shanghai Cooperation Organisation</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-1990s, China has adopted a new style of international behaviour which is often referred to as its 'new diplomacy'. Profound changes have been observed in China's diplomatic approach during the period since, ranging from an emerging attitude of flexibility and responsibility-sharing, proactive approaches in interacting with countries and regional and international organisations to a confident and constructive manner in dealing with conflicts. Many parts of the world, particularly Southeast Asian countries, reacted positively to this 'new' China that appeared friendly, non-aggressive and even open to embracing others. The Six-party talks, for instance, initiated by China in 2003, were regarded as the centrepiece of China's 'new' diplomatic approach. Other examples also point to the success of this 'new diplomacy', including an improved Sino-Indian relationship, which marked substantial efforts from China to turn its one-time adversary into a partner, increased support for the United Nations (UN) processes, efforts to establish closer ties with the European Union (EU), and a significantly upgraded level of engagement with Asian regional institutions. Indeed, as Fravel and Medeiros observed, Chinese foreign policy has become 'more engaging than at any other time in the history of the People's Republic

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1 See the following Review Chapter where the time when the 'new diplomacy' began to emerge is discussed.
of China (PRC).

Overall, the major effect of this 'new diplomacy', as Shambaugh puts it, has been able to dissipate others' concern of China's rise considerably, if not totally melted those concerns away.

However, in recent years, great Chinese assertiveness has been observed in China’s diplomatic approach. For instance, China cancelled its summit with the EU in late 2008 to protest against the French President’s meeting with the Dalai Lama and even threatened to use economic sanctions against the US for its arms sale to Taiwan. Such assertiveness on the part of China has been a major theme in Asian security politics during 2010 in particular. Reignited tensions over disputed territories in the South China Sea and Japan's arrest of a Chinese captain have resulted in the Chinese government reaching more readily for its stick. Those responses appear diametrically opposed to the 'new' diplomatic approach that has been such a dominant theme of Chinese foreign policy for much of the past decade and a half. Given the overall success of that 'new' diplomatic approach, it is thus puzzling to see such a dramatic shift on the part of China.

Two major schools of thought have been identified to account for this apparent puzzle. The first, which for the purposes of this thesis is termed the

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8 Chris Buckley, "China Cancels Japan Talks, Warns on Sea Dispute," (Reuters, 2010).
'Strong China' school, does not regard China's recent assertiveness as being particularly unexpected or surprising. This school of thought suggests that China has merely been biding its time and hiding its capabilities for much of the past one and a half decades until such time as it felt it could make a play for hegemony. That time is fast arriving, accelerated by a relative decline in American power that has been occasioned by the global financial crisis and a continuing growing Chinese economy. Hence, following the logic of the proponents of the 'Strong China' school, China is now merely revealing its true colours.

A leading advocate of this line of thinking is the American scholar John Mearsheimer, who is of the opinion that China's rise will be an inevitably unpeaceful one.9 Based on Mearsheimer's reasoning, China's recent assertiveness merely confirms that the 'new' diplomatic approach was but a clever ruse, a tactical and yet temporary move on the part of China. In similar vein, Robert Kaplan equates China's foreign policy goals with those of the US a century ago, asserting that China is as aggressive as the US was a hundred years ago in expanding global influence,10 which suggests China's growing assertiveness is a natural outcome of its rise and thus, current Chinese assertiveness simply means that the 'new diplomacy' has nearly reached its end point.

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An opposing line of thinking, dubbed the 'Weak China' school, in this investigation, rejects those interpretations of China's recent less than diplomatic behaviour. This school of thinking is particularly more popular amongst Chinese scholars who emphasise the deep-seated domestic problems that China continues to confront and which for the time being severely limit its capacity to shoulder additional international responsibilities, let alone seeking regional or global hegemony. For instance, Professor Wang, Yizhou, justifies Beijing's recent deviations from the 'new diplomacy' by emphasising China's status as a developing country. According to Wang, China may be a rich country in terms of an overall large GDP, but still a poor nation with a huge burden of feeding and providing welfare to a 1.3 billion population. Therefore, developing China itself is certainly the priority of the Chinese government, which will in turn soften China's international capacity.

From the perspective of the 'Weak China' school, however, China's recent assertiveness is merely a temporary phenomenon, reflecting areas of fragility and instability within China that, once repaired and reinforced, will lead to the emergence of a China that is more comfortable with its international surroundings. In other words, advocates of the 'Weak China' school imply that China's much criticised behaviours are a temporary phenomenon that will likely diminish and may well evaporate altogether, as China moves beyond its current 'developing' status.

This thesis argues that each of these schools of thinking is able to partially account for China’s recent assertive turn away from its seemingly successful ‘new’ diplomatic approach, but that neither is able to provide a sufficiently compelling or comprehensive explanation. Instead, the central argument of this thesis is that a synthesis of the arguments contained in the ‘Strong China’ and the ‘Weak China’ schools is ultimately required to fulfil that important analytical task.

To illustrate this argument, the thesis seeks to make a further novel research contribution towards this topic by examining three recent Australian cases, where Australia experienced China’s recent assertive diplomacy, and argues that the answer to the recent Chinese assertiveness actually lies somewhere in between those two major arguments. To start with, the debate as to why there is such a shift in China’s diplomatic posture is particularly relevant in the Australian context. For one, China, being Australia’s largest trading partner, and Australia, being a significant import market of China’s economy and supplier of resources and raw materials to China’s booming economy, have now developed an interlocking relationship with each other that is expected to intensify. In fact, the appointment of Fu, Ying, one of the China’s finest diplomats as many say\textsuperscript{12}, as the Chinese ambassador to Australia showed a specific strategic emphasis on Australia from the Chinese side.

Speculation about Australia being the target of China's 'new diplomacy' was not totally unfounded. The *Australian Financial Review* identified Madame Fu as an exemplar of this 'new diplomacy', describing her as 'a paradigm of the new elite Chinese diplomat who has learned from the West the disarming arts of issues management and public diplomacy based on personal charm and the appearance of openness'. For those who subscribe to the emergence of the 'new diplomacy', appointing Madame Fu thus was arguably quite an evident move from China to further its 'new' diplomatic practice towards Australia. Hence, the Australian encounters of some seemingly assertive practice from Chinese diplomacy not only place Australia as a legitimate stakeholder into inquiring about what had happened to the 'new diplomacy', but may also, to a large extent, reveal a bigger picture of the 'new diplomacy'. Additionally, those Australian cases are recent events, which have not received sufficient scholarly attention apart from media coverage. Study of them, hence, not only makes an original contribution but more importantly, explores a different angle of looking into the 'new diplomacy'.

The three prominent case studies involving Australia and that will be used to test the above two schools of thoughts – the 'Strong China' and the 'Weak China' schools - are the *Canberra leg of the 2008 Olympic Torch Relay, Rebiya Kadeer's visit to the 2009 Melbourne International Film Festival* and the *2010 Australian citizen Stern Hu's trial in China*. The torch relay was a dramatic event at many levels and the Canberra leg itself was illuminating to the

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extent that it exposed outpourings of Chinese nationalism that were reportedly supported and facilitated by the Chinese government, but which also ran directly counter to the ‘new’ diplomatic approach that Beijing has been implementing, with considerable success, in the Australian context. Similarly, Kadeer’s visit to Melbourne and the Australian government’s lack of opposition to it triggered tough and assertive reactions from Chinese officials, in a manner once again that was diametrically opposed to the kinder, softer and more nuanced Chinese diplomatic approach which had been so prevalent during previous years. The last incident of Stern Hu’s espionage charges witnessed a tough China that refused to openly conduct certain parts of the trial, much to the chagrin of the Australian government and which resulted in widespread criticism of Beijing in the Australian media and beyond.

The findings of this thesis, derived from a thorough and systematic analysis of these three case studies, suggest that both the ‘Strong China’ and the ‘Weak China’ schools of thinking are able to partially account for China’s recent assertive turn away from its ‘new diplomacy’. On the one hand, advocates of the ‘Strong China’ school are correct in asserting that China’s apparent departure from its ‘new’ diplomatic approach has been a direct outcome of its growing power. On the other hand, they have also incorrectly identified China’s growing power as the underlying cause for that departure. Contrary to the diagnosis of the ‘Strong China’ school, this investigation argues that China’s growing power is actually exacerbating China’s internal
fragilities in line with what advocates of the 'Weak China' school suggest. However, where supporters of the 'Weak China' school indicate that this departure may be of temporary nature, this thesis argues instead that adherents to this school of thinking have underestimated the quite deep and enduring nature of those internal fragilities. Moreover, as China's power grows, the thesis argues, those fragilities will likely be emphasised, not reduced, hence leading to more, rather than less, assertive behaviour on the part of China.

In sum, this thesis sides with the 'Strong China' school in arguing that China's departure from its 'new' diplomatic approach is more likely to be a lasting one as China's power continues to grow. Yet it also agrees with the 'Weak China' school in emphasising that the departure is more of a reflection not of China's inherent strength, but its growing weaknesses. Thus, in order to adequately account for those recent departures from the 'new diplomacy', a synthesis of the arguments associated with these seemingly opposing two schools of thinking is called for.

To advance the above line of argument, this thesis is structured as follows. The next chapter provides an overview of China's so-called 'new diplomacy', as part of which, the key characteristics of and motivations for China's 'new' diplomatic approach are discussed. The claim that China's 'new diplomacy' led to foreign policy successes is also substantiated, thereby highlighting and justifying the central research puzzle which motives this thesis – why, after a
decade and a half of seemingly successful diplomatic practice, has China apparently deviated away from this 'new' diplomatic approach?

In an effort to resolve this puzzle, the third chapter of the thesis tests the thinking of the 'Strong China' and the 'Weak China' schools against the three aforementioned cases in Sino-Australian relations, illustrating that neither explanation is adequate in and of itself to explain or to understand the cause and the outcomes of these three cases. The 'Strong China'-'Weak China' synthesis advocated by this thesis is thus also applied to these three cases in an attempt to demonstrate its superiority as an analytical approach.

The final concluding chapter of the thesis is then left to perform two important tasks. It first discusses some of the more salient policy-relevant findings of this thesis in terms of what they portend for the future of China's 'new diplomacy', concluding that in all likelihood the current deviation from the 'new diplomacy' is likely to be an enduring one. The conclusion then moves to examine what the findings of this thesis imply for scholars in terms of how they subsequently approach the study of China's diplomatic practice and its foreign policy more generally. It's most important conclusion here is that increasingly complex and synthetic methodological approaches of the sort advocated in this thesis are going to be increasingly pertinent and necessary in all future scholarly endeavours in this field.
OVERVIEW OF CHINA’S ‘NEW DIPLOMACY’

Of direct concern to this investigation is the notion of China’s ‘new diplomacy’, or the ‘new diplomacy’ for shorthand. There are a number of points related to this term that must be addressed before the thesis is able to embark on the study of the selected cases. The primary task is to define the term, which includes identifying the origin, as well as the features of and motivations for the ‘new diplomacy’. Following that, the positive impact of the implementation of the ‘new diplomacy’ will also be outlined, which highlights the central research puzzle. After all, the ‘new diplomacy’ has overall worked effectively in China’s favour in the past decade and a half, and hence is certainly perplexing to see China now appearing to deviate from it.

What is China’s ‘new diplomacy’?

The following questions must be answered, in order to gain a full understanding of the term ‘new diplomacy’: when did this terminology emerge? Why it is titled ‘new’? What are its primary features? While interpreting each element of this term appears to be a straightforward task; the reality is that there is much confusion about this term, as among China watchers and scholars, not only how they approached this term varied, but also some of them discussed it indirectly, together with other notions such as ‘soft power’. Moreover, it appears that many of them took this term or
phenomenon for granted and did not present it in a systematic fashion that delivers a clarification of each element.

To start with, it appears that Australian scholar Professor Fitzerberg may be the pioneer of adopting the phrase of 'new diplomacy' to describe China's diplomatic approach. And unfortunately, this is where the confusion seemed to have started as well. In his article 'China's new diplomacy: the Australian impression',¹⁴ 'new diplomacy' was referred to as the Chinese initiative to establish diplomatic ties with the West, including Australia, in the 1970s.¹⁵ What Fitzerberg considered as 'new' diplomatic behaviour of China was some practices in China's diplomacy that he observed as different to the ideology-driven and closed-door style of diplomacy of earlier periods of China, under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule.¹⁶ However, Fitzerberg's rigid time frame and content of the 'new diplomacy' stands out from the majority of scholars who have discussed the 'new diplomacy'. To many of them, China's 'new diplomacy' is a phenomenon associated with China's rise, which is much more recent than the 1970s and most definitely emerged after Mao's era.

