DISCOURSES OF 'CHINA' IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A Study in Western Theory as (IR) Practice

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I hereby certify that this thesis is wholly my own work and that all sources have been properly cited and acknowledged.

Chengxin Pan

For My Mother and

In Memory of My Father (1921-2004)

献给我的母亲, 并以此缅怀父亲

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with both the dangers and opportunities of China's relations with the contemporary world and with the U.S.-led West in particular. It takes an unconventional approach to these issues in critically examining mainstream Western studies of Chinese foreign policy as a particular kind of discourse. The thesis focuses, more specifically, on the two dominant Western perspectives on China, (neo)realism and (neo)-liberalism. In doing so, it engages the questions of how Western discursive practice has come to shape and dominate the ways we think of and deal with 'China' in international relations, and how, as a result, China has often come to formulate its foreign policy in line with the prescribed meaning given to it by Western-based China scholars. In this context, the thesis argues that to deconstruct the processes by which China is given particular 'meanings' by Western discourses—and by which those meanings are transformed into both Western and Chinese foreign policy—is the key to a more profound understanding of Sino-Western relations and, perhaps, a first step towards ameliorating its problems and realising its potential for long-term peace and mutual prosperity.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements *iv*
Abstract *vi*
Abbreviations *x*
Preface *xi*

1. Introduction 1

Chinese Foreign Relations in the New Century:
Remapping a Field 1
Framing China in Contemporary Western IR Literature 13
Writing Other, Constructing Self:
Beyond the Positivist Dichotomy 20
The Intimate Enemy:
Western Constructions of China's Foreign Relations 26
Chinese Foreign Policy as a Disciplinary Challenge:
A Concluding Note 33

2. Constructing Self and Other:
Speaking for 'the West' with an American Accent 37

The American Self-Construction and the Construction of Others
as 'Threat' and 'Opportunity' 39
Self/Other Constructions as Power Practice (I):
From the Indian Wars to World War II 45
Self/Other Constructions as Power Practice (II):
U.S. Foreign Policy during the Cold War 50
Self/Other Constructions as Power Practice (III):
U.S. Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era 58
Self/Other Constructions as Power Practice (IV):
U.S. Foreign Policy in the 'War on Terrorism' 65

3. The Lost 'Opportunity': Social Constructions of Sino-Western Relations 1840-1949 71

'Traditional' Chinese Worldview and the Onset of Western Domination 73

'Opportunity,' Gunboat Diplomacy, and the Making of an Intimate Enemy: 1860-1919 81

A Troubled Relationship with the 'Family of Nations' and the 'Loss of China': 1919-1949 90

4. The Imagined Enemies in the Cold War: Social (Re)Constructions of Sino-U.S. Relations 1949-1989 103

The Construction of the 'Red Menace' and Its Policy Implications 105

Cold War Containment and the Radicalisation of Chinese Foreign Relations 112

The Cold War Impact on Chinese Domestic Policies 117

The U.S.-China Rapprochement: Un-imagining the Hostile Relationship 122

5. (Neo)Realist Framings of Contemporary China in the Western Self-Imagination 130

The 'Threat' Argument in (Neo)Realist Studies of China 132

Representing a Threatening Other in Structural Realism 140

Constructing the Chinese 'Other' from the 'Inside Out' 148

The 'China Threat' Discourse and the New Containment Policy 154

'Threat' Theory as Practice (I): China and the Taiwan Missile Crisis (1995-1996) 158

'Threat' Theory as Practice (II): The 'Spy Plane' Incident (2001) 161

6. (Neo)Liberal Constructions of Contemporary China in the Western Self-Imagination 168

The 'Opportunity' Argument: The Theme of Convergence in Western (Neo)liberal Discourse 170

(Neo)Liberal Constructions of Self and the Chinese 'Other' 180

An 'Opportunity for Convergence' or Potential for Crisis? 190

7. Chinese Foreign Relations as Social Constructs in the Post-Tiananmen Era 207

The (Neo)Liberal Discourse of 'Opportunity' After Tiananmen:
Implications for Sino-Western relations 208

The 'China Threat' Discourse:
Implications for Chinese Foreign Relations 233

8. Conclusion 249

Bibliography 261

ABBREVIATIONS

ANZUS	Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (trade forum)
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (U.S.)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
KMT	Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party)
MEIs	multilateral economic institutions
MFN	most favoured nation
MOFTEC	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (PRC)
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NIC	National Intelligence Council (U.S.)
NSC-68	National Security Council Document Number Sixty-Eight
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PLA	People's Liberation Army (PRC)
PNAC	Project for the New American Century
PNTR	permanent normal trade relations
PRC	People's Republic of China
SARS	severe acute respiratory syndrome
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation
SOEs	state-owned enterprises
TMD	Theatre Missile Defence
U.N.	United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

Preface

Anytime we think the problem is "out there," that thought is the problem. Stephen R. Covey[1]

We are in effect being called upon to construct our utopias, not merely to dream about them. Something will be constructed. If we do not participate in the construction, others will determine it for us.

Immanuel Wallerstein[2]

MORE than three decades ago when the U.S.-China rapprochement was still in its early stage after years of Cold War animosity, the prominent American China scholar John K. Fairbank wrote that "American relations with China have reached a difficult phase. We can't just *do* something; we have to think."[3] Three decades on and much has changed. The Cold War is now well behind us, and Sino-American relations are in a better shape. But we