Published in 2003, Medeiros and Fravel's article addressing China's 'new diplomacy' was the very first scholarly discussion of the 'new diplomacy'

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¹⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶ Ibid.
that has been commonly referred to, in recent years.\textsuperscript{17} As they noted in the article, since the mid-1990s, China has undergone a larger and not sufficiently recognised transformation in its diplomatic approach.\textsuperscript{18} To them, the 'new diplomacy' was an evolution of Chinese foreign policy, started from Deng’s reform but had blossomed since the 1990s, largely due to the Chinese attempt to break out from the post-Tiananmen isolation,\textsuperscript{19} when China appeared to frequently approach the world in a dramatically different way. And that new way was observed to include the renouncement of the victim mentality, engagement of the world and the taking up of the responsibilities of a great power and so on. Compared to how Fitzerberg defined the 'new' diplomatic behaviours, Medeiros and Fravel's usage of 'new' referred to a much larger scale of changes in Chinese diplomacy, arguing that this 'new diplomacy' represents a height of Chinese foreign policy in terms of engaging the world in the history of the PRC.\textsuperscript{20}

This view was very much echoed in other scholars' writings. Jing, Canrong and Dai, Wei, for example, in their article discussing changes in relations among big powers, advanced that the 'new diplomacy' represented a second Chinese foreign policy revolution since Deng's open-door reform\textsuperscript{21}. To them, the 'new diplomacy' is a transformation of Chinese diplomatic behaviours

\textsuperscript{17} Many scholars quoted this article of Medeiros and Fravel in illustrating the 'new diplomacy' and viewed it as the first scholarly writing on the 'new diplomacy'.
\textsuperscript{18} Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy." pp. 22-23.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid. p. 24.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. P. 23.
\textsuperscript{21} The first time being the beginning of the open door reform when Chinese foreign policy shifted from viewing the world was in a status of war and revolution to viewing the major global theme is peace and development.
from being passive to active in dealing with international society, since the 1990s. Referring to Medeiros and Fravel's 'new diplomacy' article, they also agreed upon the degrees and depths of the changes are no less than dramatic.\footnote{Canrong Jin and Wei Dai, "The New Trend of Changes in Big Power Relations and Its Implications," \textit{Dang Dai Ya Tai} 1 (2008).} Interestingly, to Jing and Dai, the most symbolic event of this 'new diplomacy' was not China's engagement of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), the UN or its remarkable advancement of a responsible China image globally, as Fravel and Medeiros considered; rather, it was the success of the Chinese nomination of Hong Kong's former Director of Health, Dr Margaret Chan, to be the new Director-General of World Health Organisation (WHO). Jing and Dai commented that the appointment of a Chinese national to an important leading role of an international organisation such as WHO for the first time, demonstrated a China's changing attitude towards participating in the international arena. Instead of being silent, China began to choose to actively voice out its opinions in serving China's interests.\footnote{Ibid.}

Joshua Kurlantzick, similarly, agreed that it was the mid 1990s when a large scale of changes were evidently observed in China's diplomatic approach, and China began to receive historically high popularity worldwide.\footnote{Kurlantzick, "China's New Diplomacy and Its Impact on the World." p. 222.} To Kurlantzick, Chinese 'new diplomacy' is surrounding the concept of being pragmatic to advance Chinese interests globally. In contrast to Fravel and Medeiros, and to Jing and Dai, Kurlantzick's emphasis was not on the
revolutionary nature or dramatic contrast between the 'new diplomacy' and China's previous diplomatic style; instead, he examined the impact that this 'new diplomacy' has manifested worldwide. Apparently, to Kurlantzick, the 'new diplomacy' is new because it has brought China unprecedented influence under CCP rule to the point where the world even began to discuss the prospect of a Beijing Consensus to rival the prevailing Washington Consensus.25

Tsing Hua-based Xing, Yue and Zhan, Yijia again did not reject what Fravel and Medeiros have established as to what is the 'new diplomacy' in terms of the origin and distinguishing characteristics. Nevertheless, they also had their own perceptions of why the 'new diplomacy' is new. Xing and Zhan argued that the 1990s diplomatic changes reflected shifts in how China perceived its own national interests.26 According to them, the 'new diplomacy' is new because China had assumed a dramatically altered new international identity, wherein its growing economic power fuelled Chinese confidence, increased China's international liabilities and requested different or new responses from China.

Arguably also belonging to this majority group, Su, Changhe, a Fudan-based scholar, however, provided a slightly different view towards the origins of the 'new diplomacy' and why he considered this 'new diplomacy' to be new.

Su had a particular note on China’s growing interest in multilateralism, which he believed had started since 1979 and became more obvious, particularly after the end of the Cold War, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. He argued that the appreciation of multilateralism was naturally growing for China during those important years, as China realised isolation was unable to solve many challenges ahead, which gradually shaped Chinese diplomacy into one that is focused on cooperation and participation. According to Su, the 1990s was certainly where the ‘new diplomacy’ proved to have existed, but the emergence of which could be dated back earlier. Su’s logic in explaining why labelling those changes in China’s diplomatic practice as new is simply because the guiding mentality of shifting to emphasise multilateralism was new in China’s diplomatic history under CCP rule.

Hence, even within this identified majority group where most scholars agreed that the ‘new diplomacy’ was the one that emerged during the 1990s under CCP rule, views slightly varied regarding the boundary of the element of ‘new’ as to what they considered as typical features of the ‘new diplomacy’; let alone they were mostly silent on the definition of ‘diplomacy’. This conveys a real sense of ambiguity, which unfortunately can be taken further.

Firstly, there are terms like ‘soft power’, ‘charm offensive’ or ‘peaceful rise’ that have been just popular and also attracting much scholarly attention. The danger lies in where scholars did not make a distinction between those
terms and the 'new diplomacy', when discussing either 'new diplomacy' or one of those phrases. It became particularly confusing when any of those terms was mentioned together with 'new diplomacy'. For instance, Professor Yu, Zhengliang described China's 'new diplomacy' as 'a new international behaviour pattern, which is another form of soft power and further demonstrates China's peaceful rise intention', which did not clarify what really 'new diplomacy' is but blurred the boundary of 'new diplomacy' with that of 'soft power' and 'peaceful rise'. Yet those terms are not synonymous with 'new diplomacy', nor are they equal to each other themselves. Yu was not incorrect in expressing the idea that the 'new diplomacy' is part of China's soft power, a power that is based on attractions stemming from its culture or values rather than coercion, and so far, most of the scholars see both the 'new diplomacy' and 'soft power' as no less instrumental in assisting China's peaceful rise. Distinctions need to be drawn, however, if the 'new diplomacy' is discussed together with those terms.

Secondly, there are some scholars who have suggested that the so-called 'new diplomacy' after all is not that new. In other words, the existence of this term to them was doubtful. Beijing-based Dr Zongze Ruan, for instance, was of the view that China's diplomacy had followed the evolution of major political theories, which represented continuity from the initial Mao and

Deng's thinking through to current political principles.\(^{29}\) In his examination of CCP's leadership and their governing theories in diplomacy, Ruan found that virtually all of these paved way for further development of Chinese diplomacy up to the present. Despite the distinctively different styles during the initial Mao era and subsequent periods, Ruan indicated that the continuity in Chinese diplomacy existed.\(^{30}\)

Similarly, Brussel-based Professor Jing Men credited all four generations of CCP leaders of Chinese government as playing a role in shaping Chinese foreign policies. Men argued that despite the fact that Chinese diplomacy experienced dramatic changes after Deng assumed power; every CCP leader was fairly pragmatic about the realities that faced China at any given time, including Mao.\(^{31}\) In fact, Men pointed out that even though China's foreign policy under Mao was not as cooperative or friendly as that of today, it certainly was active as well.\(^{32}\)

All things considered, it is fair to say that despite the popularity of this term in scholarly discussions over recent years, the definition of the 'new diplomacy' remains obscure. Nonetheless, for the purposes in this investigation, a clearer boundary of this term must be set. That definition starts from the less contentious elements of the phenomenon. As outlined


\(^{30}\) Ibid.


\(^{32}\) Ibid.
above, regardless of some variations about when this 'new diplomacy' was brought about, it is generally agreed that in the 1990s, the 'new diplomacy' began to emerge. That, therefore, is a key and relatively uncontentious defining characteristic.

For the factors which initially motivated the shifts in China's foreign policy settings which led to the adoption of the 'new diplomacy', one must look to the 1990s when many incidents took place that have shaped the external strategic environment of China. As a consequence, China was forced to reconsider its way of interacting with the world. For instance, Su, as just noted, mentioned the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as Kurlantzick who discussed the 1989 Tiananmen incident's impact on Chinese diplomacy. Robert Sutter specifically pointed out that the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown as a development that significantly impacted on China's external environment. For example, countries, including the US and Australia, following the Tiananmen crisis, introduced a number of carefully measured sanctions against China based on its human rights record. As a result, China experienced much western countries' condemnation in the international society and the ensuing isolation. As China had already started its open-door reform and its economy was on a fast-growing track, a sudden separation from the international community would do nothing but

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34 Ibid, p.353.
great harm to its economic growth, not to mention it would further limiting China's global influence. To minimise this possibility, China thus decided to adopt a new style of diplomacy. That, according to Bolewski and Rietig, brought forward some activism from the Chinese end, where relationships with European countries and Russia were normalised, and a more flexible and cooperative China was more frequently seen internationally.36

Another potential risk for international isolation or containment in the 1990s was the 'China threat' theory, in order to defeat which China shaped its diplomacy towards a new direction. Kenneth Lieberthal argued that Chinese leaders appreciated the rapid economic growth and feared that concerns from other countries regarding China's intention behind its rise may be detrimental to China's further development.37 Kurlantzick similarly noted that China feared the US containment and increasingly saw the need to establish a favourable external environment.38 Thus, Chinese foreign policy was then shaped around the goal of discrediting the 'China threat' theory and establishing a stable external environment.

As for 'diplomacy', which most of the writings were silent about, this overview prefers to include both foreign policy making and diplomatic practice. While diplomacy focuses predominantly on implementation of

policies regarding to foreign affairs and with foreign policy usually referring to policy making in the field of foreign affairs, these two are practically interwoven with each other. As Professor Stuart Harris put it, 'the link between the two is direct and immediate' and that each of them influences the other and 'decisions on diplomatic processes are usually taken within the same decision-making process that determines the objective.’39 Thus, 'diplomacy', in this context, includes diplomatic practice (or behaviours) and foreign policy.

Extra caution, however, needs to be exercised in terms of defining the element of 'new'. Commonsense suggests that 'new' indicates a certain level of comparison between the current diplomacy in question to that in the past. And that was what the above mentioned scholars did, although their angles did differ. Xing and Zhan's argument of China's new national interests defined the newness of the 'new diplomacy' attempted, in fact, to provide an insight of the source or intention of the implementation of the 'new diplomacy'. While Fravel and Medeiros listed a good number of features that differed from the past Chinese diplomatic behaviours, Kurlantzick illustrated his understanding of the newness from the perspective of 'new diplomacy's impact. While there is no standard approach to measuring which method depicts the 'new diplomacy' the best; all of them essentially aimed to portray the features of the 'new diplomacy'.

The following, for analytical purposes, thus attempts to summarise a number of them that have been commonly referred to as features of the 'new diplomacy' and adopt them as part of the definition, which this overview is to offer.

The prime character of the 'new diplomacy' is flexibility. The style of flexibility came as a surprise to the world after Mao's diplomats planted a stiff image of China to the world by strictly upholding principles and ideologies. The flexibility can be observed in two major aspects. Regarding territorial disputes, China has astonished the world with Deng's proposal of 'One country two systems' policy in reuniting Hong Kong and Macau. Not only it was against the very principle of absolute sovereignty that China always upholds; but it compromised the centralised political system that the PRC was built on. Shambaugh noted that due to the implementation of the 'new diplomacy', tension of territorial disputes between China and its neighbours have been significantly eased.\textsuperscript{40} For example, China and Vietnam have signed treaties regarding their borders in 1999 and 2000, and further discussed issues relating to disputed islands via a bilateral forum.\textsuperscript{41} It is also worth mentioning that China in 2002 signed the Code of Conduct on the South China Sea, between ASEAN and China,\textsuperscript{42} which in hindsight, against the current South China Sea dispute, again highlights the puzzling shift away from China's new diplomacy.

\textsuperscript{40} Shambaugh, "China's New Diplomacy in Asia." p.35.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
Another area where China's flexibility has been largely demonstrated is its great effort to embrace the international system by entering the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Ann Kent noted that China used to be fairly consistent and persistent in advocating the sovereignty principle and the principle of non-interference as protection of its sole decision-making right regarding Chinese domestic affairs. However, China modified those two doctrines with its great efforts to gain entry into the WTO, which was an enduring journey of almost fifteen years' long negotiation.

Secondly, the 'new diplomacy' emphasises multilateralism as well as bilateralism. Not only has China expanded its bilateral relationships both in depth and numbers, but perhaps more importantly in the context of the present study, it has also been more and more embracing of multilateralism in dealing with regional and global affairs. In other words, cooperation has been a major focus of the 'new diplomacy'. According to Fravel and Medeiros, China's active participation in ASEAN (and its regional forum), China's proposal of establishing a China-ASEAN free trade zone as well as the establishment of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and China's active seeking dialogues with European Union since 1998, have demonstrated a very cooperative attitude in China's diplomatic approach.

Professor Fan Wang also observed that not only has China been

44 Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy." p.25.
instrumental in promoting regional bodies, such as ASEAN and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), China has also taken the initiative to establish the six-party talks to promote cooperation among powers in tackling North Korean denuclearisation. Many scholars also found that China have applied both bilateral and multilateral means to particularly improve relationships with its neighbouring countries. Apart from the afore mentioned ASEAN and SCO, Professor Shambaugh, for example, observed that China has actively engaged South Korea, Vietnam, and India, making efforts in strengthening economic ties and increasing cooperation to solve disputes in its region.

Thirdly, the 'new diplomacy' seeks active engagement with the international community, in particular by participating in global affairs. Unlike the early years of the PRC, where China was either sceptical of or distant from the UN; now China has been assuming an active role in world affairs, which includes actively participating in UN missions. China's support for UN missions has been increasingly seen on the world stage. According to Gill and Huang, since 2000, China has dispatched the largest number of peacekeepers under the UN flag among the permanent members of the UN Security Council. And as of the end of 2005, China was ranked the fifteenth largest contributor to UN peacekeeping operations. Not to mention the early 2010 Haiti earthquake

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48 Ibid.
even saw a surprising swift Chinese reaction, where 60 Chinese rescuers were sent from Beijing just hours after the earthquake hit Haiti.\textsuperscript{49}

Moreover, from an image of being resistant to international norms to a follower of those norms and even a guardian of those norms on some occasions, China has been working on transforming its old image into that of a responsible player. Dr Men, Honghua posited that China has come a long way to realise that trust-building and a good international image needs to be built through compliance with international institutions and laws.\textsuperscript{50} Medeiros and Fravel used the global arms control and non-proliferation affairs as an example, which China conventionally viewed as responsibilities of the US and the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{51} According to them, since the late 1980s, however, China has ratified several major arms control and non-proliferation accords, including the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and Chemical Weapons Convention.\textsuperscript{52} Despite the fact that China still has ongoing testing requirements associated to its efforts to modernise its nuclear warheads, it did have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1996 as well.\textsuperscript{53}

Lastly, the ‘new diplomacy’ demonstrates a win-win value. It is all surrounding the idea that China’s way of developing is not only non-

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  \item[\textsuperscript{49}] Xinping Wang and Yun Wu, "China Extremely Concerned About Haitian "Worst Quake" Victims," (People's Daily, 2010).
  \item[\textsuperscript{50}] Honghua Meng, "Learn to Play by the Rules: China's Role in International Institutions," (IR China, 2005). p.3.
  \item[\textsuperscript{51}] Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy." p. 27.
  \item[\textsuperscript{52}] Ibid.
  \item[\textsuperscript{53}] Ibid.
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threatening to others, but beneficial to the whole global community, as it provides unconditional assistance when necessary. As Kurlantzick noted that there were much of positive Chinese influence in Asia compared to the declining US influence, and China’s attitude to be everyone’s friend seems to be more appealing compared to the conditional US’ support, where human rights issues, for instance, are particularly emphasised.54

All in all, although the aforementioned list of the features of China’s new diplomacy is not exhaustively completed; this overview so far has presented a relatively clear picture of the ‘new diplomacy’. Compelled by the need to develop itself in a favourable external environment, China began to largely implement a new style of diplomacy in the 1990s, where emphasis is greatly placed upon interacting with the world in a flexible, engaging, cooperative, more responsible and win-win outcome oriented fashion. That is what has been commonly referred to as China’s ‘new’ diplomacy in recent years.

Assessing China’s new diplomacy

It is obviously difficult to quantify the effectiveness of the implementation of the ‘new diplomacy’. However, how the world reacts to the ‘new diplomacy’, as the direct recipient combined with how much of benefit that China appears to have gained, may provide important feedback on how successful the implementation has been. Overall, since the introduction of the ‘new

diplomacy' in the 1990s, China has dramatically enhanced its international image. In 2005, for example, a study of 22 nations' attitude survey found 48% of the people considered China's role worldwide was of positive nature, while only 30% viewed it negatively. Many parts of the world have received the 'new' diplomacy positively and the transformation that China has gone through via the 'new diplomacy' appears to have been in favour of China. Numerous examples can be found to support this view.

According to Shambaugh, for instance, in Asia, China’s new image of being actively engaging the region has not only deepened its ties with regional institutions such as ASEAN, (where economically, China-ASEAN trade grew from $45.6 billions to $78.2 billions within just a year from 2002 to 2003), but a soaring number of Asian countries’ citizens began to view China favourably. For example, 80% of foreign students of 2003 in China came from its Asian neighbours. Moreover, China has strengthened its ties with many of its close neighbouring countries. China has become South Korea's largest trading partner, and not only frequent visits have been paid by each countries' citizens for travelling and business purposes but high level officials have been exchanging visits on a regular basis, including increasingly interactive militaries consult and exchange. Similar improvement has been seen in Sino-Vietnamese relations and Sino-Indian relationships where China's new diplomacy has turned the once hostile

56 Shambaugh, "China's New Diplomacy in Asia." p. 32.
57 Ibid. p. 33.
neighbouring relationships into flourishing and cooperative ones and has reasonably removed some of its border tensions with those countries.58

In Latin America, another example of the striking performance of China's new diplomacy, where Gonzalo Paz called the 'American backyard' has seen more of a Chinese presence rather than that of the US.59 According to Paz, not only did Chinese president Hu spend more time travelling to Latin America, many Latin American leaders now seem to have spent more time visiting Beijing rather than Washington.60 Traditionally insignificant to China, Latin America now enjoys generous Chinese investments. Paz observed that, for instance, half of the international investments of Chinese companies in 2004 were directed to Latin America.61 Meanwhile, China has been able to reach important oil supply deals with countries like Venezuela, which is now providing China with large amount of crude oil. It was estimated at the end of 2005 that Venezuela was providing China with 140,000 barrels of the crude oil per day.62

In Africa, China's effort is also more than rewarding. According to Michal Meidan, self-portrayed as the leader of the Third World, China has been more than actively engaging Africa. China has poured in significant amounts of investment and built a massive number of infrastructure projects for

58 Ibid. pp. 35-36.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid. p. 96.
62 Ibid. p. 106.
numerous African countries. In return, China has not only secured its prime position in the oil sector as an importer, but also achieved great political success in isolating Taiwan. As Meidan observed, currently only five out of fifty-three African countries still have diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

In the Australian case, the influence that the 'new diplomacy' has exerted has been no less than remarkable. Many scholars recorded growing positive feelings from Australia towards China while a down fall in Australian opinions towards their US ally. The visits in 2003 paid to Australia respectively by US President Bush and Chinese President Hu, Jintao, for instance, experienced incredibly different receptions.

Joshua Kurlantzick commented that while being an ally of the US, the Australian government and public did not seem to have much enthusiasm in receiving Bush. Not only did thousands of demonstrators greet Bush but the Australian Parliament was not warm enough for Bush to even complete his speech. On the contrary, Hu was treated like the most-welcomed guest of Australia. He toured around Australia, delivered a speech in the Parliament House without much interruption, and very fewer protesters were there to send a negative message to Hu. His visit ended with the signing of a bilateral framework for future Sino-Australian free trade. Moreover, China's new

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64 Ibid. pp. 87-90.
66 Ibid.
diplomacy has even managed to neutralise Australia’s position as a US ally in terms of the Taiwan issue. According to Mohan Malik, the then Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, in 2004, emphasised that Australia’s obligation under the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security (ANZUS) Treaty could only be invoked if there was a direct attack on Australia or the US, which suggested a neutral position of Australia, if there were to be a war between China and the US over Taiwan.67

However, the overall success has also been shadowed by the limited practice of the ‘new diplomacy’ on certain occasions and China’s wary relations with Japan and the US. It has been widely criticised that China has retained close ties with the so-called ‘rogue’ states, including Iran, Sudan and North Korea. As Isaac Fish summarised in Newsweek, China has also been cast in the West as a selfish power, looking out for others’ interests only sometimes.68 For example, it would not exert pressure on North Korea, the Burmese Junta nor on Iran’s nuclear ambitions, due to its need for oil or other benefits.69 It was certainly not a novel opinion. While acknowledging the dramatic changes that the ‘new diplomacy’ has manifested in Asia, Shambaugh also considered China’s diplomacy as practising a ‘China first’ policy, where Chinese interests prevail over any other values or interests.70

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69 Ibid.
However, China’s controversial ways of practising the ‘new diplomacy’ goes beyond nurturing friendships with ‘rogue’ states. Although the focal point of this investigation is China’s great assertiveness of the most recent two years; the assertiveness itself, however, has always been a small part of the limited practice of the ‘new diplomacy’. On limited occasions, China’s confident diplomats have begun acting assertively. For instance, Kurlantzick observed that in 2003 when former the Chinese ambassador to Singapore warned that China would no longer bow to other nations and Singapore needed to lose some air of superiority if it wished to continue dealing with China, many Singaporean officials were very upset about it.71 Moreover, Willy Wo-Lap Lam in his study of Chinese politics and diplomacy argued that there simply has not been sufficient new thinking in the ‘new diplomacy’ and the Sino-Japanese and Sino-US relationships, for instance, remain weak points of China’s diplomatic practice. For example, the massive Chinese demonstrations against Japan in 2005 and Sino-US tension over Taiwan arm sales and so on, to Lam, have not been handled well.72

Nonetheless, overall it is difficult to overlook the achievement that the ‘new diplomacy’ has made. Not to mention China has also made improvement in gradually paying more attention to those ‘rogue’ states’ condemned behaviour. Andrew Small argued that, apparently, Beijing has been trying to broker compromises between those states and the international society.

Despite China's continuing image as a friend and protector of those states, China is also gradually more willing to interfere when international criticism is expressed.\textsuperscript{73} For example, Small noted that while in 2007 China gained a major natural gas exploration contract in Burma within days of its vetoing against UN decision of imposing sanctions on Burma; in 2008, China began to support UN resolutions against Iran, which is an important oil exporter to China.\textsuperscript{74} Although the degree of interference from China has remained limited, China's effort in taking some initiative in this regard should certainly be viewed positively.

\textit{China's assertive term?}

Given the overall success of the 'new diplomacy', especially in the Australian context, it is, indeed, rather puzzling to see Chinese diplomacy seemed to have moved away from being mostly active, engaging, flexible and occasionally assertive to be overwhelmingly assertive in the past two years. This chapter has to this stage, presented a relatively full picture of the 'new diplomacy', including its achievement so far. It is the next chapter's task to explore why its success has not been sustained and unfortunately, unlikely to be sustained either in the future.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid. p.2.
AUSTRALIAN CASES

Obviously, if the large scale of achievement of the 'new diplomacy' is not sufficiently attractive for China to sustain some major consistency in the implementation of the 'new diplomacy'; commonsense suggests that there must be compelling reasons for China not to do so. Australia experienced the 2008 Beijing Olympic torch relay, Chinese exiled Uighur leader Kadeer's visit to Melbourne in 2009 and Australian citizen Stern Hu's 2010 trial in China. None of them made the past two years an impressive part of the Sino-Australian relationship. Instead, diplomatic tensions arose dramatically between the two countries, leaving unpleasant feelings to both countries' citizens.

As discussed in the introductory chapter, the major themes created by what are termed here the 'Strong China' and the 'Weak China' schools provide a useful framework, inside which those Australian cases will be tested. On the surface, what will be reinforced is a simple weighing or balancing exercise between each argument. Yet, by way of locating each major argument in those incidents, a relationship between those two schools' arguments seems to take shape, and forms a novel angle of examining China's departure from the 'new diplomacy'.

Wen JIA 40
The Canberra leg of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Torch Relay

The year of 2008 witnessed, for the very first time, a Chinese-hosted Olympic Games and an unprecedented long torch relay. It was a widespread judgement that the latter caused some major controversy. Such controversy is of twofold. First of all, the torch relay itself was invented by Nazi Germany in the 1930s to project Nazi power, which is hardly part of the ancient Olympic tradition. China's devotion into making the relay the longest ever in history was, thus, a point of debate against this convenient historical backdrop. Secondly, and also the most controversial, how the Chinese government assertively handled the massive scale of protests and demonstration against China, along the torch passage, signalled a substantial deviation from its newly established open, constructive, friendly and cooperative image.

The Canberra leg of the Beijing torch relay built up tension between China and Australia throughout the whole relay: there was heated debate on the role of Chinese paramilitary guards in protecting the torch on Australian soil, before the relay; there were anti-China protesters clashed with a large number of pro-China students during the relay; and there was some discomfort left between pro-China groups and anti-China groups after the relay. In many ways, China left an aggressive image, which literally challenged its own 'new diplomacy' and fuelled more of the argument of the

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‘Strong China’ school. Yet, the whole point about the Beijing Olympics was China’s emergence as a great power globally, which mattered so much to the Chinese people that their great sense of national pride, or nationalism, must inevitably have a wide international repercussion. This pressed Chinese government to adopt heavy-handed measures against anti-China demonstrations and was forced into a position to be almost appeasing the domestic realm, which lends support to the ‘Weak China’ school. However, none of the arguments alone sufficiently accounts for the reason as to why China departed from the ‘new diplomacy’. Instead, it finds that it is the synthesis of both the ‘Strong China’ and the ‘Weak China’ arguments that fully explains why.

Background

The Beijing Olympic flame was created at the Torch Lighting Ceremony at Olympic in Greece on 24th March and arrived in Beijing on 31st March to start the global Torch Relay on 1st April. Under the theme of ‘Journey of Harmony’, the Beijing Olympic Torch started its journey first heading to Almaty and ended in Chengdu, the capital city of the Sichuan Province in China, travelling an unprecedented 137,000 kilometres in 129 days to 139 destinations, via 315 bearers around the world.76 What Chinese called sabotage efforts, unfortunately, were made from the day one in Greece after the flame was created, where a number of protesters attempted to obstruct

76 The Beijing Organising Committee for the 29th Olympic Games, (Beijing: The Olympic Torch Relay Centre, 2008).
the relay process by lying in the streets. Throughout the global relay, the torch encountered many anti-China demonstrations protesting issues related to China's human rights record, Taiwan independence and the Tibetans' struggle for independence and so on.

For the Canberra leg, the Chinese government started planning the relay route as early as 2007, when a group of Chinese officials were sent to tour Canberra and meet with Australian Olympic Committee officials to decide on the route.77 It was not surprising that the Chinese authority exercised extra-caution after some dramatic episodes occurred along the London and Paris legs, where protesters attempted to extinguish the flame or seize the torch from the torch bearers. The major debate between China and Australia, leading up to the relay day, was surrounding the role of the Chinese paramilitary torch protection unit.

The Chinese sacred torch protection unit consisted of well-trained paramilitary guards, averaging about 1.9 metres height, with the mission to safeguard the torch along the relay and light up the flame about every 15 minutes when necessary. They dressed in blue tracksuits and ran next to the torch bearers. During the past European legs, their grim expressions and forceful manners in maintaining a path for the torch caused much unease in the local community. Former British Olympic runner Lord Sebastian Coe, for

instance, even titled them 'thugs'; not to mention that they showed little regard for the local laws.\textsuperscript{78}

As the Canberra relay approached, there were widespread concerns regarding a possible clash between those blue unit guards and protesters. Rudd, in his visit to China, before the Canberra relay, implicitly stated to the Chinese Premier Wen, Jiabao that the Australian authority believed that those attendants would be travelling in an accompanying bus.\textsuperscript{79} The ACT authorities elaborated on ‘the travelling in a bus’ as their role is limited to only be required to attend to the torch when the flame needed to be relit.\textsuperscript{80} Leading up to the relay, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) deputy president Kevan Gosper claimed that those Chinese torch attendants would be called upon if there was serious trouble, which caused the then Rudd government to reiterate its position. Rudd, on the next day, firmly expressed that Chinese torch attendants had no security role in Australia.\textsuperscript{81} Regardless, at a press conference on the eve of the Canberra relay, Chinese spokesman Qu, Yingpu put forward that the torch attendants could take matters into their own hands if a torchbearer was threatened.\textsuperscript{82} Moreover, the Chinese

\textsuperscript{79} Phillip Coorey and Deborah Snow, "No Foreign Guards When the Torch Comes to Canberra," (Sydney: The Sydney Morning Herald, 2008).
\textsuperscript{81} Julian Drape, "Torch to Be Guarded by Australians Only," (Melbourne: The Age, 2008).
\textsuperscript{82} Andrew Bolt, "China Sends in the Clowns," (Herald-Sun, 2008).
ambassador in Australia, Zhang, Junsai, controversially claimed that those Chinese runners would use their bodies if the torch was attacked.83

Further to this, the Chinese domestic media was not at all pleased at the Australian interpretation of the role of those guards, claiming Australian media defamed the Chinese intention to protect the sacred torch. Chinese Global News commented that claim from the Australian side of China's intention of sending military to Australian soil to protect the torch was a defamation and insult to China and its people.84 Clearly, the Chinese media did not view any direct security role performed by those paramilitary guards as an impeachment to Australian local laws. In fact, the Chinese spokesperson for the torch relay insisted that those blue unit guards were the people to protect the flame and they did so by strictly abiding by the IOC rules and Olympics Charter.85 The Australian point of view of not permitting those paramilitary guards to take on security role was not interpreted from Australian sovereignty perspective, but by the angle of Chinese pride. Angry Chinese commentators pointed out that China should stand firm against those twisted reports, ban evil-willed journalists when necessary, and not to tolerate bullies from them.86

The Chinese and Australian media may have kicked the issue around; but one thing was certain that tension between China and Australia was steadily

84 Zhihua Lei and Jinghui Shao, "澳大利亚故意将军队赴海外保护奥运圣火," (环球网, 2008).
86 Lei and Shao, "澳大利亚故意将军队赴海外保护奥运圣火."
built up right before the relay took place in Canberra. And the reality turned out to be that Chinese side was not merely forceful verbally. On the relay day, the blue unit guards went along with their believed mission, despite the Australian government’s firm rejection of their role. The clash between those guards and the Australian police ended in one of the blue unit guards being removed forcefully by the Australian Federal Police officers.

Central to the Canberra torch relay day, however, was the apparent tension between pro-China and anti-China demonstrators. On 24th April, a massive number of Chinese students, approximately 10,000 of them, arrived in Canberra. Every one of them had national flags and banners. They arrived much earlier than the anti-China demonstrators to seize dominant positions along the torch route and outnumbered them by five to one. As the Torch passed by, pro-China students screamed ‘One China’ and sang the Chinese national anthem, which overwhelmingly covered any protesting voice from Falun Gong, pro-Taiwan and Tibet independence groups and forced them to retreat. Jeff Li, one of the enthusiastic pro-China demonstrators told the media that those anti-China protesters were ‘idiots’ and that they did not know anything about China’s history.87

Obviously, a large number of the pro-China demonstrators shared the same view, which resulted in many reported skirmishes occurring between the pro-China group and the anti-China group, where pro-China students tore up

87 "Torch Relay 'a Success' Despite Arrests," (The Age, 2008).
‘free Tibet’ banners of those anti-China demonstrators. During the relay, the police arrested seven people, where five were pro-China demonstrators and two were anti-China protesters. Also, the police received sporadic reports from anti-China protesters and Tibet sympathisers that they were assaulted by those pro-China students physically and that they were frightened by their aggressive manners.

While no major violent episodes took place during the Canberra relay, China seemed to have left an impression of a different nature to the Australian community. This was reflected at two levels. At one level, Australian taxpayers were not impressed by the high costs associated with the torch relay, which some thought was a conduct of pleasing a growing strong China. Ric Hingee, an ACT resident, for example, specifically pointed out in the Canberra Times that, similar to Nazi regime’s projection of power, a totalitarian China that oppresses minorities such as Tibetans should not be encouraged to have a ceremony for its power; not to mention to have Australian tax payers to bear the costs.

At the other level, many Australians felt unease at an aggressive China, due to the overwhelming attendance of Chinese students who behaved forcefully. Australians and media largely described those pro-China students as a ‘red

88 Peter Jean, Ben Packham, and Ben English, "Olympic Games Torch Passions Inflame Canberra," (Canberra: Herald Sun, 2008).
91 "Letters to the Editor," (The Canberra Times, 2009). pp. 4-5.
army' that ruthlessly swamped other protesters.\textsuperscript{92} ABC broadcasting on the relay day commented that it was probably even a surprise for the Australian Chinese community that there are actually so many Chinese people in Australia.\textsuperscript{93} Australians who were present on the relay expressed concern when they reported that assaults were carried out by groups of Chinese students. Some parents were frightened to bring children to Commonwealth Park where a large number of Chinese students gathered, chanting and screaming slogans aggressively.\textsuperscript{94} The head of Canberra Olympic Committee, Ted Quinlan, said that they did not expect such a reaction from the Chinese community.\textsuperscript{95}

While ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope proclaimed the Canberra torch relay was the first successful relay that had been run since the Beijing Olympic torch relay started globally,\textsuperscript{96} (given no violent episode broke out to disrupt the torch passage), by no means was it a smooth journey. Without doubt, China and its people had long looked forward to an opportunity such as hosting the Olympic Games to demonstrate China's growing confidence and power and certainly, they had also expected to receive confirmation of a rising power status from others. Nevertheless, enormous negative demonstrations seemed to have caught China off guard and cast doubt on

\textsuperscript{94} "Rival Protest Groups Clash at Torch Relay," (Canberra: ABC News, 2008).
\textsuperscript{95} "10,000 Pro-China Demonstrators Turn Australian Capital into Sea of Red Flags for Olympic Torch Relay," (London: Associated Newspapers Ltd).
\textsuperscript{96} Mary-Anne Toy and Brendan Nicholson, "We 'Saved' Torch Relay: Aoc," (Beijing Canberra: The Age, 2008).
how China sees itself and the rest of the world. How China dealt with those views, thus, not only reflected on its intention in global politics but also implied challenges that face China’s rise.

*The perspective of the ‘Strong China’ School*

‘*As the world’s largest country emerges not from within but outside the established post-World War II international order, it is a drama that will end with the grand ascendance of China and the onset of an Asian-centred world order.*’ – G. John Ikenberry

For the ‘Strong China’ school, there is, perhaps, no better case than the Olympic torch relay to illustrate a growing assertive China, including the Canberra leg, which demonstrates the great aspirations and growing power of today’s China. It does so from two major aspects.

First of all, the most impressive part of the Canberra leg was the unexpected massive turn-ups of patriotic Chinese students, whose aggressive manners in expressing deep loyalty to China left little doubt to Australia about an assertive and powerful China. To summarise this Chinese assertive image, Zhao, Suisheng, in the study of Chinese nationalism and the Olympics, quoted *The Economist’s* comment that ‘the sight of thousands of Chinese people waving xenophobic fists suggests that a country on its way to becoming a
superpower may turn out to be a more dangerous force than optimists had hoped.'97

However, what shocked the Australian community more, perhaps, was how the Chinese government seemed to have regulated and planned the dramatic nationalist demonstration. Right before the relay, online websites and blogs started sending out strong patriotic messages, well-written mails were circulated among Chinese communities98 and even the Chinese embassy indicated they had been in contact with Chinese students associations in Australia.99 To a nation that favours censorship, the active usage of the internet and other communication channels to encourage and plan this massive demonstration proved a deliberate intention of showcasing a strong China. It is certainly no coincidence that while Australia and its people acknowledged the unprecedented Chinese economic power, they also expressed a growing concern over China's rise and its intentions.100 In 2009, approximately, 60% of the Australians believed that China's intention was to dominate Asia and in 2010, this number has ascended to 69%,101 suggesting China has indeed projected its power assertively over the recent years.

Secondly, ironic to a long-standing and conventional Chinese claim of respecting China's sovereignty and national unity, the Chinese government's

98 Rob Taylor, "Chinese Rally in Australia to Guard Olympic Flame," (Canberra: Reuters, 2008).
99 Toy and Nicholson, "We 'Saved' Torch Relay: Aoc."
100 Peter Hartcher, "As China Rises, It Demands a Defence We Should Be Wary to Give," (Sydney: Sydney Morning Herald, 2010).
101 Ibid.
statements and conduct appeared to have double-standards during the torch relay. The infamous Chinese torch protection unit, while carrying out their sacred duty to protect the torch, impeached upon local sovereignty and laws. As noted above, they were even titled 'thugs' during their duties in the torch's European journey. China, nevertheless, did not endorse such criticism and continued to assert a direct security role of those torch attendants in the Canberra leg. What was striking was not the fact that one of the Chinese torch attendants ended up being forcefully removed by the Australian police during the relay; but China's blatant disregard of Australian government's position and the Australian sovereignty. One does not need to appeal to sophistication to realise that a growing China is showing its muscles whenever it wishes to.

Clearly, what the 'Strong China' school draws upon from the above is one set of tensions, that is, the tensions between the international community, including Australia and China, in terms of how a new Chinese identity should be defined. Apparently, Australia and the rest of the Western countries hoped that there would be some educational value for China from the events surrounding the relay, whereas China was furious over their attitude of not acknowledging an important China and their failure to 'understand' China. An aggressive China, backed up by its growing power, was indisputable to many, which substantiates the anticipation from the 'Strong China' school that China is to act in a growing assertive fashion due to its growing power.
Nonetheless, while this assumed outcome of China’s assertiveness or its departure from the ‘new diplomacy’ appears to have a solid factual ground; it is incomplete and incorrect in identifying the underlying cause for the departure being China’s continuing growing power. The above mentioned set of tensions is not the only one and it cannot reveal, by itself, the main cause behind the Chinese assertiveness. An examination of the ‘Weak China’ argument in this case uncovers the other hidden set of tensions being the one between the fired-up Chinese nationalism and the Chinese government, which not only shows another degree of worry but at the same time assists in identifying the cause in question.

_The perspective of the ‘Weak China’ school_

_‘Today's China has no communism but only nationalism on the ground to keep the people together.’ –Lee Kuan Yew_

This insightful comment from Singapore’s former Prime Minister at least reveals two points. First of all, nationalism is alive in today’s China. The massive turnout of Chinese students during the Canberra leg of the torch relay further proved that it is strong as well. Secondly, the implication that nationalism is the only basis where today’s China resides upon sends out a worrying message that this seemingly strongest link, if not handled well, may break down into the weakest point and ultimately threatens the stability of China. On one hand, the popularity of nationalism has united
Chinese people together, especially in facing external criticism and made the government's policies more credible, which are crucial for the ruling party's legitimacy. On the other, if it gets out of control, such a force may turn against the Chinese government if it is unable to deliver what the nationalism wishes China to acquire.

Taking this logic, the aggressive and assertive account of massive Chinese nationalist demonstration on the Canberra leg of torch relay that the 'Strong China' argument centres on, stands also as a counterpoint, which not only may imply a relative benign intention of China, but more importantly, indicates the above suggested weak point is reality. There are essentially two aspects to the 'Weak China' argument here. First, Chinese people's view of the Olympic torch relay was based on real pride, regardless if it was led by the state or not. Secondly, previous dramas that occurred during the London, Paris and San Francisco legs seriously wounded Chinese pride. If the Chinese government did not react with any countermeasures in the ensuing Canberra journey, the disappointment of the Chinese people could have led to the Chinese nationalism's backfire.

To start with, Chinese people felt strongly that they had a personal stake in the whole Olympic event. Despite the fact that the Chinese government has been consistently educating Chinese on the role that the CCP has played in leading the country and also it played a major role in securing the Olympics for the nation, the Chinese viewed the Olympics as Chinese people's
Olympics. According to a Pew Survey, roughly 79% of Chinese people saw the Olympics as important to them personally and 90% of Chinese people in Beijing felt this way. Also, 93% of the Chinese polled in Pew Survey had a firm belief that the Olympic was to assist in improving China's global image.

This strong nationalist sentiment has come a long way. China's falling behind the world's industrialised countries in the last century was considered humiliation suffered at the hands of Western powers, which is repeatedly stressed in Chinese textbooks and media. Orville Schell quoted a Chinese film-maker stating that the Chinese people do carry a historical burden, which is so deeply rooted that it can be triggered automatically and extremely sometimes. It was this sentiment that greatly facilitated the economic miracle that China has created in the past three decades, since its open-door reform. Now China is positioned as one of the largest economies in the world; Chinese people feel so proud about China's achievement that it is the time for China to present the world with a brand new powerful image. It is fair to say that, to many Chinese; the Beijing Olympics was more about China's Olympics instead of that of the world. That explains why when unexpected protests and demonstrations against China occurred along the torch journey, Chinese people were deeply hurt and fiercely condemned

103 Ibid.
104 Petra Cahill, "Why These Might Be the 'Nationalism Games'," (NBC News World Blog, 2008).
them being disrespecting the Olympics spirit, where really, only China's image was ruined.

That leads to the second point of how much of a dangerous power that this nationalism may be for the Chinese government. It is not to say that the Chinese government has not made use of the strong nationalist sentiment. In fact, there are numerous examples where state-led or tolerated nationalist sentiment that have served to consolidate the ruling party's legitimacy. That organized love and pride among Chinese people was so genuine and powerful that labelling it CCP propaganda or an instrument for the Chinese government is an oversimplification and misleading in this case. Rather, it was more of the pressure from nationalism that pushed the Chinese government to have behaved forcefully in the Canberra leg of torch relay.

Before the Canberra leg, tension was already dramatically built up between the Chinese people and foreign media that have covered anti-China protests against China along the torch relay globally. Undignified public reception of the Beijing torch, particularly in London and Paris came as a shock and

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105 In fact, the state-led nationalism identified the Chinese nation closely with the CCP. Promotion of loving the state is indistinguishable from loving the Communist state. After Tiananmen crisis, for example, the CCP found the nationalism is a much reliable banner and helped fight against sanctions and isolation from the West. See Zhao, "The Olympics and Chinese Nationalism." p. 50.
agitation to Chinese. After reporting London leg's drama where China's sacred torch guardians were titled 'thugs', *Time* journalist Simon Elegant received intimidating feedbacks from Chinese readers, including one email that read 'Hope someday someone will spit in your face. Your name will be recorded in Chinese history book forever as one of cold-blooded, Hitler-type, murder's assistant.'\textsuperscript{106} Some other foreign reporters even received death threats and seriously considered to reallocate themselves while being physically present in China.\textsuperscript{107}

Angry Chinese also burnt French flags in front of French-franchised supermarkets in Qingdao and a massive amount of online postings and circulated mails called for boycotts of French goods.\textsuperscript{108} An intriguing point worth mentioning is that Jin Jing, the portrayed Chinese heroin, who clung onto the torch during the Paris relay where demonstrators attempted to forcefully remove it from her, was even vilified then, just a few weeks after her nationally broadcasted bravery; simply because she refused to support the popular boycott against the French franchised Carrefour.\textsuperscript{109}

Despite having a clear awareness of the extreme direction that this nationalist sentiment took, Chinese officials were cautious to mediate the impact and gently reminded its people that 95% of the Carrefour employees

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
are Chinese people.\textsuperscript{110} The Chinese central news agency also released reports and interviews that demonstrated support offered by Carrefour to the Beijing Olympics, which indirectly defended Carrefour.\textsuperscript{111} For a country that is famous for implementing heavy-handed measures to counter unwelcomed sentiment and movement, Chinese government's meticulous attitude in dealing with the nationalist call does suggest a strong sense of fear from the government side.

Evidently, this seemingly remarkable power that the Chinese nationalism has, in pushing the Chinese government to change its diplomatic direction, lends support to the 'Weak China' argument that the Chinese assertiveness in this incident was a reflection of China's weakness. However, it is also an incomplete finding. For one, this unpredictable powerful nationalism neither can reduce the degree of Chinese assertiveness nor can discredit China's power. Additionally, the implication of the 'Weak China' school that China's assertiveness is likely to be temporary underestimates the enduring nature of this weakness. In fact, as counter-logic as it may sound, this investigation argues that this weak point is likely to be emphasised rather reduced as China's power continues to grow.

\textit{A Strong China/Weak China synthesis?}

\textsuperscript{110}Zhao, "The Olympics and Chinese Nationalism." p. 54.  \textsuperscript{111}Ibid. pp. 54-55.
A synthesis between those two schools is, thus, called for. To put briefly, the Chinese assertiveness seen in this incident was a reflection of China's weakness (strong and powerful nationalism in this case), as 'Weak China' has advocated and powerfully made out the case. And it is of on-going nature, as the 'Strong China' has anticipated. However, it was not solely caused by either China's growing power or China's weakness. It was China's growing weakness which has been exacerbated by China's growing power that pushed China to have acted assertively.

If one can recall the Belgrade embassy bombing incident between the US and China in the 1990s, at a time when China's open-door reform had been well established and China had started its rapid economic growth, there was dramatic public outcry for the government to do something about that disgrace. Hundreds of angry Chinese protested outside the American Embassy, demanding an apology, which was eventually settled by the Chinese government's acceptance of the term 'sorry' from the US as a remorseful apology. Tremendous fury among Chinese people sparked sayings like 'Mao would never have tolerated such an attack, if he were the leader',\(^{112}\) which was very detrimental to the CCP legitimacy. Evidently, Chinese people measured their expectations of their government against their perception of China and hoped for some dramatic increase in other countries' respect, given China's significant power growth. Therefore, a

bigger disappointment followed when these elevated expectations were not met.

Now, China is the world's second largest economy,\textsuperscript{113} with a leverage and global influence that China has never enjoyed in its modern history. It is out of the question to even consider how to temper the rising Chinese pride, not to mention naively think that Chinese people may be able to settle for a quasi-apology again when similar incidents take place. When the national image was subject to questions during the Olympics, the Chinese government simply couldn't risk being perceived as weak again by its people and could not allow the powerful nationalism to turn in the opposite direction and shake its ruling status.

When the Beijing torch approached Canberra, the Chinese government probably felt dramatic pressure in this relay to defend China's image and satisfy Chinese people's strong sense of national pride. As noted earlier, online postings and daily life circulations had already reached height to call for Chinese people to come together and guard national honour and boycott against foreign goods and companies before the Canberra leg. The organisation of 10,000 Chinese patriotic students by the Chinese embassy to demonstrate China's power and insistence upon China's torch guardians' security role, thus, came in not just on time but assisted in showing the

\textsuperscript{113} "Second in Line," (Washington The Economist, 2010).
Chinese people the very capability that the Chinese government has today to meet the growing expectation of its people.

Indeed, as one Chinese saying says ‘when the water rises so does the boat’ (shuizhang chuangao), Chinese people’s national pride has never before risen to this height, thanks to China’s rapid development. And it will certainly continue to rise as China continues its development. It is thus almost impossible to imagine a possibility that the challenge of handling powerful nationalism by the Chinese government will diminish, instead, it will be more emphasised, as China is now literally the world’s manufacturer and continues to power the world’s economy.

If anything, the Chinese government needs to anticipate more and more demanding nationalism. Echoing Lee Kuan Yew, Professor Liu Kang summarised that today’s Chinese communist government is more a product of nationalism than a product of ideology like Marxism and Communism.114 Perhaps, the seemingly aggressive Chinese image in the Canberra leg of the torch relay was really tough on the surface, and yet radically weak underneath. And not to be over pessimistic, as China’s growing power continues to raise expectations from its citizens, more of demanding Chinese nationalism is to exert its power and more of an assertive China is going to be seen.

Kadeer's visit to the 2009 Melbourne International Film Festival

After the controversial Canberra torch relay, Australian citizen Stern Hu was reported to have been detained in China for suspected espionage charges in July 2009. While Hu's case was underway, Rebiya Kadeer, the Chinese exiled Uighur independence movement leader, was invited to attend a movie premier about her life at Melbourne's International Film Festival in August 2009. The tense relationship between the Chinese government and Xinjiang independence movement was too conspicuous for Kadeer's visit to be ignored by China. The Australian government received enormous criticism and protests from China for granting Kadeer a visa, which stirred up a new round of diplomatic tensions.

To the Australian government and community, there was no sign of Chinese 'new diplomacy', but a China acting as a bully and impeaching upon Australia's domestic sovereignty in deciding to whom it wishes to issue visas. From China's perspective, however, Australia's invitation to Kadeer denoted an open denial from Australia of China's interest in maintaining its national unity.

The most common verdict, found mostly among Australian media, upon China's attitude towards Australia in this incident was aligned with the 'Strong China' argument. It was not difficult to locate evidence that were obviously pointing to China's rough and aggressive comments and behaviour,
in an attempt to reverse the Australian decision to grant Kadeer entry.

Nevertheless, the 'Weak China' argument can also powerfully come to the
tone over such a verdict. The essential interest behind this case is China's
national unity. Titled the prime national interest, national unity is not merely
a national dream but the last thing that the Chinese government can afford
to lose in maintaining its ruling status.

As this case unfolds in the following pages, it appears that while China has
been more assertive on its position regarding China's national unity, the
challenges facing the Chinese government in maintaining national unity are
not reducing over the years, even against the backdrop of China's growing
strength. Applying the method from the previous case, it finds that both
schools are partially correct and yet incomplete in addressing the
fundamental cause to China's assertiveness in this case.

Background

The facts of this case were reasonably straightforward. Rebiya Kadeer, an
exiled Uighur independence movement leader in Xinjiang, was invited by
the Melbourne International Film Festival in 2009 to attend a documentary
titled '10 conditions of love' about her life. Considering Kadeer as a
separatist and the mastermind of the deadly July 5th riot in Xinjiang in 2009,
the Chinese government launched a large scale of protests against Australia.
When the overwhelming protests from the Chinese side created enormous
publicity for Kadeer, she was not only granted the entry but was subsequently also invited to speak at the Australia National Press Club, which earned the chagrin of the Chinese government and even caused high-ranked Chinese officials to cancel visits to Canberra.

And it was through the process of China's launching protests and making demands that the diplomatic tensions between China and Australia were steadily built. When *The Age* published the program list of the film festival, the Chinese government demanded that the festival to withdraw the movie about Kadeer and the Australian government not to issue the visa to Kadeer. Mr Moore, the director of the festival, told the media that the Chinese cultural attaché in Melbourne phoned him, demanding him to remove that movie and his justifications for including that movie.115 Further, Chinese officials also approached the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Robert Doyle, similarly demanding that the film not be allowed to screen at the Town Hall. Again, Doyle and the Melbourne City Council stood their ground, and were not so impressed with the robust Chinese manner.116 Chinese diplomats in Canberra also frequently visited the Australian government, protesting against the invitation and demanding a visa not to be issued to Kadeer. Beijing even called in the Australian ambassador, outlining the seriousness of China's protest.117

115 Mary-Anne Toy, "Beijing Pressures Film Festival to Dump Documentary," (Muslim Village, July 2009).
However, Chinese officials' efforts did not seem to pay off. Kadeer accepted the invitation and was issued a visa by Australia. When Kadeer arrived in Canberra, Michael Danby, the Federal Labor Member for Melbourne Ports, and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee of the Parliament's Joint Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade committee, even hosted a function for her in the Parliament House.\textsuperscript{118} Due to the massive scale of protests from the Chinese side, the '10 conditions of love' sold out the initial 750 tickets and was requested by the public to be rescheduled for more shows. Further, many Australian media were drawn to Kadeer's subsequent National Press Club speech and turned her speech into a front-page story.\textsuperscript{119}

Further, Chinese dramatic efforts not only have failed in stopping Kadeer's presence in Australia; but, they have, instead, contrarily upset the Australian community. The Australian community viewed China as a 'bully',\textsuperscript{120} and the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Smith warned that while it is legitimate for diplomats and officials to express views in Australian society, they need to put those views politely and appropriately.\textsuperscript{121} The then Prime Minister Rudd even stated expressly that Australia has the right to decide to whom it wishes to issue visas,\textsuperscript{122} pointing out that China has impeached upon Australia's sovereignty.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{119} Nie MacBean, "Kadeer to China: Thanks for the Publicity," (ABC News, August 2009).
\textsuperscript{120} Paul Kelly, "Shock of the New," (Sydney: The Australian, 2009).
\textsuperscript{121} "Smith Defends China over Kadeer Gag Bid," (ABC News, 2009).
\textsuperscript{122} Colleen Ricci, "Australia-China Relations," (Melbourne: The Age, 2009).
Nevertheless, the Chinese side seemed to be more upset. Not only the three Chinese movies, ‘Petition’, ‘Perfect life’ and ‘Cry me a river’ directed respectively by Zhao Liang, Xiaobai Tang and Zhangke Jia, pulled out of the festival, but the Chinese foreign ministry vice minister cancelled his scheduled visit to Canberra. The *Global Times* quoted a Chinese scholar commenting Rudd’s statement was a blatant infringement of Chinese internal affairs, as Kadeer is a criminal who attempted to separate Xinjiang from China.123 Further, against Smith’s warning of Chinese diplomats’ forceful manner, Chinese media fired back by commenting that Smith himself was ridiculous in making that statement, since diplomats are meant to maintain their country’s dignity and interests while on foreign soils.124 When *The Australian* reported the cancellation of Chinese official’s visit, indicating China was unhappy about Kadeer’s visit and also about the failed negotiation between China and Rio Tinto. The Chinese media, instead, criticised that Rudd only knows how to speak Chinese but has no understanding of China at all. And its Chinese policy was stupid.125

In addition, commentaries in China not only fired at Australian media and government officials’ stance but also at the movie ‘10 conditions of love’ itself. For instance, an article labelling Kadeer a murderer, questioned how a murderer could talk about love. In this article, Kadeer was convicted as the murderer and planner of the deadly 5th July riot and it claimed that under

125 "陆克文为热比娅窜访辩护 称澳有权让谁入境，懂中文但不懂中国,” (*BaiDu*, 2009).
the disguise of love or culture, Kadeer is now committing the same crime as Dalai Lama has been doing, that is, destroying the stability within the Chinese society. The Chinese anger was also seen over the fact that the Melbourne Film Festival's website was taken down by Chinese hackers after the authority refused to withdraw the '10 conditions of love'. They replaced the festival information with the Chinese national flag and anti-Kadeer slogans. Mr Moore said that apart from officials' forceful demands and Chinese hackers' interference, he and his staffs had also been bombarded with abusive emails from Chinese audiences, ever since the program list was published.

Although it is difficult to weigh one side's justifications against that of the other, simply because China and Australia stood on different grounds; one thing appeared to be certain that this incident had brought Australian-Sino relationship to a new low. The Festival and Kadeer's visit did not last long, and yet the impact of having '10 conditions of love' shown and Kadeer's presence in Australia is hardly short-lived.

The perspective of the 'Strong China' School

'The Chinese people will pay any price to safeguard the unity of the motherland.'—Wen, Jiabao

126 "（爱的十个条件） 热比娅厚颜言爱," (Bai Du, 2009).
128 Mary-Anne Toy, "Chinese Hack into Film Festival Site," (Melbourne: The Age, 2009).
To the 'Strong China' school, the Chinese practice of assertive diplomacy seemed to be once again confirmed in this incident. The substance of Chinese forceful behaviours against the Australian government and community was clearly demonstrated in both official and non-official capacities. As mentioned previously, Chinese officials launched fierce protests against the Australian government and the Chinese media did what they could to defy Australia's stance in this case. It was done in such a demanding and forceful manner that indeed, what China did was cause unease within the Australian community. For a country that is sensitive to its own national sovereignty and unity to aggressively demand another country not to issue visas to a particular individual, China's behaviours were hypocritical in nature.

Further, it was not an accident that China behaved in such an assertive manner in this incident. In fact, China has been consistently assertive towards other countries when it comes to issues that threaten China's national unity. What have been mostly observed were China's forceful behaviours towards other countries' sympathy towards the Dalai Lama. As mentioned earlier already, during the Beijing Olympics, China even threatened to economically sanction against France because the French President supported the Dalai Lama as well as boycotting the Olympics because of China's abuse of human rights. When the French President met up with the Dalai Lama, the Chinese government protested by summoning the French ambassador and issued a warning that such behaviour would
undermine the French-Sino relationship.\textsuperscript{129} To express the anger towards the French side's ignorance of Chinese position, China also cancelled EU-China summit, as noted before, for which France was to be the host.\textsuperscript{130} Very similarly, China demonstrated its fury against the US' decision of meeting with the Dalai Lama by lodging protests and summoning the US envoy. In an official statement, the Chinese foreign ministry forcefully 'advised' Obama to take concrete actions to build healthy Sino-US relationship.\textsuperscript{131}

The most striking part of those Chinese assertive actions is the growing Chinese confidence in its own power, where it has, more frequent and more freely, started threatening to apply economic sanctions against countries that show little concerns as to the Chinese sensitivity regarding its national unity. Not only has China warned France of a possible sanction, but also it has indicated that it might implement sanctions against the US\textsuperscript{132} which is still the most powerful country in the world. It seems that a stronger China is less willing to accommodate others, including the still strongest country, US. Against this backdrop, from the perspective of 'Strong China', it was not altogether unexpected that when Kadeer was invited to Australia, China had no hesitation in demanding the Australian government to solely consider the Chinese position.

\textsuperscript{129} "China Protest at Eu-Dalai Meeting," (BBC News, 2008).
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{132} Jane Macartney and Giles Whittell, "China Threatens Obama over Dalai Lama Meeting," (Beijing Washington: The Times, 2010).
In sum, there is no doubt again about the fact that China exerted its power assertively in this case and it appears to be more willing and freely to do so as its power grows. Nonetheless, similar to the torch relay case, the fact that the Chinese assertiveness appeared to be directly derived from its power does not account for the whole incident by itself. Examination of the other side of the story reveals that the cause of the Chinese assertiveness does not necessarily come from China's growing power, as the ‘Strong China’ assumes. It was the sensitive issue of national unity that triggered long-standing unresolved insecurity of China, which the ‘Weak China’ argument is to find its ground.

*The perspective of the 'Weak China' School*

*It is a question of regime survival.* -- Susan L. Shirk

From the perspective of the ‘Weak China’ school, it is actually in the assertiveness demonstrated in incidents such as the current one that a worrying case can be made on China's behalf. It is almost known to all that the task of keeping China together as one country is a difficult and challenging one for the Chinese government, given the long-standing issues with Taiwan and Tibet.

Neighbouring Tibet, having a population of almost 10 million Uighurs who are Muslim and share linguistic and cultural bonds with Central Asia, and
were once under the short-lived East Turkistan Republic before the CCP united China, Xinjiang is a province that has potential to develop ethnic conflict between the majority Han Chinese and Uighur minority, or in other words, become another Tibet.

In fact, some Uighurs still harbour a dream of independence. A series of terrorist activities took place in Xinjiang as early as 1997, including the bus bombing in Urumqi that killed 9 people and injured 74, and a similar bomb in Beijing where 10 people were injured. In 2003, for example, an explosion also occurred on the railway between Xinjiang and Lanzhou, the capital city of the province of Gansu. The organisation titled East Turkistan Movement (ETM), which has been involved in planning terrorist activities as well as supporting Xinjiang independence movement, claimed responsibility for most of those activities. The Chinese government has been highly aware of the ETM and sought to employ effective measures to counter its expansion and activities. The SCO, for example, serves as a forum where China seeks cooperation and advice from Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in tackling terrorism. In 2002, the UN classified the ETM as a terrorist organisation which officially justified the Chinese government's attempt to limit the influence of the ETM, in particular regarding the Xinjiang independence movement.

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133 B Raman, "Explosive Situation in Xinjiang," (Hong Kong: Asia Times, 2005).
134 Ibid.
However, despite the Chinese government’s efforts in anti-separatism and anti-terrorism in Xinjiang, the potential of Xinjiang of becoming the next Tibet did appear to have become more of a reality, as Kadeer gradually emerged as an activist of Uighur human rights and leader of Uighur independence movement internationally. It may be surprising to many, but before Kadeer was seen as a national criminal, she was portrayed as an excellent model for women of the entire China. Aged 62, Rebyia Kadeer, an ethnic minority Uighur, is a mother of 11 children and was one of China’s most successful businesswomen. Her success even saw her awarded a seat in the National People’s Political Consultative Conference. It was her outspoken manner in public regarding the Chinese government’s policy toward Uighurs that gradually turned her on the path that she is on today.

In 1997, her speech in front of the legislature about the burdens shouldered by Uighurs sparked discomfort from the government side. In 1999, she was detained on her way to visit a delegation from the US Congressional Research Service to provide information on political prisoners in Xinjiang. Subsequently, she was charged with and convicted of the crime of endangering state security. In 2005, Kadeer’s request to have medical treatment in the US was approved by the Chinese government and since then, Kadeer has been living in exile in the US.

Since then, Kadeer appeared to have enjoyed even more attention and galvanised more international sympathy towards her cause, which of course,
resulted in the tensions between her and the Chinese government intensify. In 2006, Kadeer was even nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, which provoked fierce protest from the Chinese government. The Governor of Xinjiang, Nuer Baikeli, commented that nominating Kadeer with this prize is ‘extremely preposterous’ and ‘tarnishes the race’,\textsuperscript{135} for her behaviours were to disrupt the peace and stability of the Chinese society, which go against the intentions of the Nobel Peace Prize.

By the time of 2009, when the deadly Uighurs riots took place in Xinjiang, the Chinese government was almost certain that Kadeer had indeed become a powerful separatist that is going to impose more and more challenges for it to maintain stability in Xinjiang, as the Chinese government firmly believed that Kadeer was the mastermind of the deadly riots.

From the perspective of the ‘Weak China’ school, Kadeer’s emergence, between 1999 to 2009, as a single unsatisfied Uighur first and then an influential international activist for human rights and leader for Uighurs’ independence movement, meant nothing but greater instability for China and increasing challenges for the Chinese government to manage in keeping China together. This is so much the case as it appears that the Chinese government is becoming more and more desperate in mitigating the negative impact that Kadeer has caused to the Chinese society.

\textsuperscript{135} “Xinjiang Party Head Says Kadeer ‘a Separatist’,” (Beijing: China Daily, 2007).
After the deadly July 5th riot took place, letters written by Kadeer’s children and brother were published together with their signatures on front pages of Chinese domestic newspapers, in which they pleaded that Kadeer should stop any further activities intending to separate Xinjiang from China.\textsuperscript{136} They also apologised to victims of those riots, stating that the harmony between Uighurs and Han Chinese should not be disturbed,\textsuperscript{137} in the manner that pretty much expressed the official belief that Kadeer was the mastermind of these killings.

Interviews with Kadeer’s acquaintances and friends were also widely reported to be against the title given to Kadeer as the ‘mother of Uighurs’. All of them commented on how much of a cunning business woman Kadeer was and stressed the crime of tax evasion committed by her and her sons.\textsuperscript{138} Despite speculations about the truth of these statements, and Kadeer herself claimed that her family and friends were likely to have been intimidated, her sons were subject to physical abuse and her family house was to be torn down by Chinese government,\textsuperscript{139} the fact that the Chinese government applied a large amount of resources against one single citizen shows a high degree of insecurity and severity of potential consequences of allowing Kadeer to continue her cause. The message was clear that the Chinese

\textsuperscript{136} "我们也想过安稳的日子" 热比娅境内亲属分别致信热比娅和 "7•5" 事件遇害者家属", (Beijing: The Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China, 2009).
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} "不称职的母亲、骗子和忘恩的人”——昔日同学和生意伙伴眼里的热比娅", (Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Negara Brunei Darussalam, 2009).
\textsuperscript{139} "Rebyia Kadeer’s Son Setenced to Seven Years; Anohter Fined; Another Feared Tortured,” (Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2006).
government saw winning this campaign as critical in securing stability in Xinjiang and within the whole Chinese society.

Therefore, the 'Weak China' school appears to have a strong case here, where the China's assertiveness predominantly reflects the great difficulty in maintaining national unity for the Chinese government. However, this weak point of China cannot overlook the reality of an assertive China brought up by the 'Strong China' school. Further, the lasting nature of this weakness, if examined closely, makes this weak point an incomplete argument to account for the China's assertiveness, as the following synthesis will argue.

_A Strong China/Weak China synthesis?_

Even it does not appear as straightforward as the last incident; the answer to the cause of the Chinese assertiveness in this case still lies in the synthesis of the two schools' arguments. On one hand, China's assertiveness in this matter did appear again as a convenient product of China's growing power, which the 'Strong China' school as argued. On the other, the great difficulty of keeping China together, in this case stabilising Xinjiang, for the Chinese government has been a compelling reality, especially after Kadeer's emergence as an internally active leader for Uighurs' independence, which pushed China to resort to assertiveness. But, this weakness is to be exacerbated as China continues to grow, which will result in more assertiveness from the Chinese end.
First of all, the above stated frustration, which is likely to be a long-term one, stems from China’s growing confidence in its increasingly stronger economy. Compared to the great coverage on independence movement in Xinjiang or Tibet, much less discussed is the policy of the Chinese government towards the Uighurs and Tibetans, which is primary economy-oriented. Seeing remarkable economic performance has greatly facilitated social stability in the majority Han society, the Chinese government believed that improvement of living standards of minorities would consolidate the stability in Xinjiang and Tibet. The Famous ‘Develop the West’ campaign, aiming to introduce advanced technology from more developed China Eastern areas and attract more investment to the West, including Tibet and Xinjiang, was launched in 2000. Between 2001 and 2005, some US$13 billions have been invested to Tibet.\textsuperscript{140} Large amount of investment also have been poured into Xinjiang, which, by 2008, has kept up Xinjiang’s annual economic growth of 10% for over ten years.\textsuperscript{141}

Nonetheless, contrary to what the Chinese government wished, Uighurs and Tibetans do not feel benefited from the economic growth nor did the cash ever stop protests and demonstration. Instead, the neglect of the cultural and political needs of those minorities against the growing emphasis on economy has aroused more dissatisfaction from Tibetans and Uighurs.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
Indeed, deadly riots such as the one occurred in Xinjiang in July 2009 and the one in Tibet in 2008 were still staged, despite all the economic effort that the central government has been putting in. Exiled Tibetan government official Ghangkar commented that Tibetans do not pursue high living standards with more money, but the existence of the Tibetan race.\textsuperscript{142} To Ghangkar, Chinese government’s attempt of buying away the Tibetan culture with money will never work with the Tibetans.\textsuperscript{143} Similar feedback bounced back from Xinjiang as well, where Uighurs actually felt they had been further deprived of controlling their own local economy.\textsuperscript{144} That, perhaps, explained why the once richest woman in Xinjiang, Kadeer, still turned against the Chinese government and also why between 2000 to now, maintaining stability in Xinjiang has not been an easier task to manage.

Further, frustration of minorities, including the Uighurs, is to increase rather than diminish as China continues to trust its economic power. At one level, an economy-oriented minority policy may well be \textit{the} policy option for China, given any cultural and political compromise is beyond the acceptance of the CCP, which has been governing China as a centralised one-party country since 1949. And the Chinese government has a long-standing favour for primarily economy-driven measures to address human rights accusations.\textsuperscript{145}

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\textsuperscript{142} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid. \\
which to this day, obviously is still the most favourite of China's policy towards minorities.

At the other level, Deng once said 'Development is the hard truth', which the CCP has followed closely as a principal governing doctrine. Even great success in stabilising Xinjiang has not been secured via economy-driven measures, the Chinese government does not appear to have given up on this principle; rather it demonstrated its firm belief by continuing it. According to Chinese media, there are even much larger projects will be developed in West China in 2010, in a total value of ¥ 682 billion, which represented another great move of the Chinese government to stabilise Tibet and Xinjiang.\textsuperscript{146} Apparently, confidence continues to soar on the part of the Chinese government regarding the capacity of its growing economic muscles in maintaining national unity.

Hence, the dilemma is that the more China is equipped with economic power, the more China seems to be convinced of the magic of economy-driven measures to address national unity issues, which in turn irritates the minorities more as their cultural and political needs are further neglected.

Secondly, as indicated in this case above, Kadeer has galvanised more and more international attention in the past decade, which increased her influence for her cause and the difficulty for China to stabilise Xinjiang.

\textsuperscript{146} "港媒惊呼：声东击西，北京开始发起银弹攻势！", (2010).
However, she is likely to enjoy this benefit more as China continues to develop, and more and more comes under the international spotlight. More of China's achievements as well as its issues are more than likely to be scrutinised by the international community, including the thorny issue of maintaining national unity, as China continues its rise.

This can really come as detriment to China from two possible perspectives. For one, the more China becomes powerful, the more the rest of the world demands from China, including improvement of human rights conditions for minorities in China. As noted above, China has always defended its position on human rights with its economy-driven policy, but how long this can be effective remains to be seen. Additionally, there will be greater publicity for Kadeer as China itself enjoys more attention. The greater publicity means the more potential international support for Kadeer, as Tibet's Dalai Lama seems to have proved. That is perhaps why Kadeer sarcastically thanked the Chinese government for giving her the publicity in Australia.147

Chinese believe that 'the longer the night the more dreams one can have' (yechang mengduo), meaning more unwelcomed variables would occur if one delays solving a problem. This appears to be true. As the national unity has long been challenged by unresolved Taiwan problem and an unstable Tibet, and now Xinjiang appears to be on top of the list as Kadeer becomes an activist internationally. But the challenge to stabilise Xinjiang is likely to

147 MacBean, "Kadeer to China: Thanks for the Publicity."
be furthered as China grows more powerful, as discussed. Thus, the Chinese assertiveness in this case is a great reflection of China's national unity issue that are exacerbated by its growing power. As China continues its rise, so does the assertiveness.

The 2010 Australian citizen Stern Hu's trial in China

Accused of having caused substantial loss to the Chinese steel industry, during the negotiating process with China about iron ore exporting pricing, by accepting bribes and stealing Chinese commercial secrets, Australian citizen and Rio Tinto's former Shanghai Chief Executive Officer, Stern Hu and his three Chinese colleagues were arrested and detained on 5th July 2009, by China's Ministry of State Security. On 22nd March 2010, Shanghai Number One Intermediate People's Court began the trial and Hu was subsequently convicted of receiving bribes and infringing commercial secrets. As a result, Hu was fined $75,000 and given a 10 year jail term.

While the political strain that Kadeer's visit to Melbourne Film Festival had caused to the Sino-Australian relationship was not totally relieved, the occurrence of this incident added nothing but salt to the existing diplomatic scar between China and Australia. The Chinese court decided to prosecute Hu under charges of accepting bribery and infringing Chinese national secrets initially, which later on were changed to charges of accepting bribery and stealing commercial secrets. The tension started when the court decided
that the latter charge was not open for Australian officials and the general public to attend. Bringing this tension to a peak was the final verdict, which Australia considered as both very harsh and lacking clarity on the reasoning behind the conviction of stealing Chinese commercial secrets.

Not so long ago, the Australian media hoped that 'the Australian-Sino relationship would only blossom', given the close relationship that these two countries have had and as well as the appointment of a Chinese history expert, Rudd, as the Australian Prime Minister. Yet many felt such a hope seemed to be diminishing. While Australia's criticism of Hu's trial was unacceptable to China, the lack of transparency in the Chinese legal system and the Chinese government's quick dismissal of the Australian position in Hu's matter confused Australia further over China's 'new' diplomatic practice. Central to the contention was not so much about whose position was more justified in this case, but a supposedly flexible China seemed to go back to its former stiff diplomatic practice, leaving Australia and the world to gauge what that meant for future economic dealings with China. Similar to the previous two cases, Hu's case lingered on a very visible fissure of China, which unfortunately proved to be cracking further as China grows stronger, especially in terms of its economic power.

*Background*

Stern Hu was arrested on 5th July 2009 and left in detention without charges for six months. When a Chinese court eventually decided to prosecute him under the charges of accepting bribes and stealing Chinese commercial secrets in March 2010, the Australia government and media were denied access to the trial. The then Foreign Affairs Minister Smith described China's decision to lock down the second part of the trial as a 'lost opportunity' for China to be open to the world. And the then Prime Minister Rudd expressed concerns over unanswered questions about the verdict of the second part of the trial due to the manner in which it was carried out. The Australian opposition foreign affairs spokeswoman, Julie Bishop, also questioned the strength of a consular agreement between Australia and China, which should have permitted local officials to attend Hu's trials. Bishop pointed out that if China did not honour the agreement in those circumstances, under what other circumstances will China not adhere to it again? Furthering the tension, Rudd even upgraded China's behaviours in this case to a level that he marked as not meeting up with the standards of an emerging superpower.

149 "Interview with Abc 7.30 Report," (Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Office, 2010).
151 "Government in Damage Control over Hu Case," (Sydney The Sydney Morning Herald, 2010).
The Chinese foreign ministry reacted roughly, dismissing the Australian government's comments as 'irresponsible remarks'. Qin, Gang, the spokesman of the Chinese foreign ministry, commented that the 'Australia side should respect the verdict (emphasis added)'. Further, Qin, Gang, in a fairly forceful statement, warned Australia that Hu's case was an internal legal matter for China, and it was inappropriate for Australia to make it bigger, because this will be 'no good for Australia (emphasis added)'.

Tensions between the two countries' media were even more obvious. The China Daily published an angry commentary titled 'Rio Tinto fallout can only hurt Australia'. In this article, the author was firmly on the side of the Chinese government and maintained that Australia's questioning of the verdict was irresponsible. What was more, it was even taken up to another level that an association was made between the tensions in this case and a so-called deep-rooted Australian bias against China. Remarkably forceful expressions were employed, including phrase like 'Australia should be ashamed of its arrogance and bias against China' and it threatened that Australia would soon turn into the biggest loser in the southern hemisphere once Chinese tourists and students stopped coming.

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154 Ibid.
155 "Feature: China-Australia Relations."
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
Various Chinese online forums and posts also used acrimonious expressions describing Stern Hu and the Australian government. Hu was considered having committed treason, since he was born in China, despite him being actually an Australian citizen. Australia too was depicted as a non-significant nation to China. A Global Times' interview with a scholar from Tsing Hua University was widely quoted, in which the Tsing Hua scholar commented that Australia was in no position to be assertive against China, not to mention criticising the Chinese trial and legal system. According to him, Australia should thank China's purchasing iron ore from Australia so Australian economy was not struck as hard as that of the other developed nations, during the current global financial crisis. Australian attitude towards Hu's case thus was picking bones among eggs.

The Australian media, on the other hand, despite being overall less forceful, linked Hu's case to the Chinese political system and pointed out that China is a country that has always addressed challenges in a ruthless manner and that was how it dealt with Hu's case. The Age was almost certain that Hu's arrest and put under charges was in retaliation by the Chinese side for Rio's past conduct that substantially contributed to the rise in iron ore price. It commented that Hu's trial suggested Australia and Rio Tinto have underestimated the 'humiliation, ill-will and legitimate economic anxieties

160 "中国奸商胡士泰是怎样成澳大利亚民族英雄的？", (NF DAILY, 2009).
161 Xiaoya Chen and Hui Zhao, "力拓传胡士泰对华“公关”搞好与中国关系," (Sohu News).
that could be generated in a country (China) so dependent on steel.\textsuperscript{163} The \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} claimed that Hu's case should serve as a reminder that Australia should not let the 'promise of riches blind people to the dangers of dealing with an authoritarian regime (China)'.\textsuperscript{164} Moreover, it encouraged the international business community to put real pressure on China to open up Chinese legal and economic system by not doing business with China.\textsuperscript{165} There were also other comments, less negative but certainly suggesting dissatisfaction over the Chinese way of dealing with Hu's case. For instance, Australian corporate law expert Professor Ian Ramsay from the University of Melbourne was quoted saying, given the impact of Hu's case, that all governments, including Australian government, were rightly concerned to understand what happened so similar cases will not happen again.\textsuperscript{166} The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry also expressed that they would seek clarification from the Chinese authorities on those unanswered questions arising from Hu's trial.\textsuperscript{167}

Echoing Professor Ramsay's comment that Hu's case has an international reach, and Rudd's warning to China that the world was watching how it handled the trial,\textsuperscript{168} the continuing impact of Hu's case on the international business community did appear to be no less than dramatic. Not only did

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{163} John Garnaut, "Trade Secrets: The Iron Ore Wars," (Beijing: The Age, 2009).
  \item \textsuperscript{164} Daniel Flitton, "Farce Flags Canberra's Limited Influence in Beijing," (Sydney The Sydney Morning Herald, 2010).
  \item \textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{166} Hewitt, "Tension Rise between Australia and China over Hu Jailing."
  \item \textsuperscript{167} Cathy Alexander, "China Not Acting Like Superpower over Stern Hu Verdict, Says Kevin Rudd," (News Limited, 2010).
  \item \textsuperscript{168} Joe Kelly, "World Is Watching the Stern Hu Rio Tinto Trial, Rudd Warns China," (The Australian 2010).
\end{itemize}
Australian exporters start feeling insecure in doing business in China, but more and more attention now has been paid to other aspects of doing business with China, including recent complaints from foreign investors of rising Chinese protectionism, lack of market access and absence of even token efforts of the Chinese official to protect intellectual property rights.

For example, Gome quoted Chinese correspondent Coleen Ryan by pointing out that a US Chamber of Commerce survey done by its Beijing office has found a rising number of them feel unwelcomed in China. Jumping from 23% and 26% in 2008, and 2009 respectively, about 38% of the companies surveyed now feel unwelcomed to compete in the Chinese market.

In Australia, another round of discussions over future Sino-Australian relationship was triggered. On one hand, China is rising to be so strong that it is more and more willing to flex its economic muscles, which certainly indicates a departure from its 'new diplomacy' and Australia needs to learn to deal with a growing China better. On the other hand, China's rigid attitude in this incident was surrounding the iron ore pricing, which is vital to its economy and China has been struggling to secure its supplies at a reasonable price. So, similar to the previous two incidents, this case again exposes two opposing realities facing China, that is, a strong China with great economic influence, as the 'Strong China' school is to argue and a weak China deeply

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171 Gome, "Stern Hu's Case Has Lessons for Aussie Exporters."
troubled by its incapacity of supplying itself with sufficient iron ore, as the arguments from the 'Weak China' school are to present.

*The perspective of the 'Strong China' School*

*A verdict showing China is still made of steel'. – *The Age*

It is almost self-evident in this incident, as to why the 'Strong China' school holds the view that China is likely to be getting tougher and more assertive in safeguarding its economic interests. Not only has China's quick and rigid dismissal of Australian protests and criticism in this case demonstrated an uncompromising Chinese stance regarding its economic interests, but also there is a big picture that cannot be overlooked where China has indeed come to a position where its economic power has reached an unprecedented height in the China's modern history, and which seems to feed into an evident Chinese intention to assert its financial influence worldwide.

Firstly, although it may be unrealistic to expect an economically successful China not to be appear more powerful; it is the 'how' part that requires attention. How China reacted towards Australia's scepticism of its legal system and how it handled Hu's trial almost served as a live example that confirms China's deviation from the 'new diplomacy' spirit. As outlined above, in the eyes of the Chinese government, Australian officials' expression of concerns over matters on which they were entitled to seek explanations,
due to the closed trial, was disrespectful to China's criminal system and therefore, irresponsible expression. Not to mention that Chinese media's rigid and harsh comment of Australia's attitude in this incident was close to offensive. Jerome Cohen, a New York University legal expert, argued that China used to admit the US consuls to secret trials, but changed it in recent years.\textsuperscript{172} Cohen also expressed his confusion over the fact that it was the very first time that he could recall that there is a distinction drawn so certain charges are heard in public and some are not.\textsuperscript{173} Also, as the Australian side had repeatedly stressed that it too condemned bribery under any circumstance, but the fact that there was no mentioning of any legal consequence to the person who bribed Hu justified any Australian doubts casted onto Hu's trial, a rigid dismissal by China of this valid concern, thus, signals nothing but an impatient and assertive China.

Secondly, to make more sense of the 'Strong China' argument in this case, it is reasonable to draw attention to the big picture where China's economic power is seen and felt by others globally. For one, China's economy has been rapidly growing since its 1978 'open-door' policy. According to the World Bank, from 1989 to 2010, China has an average GDP annual growth rate of 9.3%, with a historical height of 14.2% in 1992,\textsuperscript{174} which has dramatically increased China's economic power and confidence. Now China is even

\begin{thebibliography}{1}
\bibitem{172} "Jerome Cohen and Yu-Jie Chen on the Stern Hu Trial," (Chinese Law Prof Blog, 2010).
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\end{thebibliography}
positioned to be the second largest economy in the world.\textsuperscript{175} A Pew Global Attitudes survey also revealed that nine out of ten Chinese people are happy about the current state of Chinese economy and optimistic about China's future economic development.\textsuperscript{176} Additionally, the rest of the world seems to have felt the great economic strength of China as well. In the same survey, among the populations in 22 nations worldwide, the majority in eight nations chose China as the international leading economic power. And half of Japanese, French, Germans and Americans now assigned the top spot to China.\textsuperscript{177}

Surviving the current global financial crisis, China's economy seems to be even stronger and more influential on a global scale. In fact, China has now assumed a role of the rescuer of the global economy. Jamaica, for instance, a traditional ally of the US and Britain, received a loan package of $138 million from China, while the US and Britain were preoccupied in tackling their own financial problems.\textsuperscript{178} Another example, Moldova, to which, China has been historically an observer rather than a player, now has received a $1 billion loan from China to help the entire Moldovan economy.\textsuperscript{179} Numerous of other examples, including $25 billion loan to Russia\textsuperscript{180} and $10 billion to

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\item \textsuperscript{175} "Second in Line."
\item \textsuperscript{176} "Near Universal Optimism About Beijing Olympics: The Chinese Celebrate Their Roaring Economy, as They Struggle with Its Costs."
\item \textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Ariana Eunjung Cha, "China Uses Global Crisis to Assert Its Influence: Along with Aid to Other Nations, Beijing Offers up Criticism of the West," (Washington: The Washington Post, 2009).
\item \textsuperscript{179} "China Offers Moldova Non-Reimbursable Assistance," (AllMoldova, 2009).
\item \textsuperscript{180} John Helmer, "China Loan Turns Russia Oil East," (Asia Times, 2009).
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Kazakhstan,\textsuperscript{181} all seem to say nothing but a powerful Chinese economy is expanding its global influence. It really shouldn’t come as a surprise to see China now speaks with a stronger voice and has low tolerance when its own economic interests are at stake.

Nevertheless, a more striking part of this Chinese global economic reach is how China has been almost persistent in pursuing energy, raw materials or other resource supplies elsewhere apart from Australia, in a fashion that is controversial. The fact that Chinese diplomacy has been courting so-called ‘rogue’ states that are rich in resources that China needs is undermining its ‘new’ diplomatic practice as noted earlier, and gives the ‘Strong China’ school a perfect argument to claim China’s non-genuine intention behind its so-called ‘new diplomacy’.

Noted briefly already in the overview chapter, countries like Sudan, Burma and Iran all of which have notorious human rights record, have received financial support and political cover from China in combating US sanctions. A massive amount of investment from China has been pouring into those regimes, helping building pipelines and exploring local resources. Thirteen out of fifteen foreign companies in Sudan are Chinese and more than 10,000 Chinese workers are working in Sudan’s oil business.\textsuperscript{182} Sudan also accounts for 5\%-7\% of Chinese oil consumption.\textsuperscript{183} Similarly, thanks to Chinese

\textsuperscript{181} "Summary," (Stratfor Global Intelligence, 2009).
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid.
investment and its non-interference principle, the Burmese military junta has survived the US economic sanctions and still stands strong against domestic call for democratic reforms.\textsuperscript{184} In return, China has been largely involved in obtaining oil and gas exploration rights in Burma.\textsuperscript{185} The Iranian-Sino relationship too, is grown out of China’s pursuit for energy. Despite US-led condemnation and economic isolation, China stepped in and further strengthened economic links and signed substantial energy deals with Iran.\textsuperscript{186}

Perhaps, an increasingly powerful China simply decided to change how it runs legal trials. But the Chinese assertiveness in handling Hu’s case is hardly an accident. China’s assertive tone is also heard elsewhere when, in recent years, it demanded foreign companies’ patent technologies to adopt Chinese standards if they wish to sell them in Chinese market and brought many trade cases against Western producers who sell products to China.\textsuperscript{187}

It appears that China is now ready to flex its growing economic muscles to achieve its economic goals, regardless the manner and measures. Hence, without doubt, the ‘Strong China’ school is correct in arguing that the Chinese assertiveness is the direct outcome of China’s growing power.


\textsuperscript{185} “China’s Support Blocks International Diplomacy and Keeps Burma’s Regime in Power.”


\textsuperscript{187} Bruce Stokes, "China’s New Global Leverage," (Asia Sentinel, 2010).
However, it can also be said with some certainty here that China’s growing power cannot fully account for China's assertiveness in this incident, as it is far more obvious in this case than that in the previous two incidents that the other side of the powerful Chinese economy is an exactly opposite reality, where China relies on others to supply its economy with energy, resource and raw materials, in this case, iron ore. Without the supplies, what the 'Strong China' school has argued upon would come to an end, which forms the basis of the 'Weak China' argument.

*The perspective of the 'Weak China' School*

'When it comes to China, diplomatic relations has to take a back seat to its own security.'—Russell Smith

From the perspective of the 'Weak China' school, Hu's trial means something significantly different from that meant for the 'Strong China' school. China’s economy has indeed been rapidly growing since its 1978 open-door reform, and so has its demands for energy, resources and raw materials. The first point to make is that Hu and the other accused three Rio employees were involved in negotiations of iron ore prices between China and the Australian company Rio Tinto. Iron ore is a raw material essential to steel industry, which China is unable to supply for itself as its booming economy continues its large consumption annually. By 2003, China became the largest importer of iron ore in the world and the demands are continuing to rise with no sign
of slowing down.\textsuperscript{188} By 2007, statistics show that China was taking almost 50\% of internationally traded iron ore.\textsuperscript{189} And steel production is critical to any country’s infrastructure development in particular for China, as China’s miraculous economic rise has been deriving significantly from investment in infrastructure projects, such as roads, houses and factories, which has been encouraged and, as the Chinese economist Ba, Shusong pointed out, should be continuously emphasised as a long-term strategy for the Chinese economy to be rebalanced and thus to be able to continue grow.\textsuperscript{190} Hence, without iron ore, there will be no lasting steel industry in China to supply its infrastructure projects with steels required. That makes outsourcing for iron ore the option for China. And obtaining sufficient iron ore at a stable price becomes essential to further Chinese economic growth.

However, the second point is that China has encountered great difficulties in maintaining a stable iron ore price; instead, the price has increased dramatically in recent years. For the past decades, the international iron ore suppliers and purchasers were involved in a benchmark pricing system where the first negotiated price with major suppliers and purchasers of the year is applied to any other future contracts between suppliers and purchasers of that year. This system does not necessarily guarantee benefits to the suppliers, which is why in recent years, big suppliers such as the ‘big three’, including Brazil’s Vale, Australia’s Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton decided

\textsuperscript{188} Richard Leaver and Carl Ungerer, "A Natural Power: Challenges for Australia’s Resources Diplomacy in Asia," (Canberra Australian Strategic Policy Institute 2010). p.10.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid. p.19.
\textsuperscript{190} Shusong Ba, “从金融“再平衡”看中国经济复苏,” (GUOTAI AMC, 2010).
to shift to a shorter term pricing system based on more close to market price. That definitely does not impress big purchasers like China. In fact, China claims losses in purchasing more and more expensive iron ore. And within the domestic steel industry, there are voices pressing the government to 'do something about it'.

Furthering this weakness, according to Leaver and Ungerer, is China's relatively non-regulated steel industry, which they call it 'highly decentralised' system that weakens China's position in bargaining for stable and low import costs at its national capacity. China has massive manufacturing capacity nationally but centralized regularity only exists among local planning not national planning, which explains why a big nation like China only hosts one of world's five largest steel companies.

Moreover, the Chinese negotiation front has been undermined by internal corruption. Minister of China's Department of Industry and information, Li, Yizhong, explicitly referred to corrupt personnel within China's steel industry as traitors (hanjian), a term that has almost been ceased in use in China since the end of World War Two. Li pointed out, in his speech in May 2010, that the import price of iron ore has increased from 90% to 120% and the current 200%, which caused China to have suffered a loss of at least

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193 Ibid.
194 “李毅中评进口铁矿石价格飙升：要整治内乱严惩“汉奸”, (iFeng, 2010).
¥700 billion.\textsuperscript{195} As Li identified, the major contributing factor is some corrupted officials and personnel within this industry are selling off China's interests in return for personal gains.\textsuperscript{196}

That leads to the point that Hu's case may be one of the examples that China was wishing to establish and then start cutting back or even stopping the losses in the process of negotiating iron ore price. According to \textit{Daily Economic News}, Hu and other three confessed that they regularly extracting bribes from small Chinese mills that wished to access to Rio Tinto's iron ore supplies at a favourable price,\textsuperscript{197} which significantly undermined the big Chinese mills' bargaining position, and Accordingly, as the judge claimed, that had caused Chinese iron and steel association to have suffered an overall loss as great as ¥1 billion in 2009.\textsuperscript{198}

Corruption in China's steel industry did not start from Hu's case. But the substantial loss that has occurred alarmed China and in the wake of Hu's case, more stress has been placed on anti-corruption in this industry. That explains why while the Australian side focused on how Chinese law dealt with commercial secrets and the transparency of Chinese legal system, the Chinese side concentrated on the trend of corruption in its steel industry.\textsuperscript{199}

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{197} "中国富豪杜双华向力拓前高管行贿 900 万美元," \textit{(Xin Hua News, 2010)}.
\textsuperscript{198} Jing Guo, "力拓案一审判决 胡士泰获刑 10 年," \textit{(CQCB, 2010)}.
\textsuperscript{199} "李毅中评进口铁矿石价格飙升：要整治内乱严惩“汉奸”."
China's iron ore supply is indeed facing a critical challenge, which provides a strong case for the 'Weak China' school. Without sufficient supply of the iron ore, China's current mushrooming economy will be like a fast driving car short of petrol. While the 'Strong China' argument is grounded on the apparent assertive manner of China in dealing with Australia's complain; the fatal relationship between supplies of iron ore and the Chinese economy means it was more of China's desperation for stable supplies of iron ore that pushed China in acting assertively against Australia. And the bad news for China is that this weakness will be escalated as its economy continues to grow. That is where the synthesis of both schools comes into place.

A Strong China/Weak China synthesis?

The essential point here is that this situation is likely to get worse for China as Chinese economy continues booming. According to China Mining Association, Chinese imports of iron ore continued to soar and now it has reached 69% dependency rate in 2010.200

Inevitably, the increasing demand results in an increase in supply prices, which makes securing iron ore supply for China a more challenging task. In the 2005, for example, when Japan's leading steel company agreed upon a dramatic 50% increase in benchmark price, China's steel industry found itself in no position to bargain but had to settle for a price increase of 71.5%

200 "China's Iron Ore Import Dependency Hits 69%," (Beijing: People's Daily, 2010).
with Australia's Rio Tinto and CVRD. Attempting to reduce its weak position, in 2009, Chinalco offered a bid of $30 billion to purchase Rio Tinto's shares, aiming to increase its stake in Rio Tinto, which appeared to have failed, when Rio's iron ore division expressed that Chinalco's role would be limited.

Frustrated by its position as a resource buyer, China has also been negotiating a free trade agreement with Australia in the hope to stabilise import prices from Australia on resources such as iron ore. Despite these countermeasures, China's position as Australia's largest market for resources, nevertheless, means further price rise will be the case. As Leaver and Ungerer noted that back in 2006, it was widely expected that a further price rise of 10% to 20% would occur.

To make the matter more detrimental to Chinese interests, this challenge is not only coming from the Chinese side, but also deriving from the end of the supplier. In the case of Australia, by late 1970s, the surge of production of iron ore in the Pilbara in Western Australia positioned Australia as a leading iron ore producer in the world. That provided Australia with some significant leverage in iron ore exports. Although not commonly discussed, energy diplomacy was never foreign to Australians.

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201 Leaver and Ungerer, "A Natural Power: Challenges for Australia's Resources Diplomacy in Asia." p.20.
203 Leaver and Ungerer, "A Natural Power: Challenges for Australia's Resources Diplomacy in Asia.", p. 20.
204 Ibid.
Former Prime Minister Gareth Evans used to mention Australia’s uranium sales and political clout in international community\textsuperscript{205} and Howard publicly talked about Australia’s potential to become an energy superpower.\textsuperscript{206} Australia has always known its advantageous position of being a resource rich nation.

In 2010, so far the export of iron ore has produced a trade surplus of $3.5 billion for Australian economy.\textsuperscript{207} The dominant stake in the iron ore supply market allows Australian companies like Rio Tinto to take advantage and shift to a shorter term pricing system with Asian mills, as mentioned before, which effectively pushed up the price of purchase. Despite strong Chinese countermeasure in launching substantial investments in Australian mining industry and using its massive demand as a bargaining chip, the desperation of Chinese mills to secure the supplies of iron ore has failed Chinese effort to this end. The very fact that smaller and private Chinese mills bribed Hu and the other three Rio Tinto employees showed that the desperate need of iron ore seems to loom large.

With no sign of China’s slowing down in consumption of iron ore, China’s further weakening position in bargaining for a reasonable and stable iron price is foreseeable. Thus, Hu’s trial is a clear case reflecting on the weakness of China in supplying its own economy with the demanded iron ore, which is,

\textsuperscript{205} Ibid. p.14.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{207} David Uren and Matthew Franklin, "Soaring Iron Ore Exports Drives $3.5billion Surplus," (The Daily Telegraph, 2010).
unfortunately, to be further exacerbated by China's growing economy, as outlined above. That indeed frustrates a China that is economically powerful and going to be more powerful, and thus will result in more and more assertiveness from the Chinese end.

Conclusion

Central to all of those above incidents are the 'Strong China' and the 'Weak China' perspectives, which combined together to encapsulate the dilemma facing China's power growth. On one hand, the 'Strong China' argument has presented a powerful China that is unwillingness to compromise its own interests when challenged. On the other hand, the 'Weak China' school has revealed significant weaknesses that have compelled China to resort to assertiveness.

Although it is logical that China's seemingly stronger appearance must have a recognisable reputation and image that matches its citizens' expectations, a better capacity in maintaining national unity and a stable and reliable supplier of iron ore. Yet, none of those is a likely case. As China is becoming more powerful, its weaknesses somehow appear to be exacerbated, which creates frustration and drives China to resort to more assertiveness.
CONCLUSION

The picture of a seemingly assertive China presented by the Australian experiences in the past two years of China’s new diplomacy was certainly remarkable. Not only are those Australian cases relevant to the ‘new diplomacy’s implementation for various reasons as outlined before, but the findings are illuminating, especially given the similar nature of those cases to their parallels happening elsewhere right now. A brief revisit of the last chapter is the first task of this conclusion, which provides an opportunity to emphasise the findings and reiterate the major argument.

Throughout all three cases, arguments, dubbed the ‘Strong China’ and the ‘Weak China’ schools create the major themes. Despite this distinction between the ‘Strong China’ and the ‘Weak China’ schools may be artificial; it serves to provide an opportunity to discover a new perspective in examining the ‘new diplomacy’. And it is through locating those two major groups of opinions in those cases that this investigation claims no conclusion should be made, purely based on either of them alone.

On the surface, all of the three cases have demonstrated a powerful China that dealt with Australia assertively when its existing positions were challenged or interests appeared to be threatened. A closer examination of those experiences, however, reveals that the ‘Strong China’ argument overlooks the other side of the story, as the ‘Weak China’ school advocates,
which is a China troubled by its powerful nationalism, difficult challenges to keep China together and its growing consumption of iron ore. These weaknesses are no less than compelling, which pushed China to resort to assertiveness in an attempt to address them. However, the Chinese assertiveness in question is more than likely to linger on in the future, as this investigation finds that the more China develops, the more powerful its nationalism will get, the more challenging the task of maintaining national unity will become and the more iron ore it will need to consume.

In the aggregate, the answer to the question asked in the title is positive. China has embarked on an assertive path that is ending the 'new diplomacy'. And it is most unlikely that China is to willingly slow down its developing pace in the future. Not only finding the antidote to the growing iron ore thirst, fired-up nationalism and challenges of maintaining national unity is one complex task; but the fact that China's power growth exacerbates those problems means China's assertive diplomacy is already heading towards a direction that offers no return.

The vision that this investigation has for the destiny of the 'new diplomacy' benefited from the 'Strong China' and the 'Weak China' debates, and will in turn contribute to further academic research towards this topic. The 'Strong China' argument anticipates aggression from China and growing tensions between China and the existing world order, as China continues to rise. It is only correct in terms of the ultimate outcome. In a sense, this line of
argument is very much centred on the idea that power feeds into ambitions for more power. It has a good grounding in history but loses sight of contemporary surroundings. It fails to acknowledge the fact that China is also fragile by many counts, which currently is more of a driving force than its growing power behind its assertive diplomacy. Similarly, the ‘Weak China’ school is limited in only engaging in the Chinese domestic element, overlooking solid evidence and hoping that the negative international repercussion may be adjusted following some improvement in tackling Chinese domestic issues.

The Australian experiences, however, came to the heart of this diagnosis as not only contemporary but by shedding light on both internal and external factors of China as a general background for this profound diplomatic shift, provide an opportunity for thorough examination of the departure of the ‘new diplomacy’. Thus, they provide a valuable lesson for future research towards this end that an approach is both contemporary and thorough is necessary for capturing the fast evolution of the Chinese diplomacy.
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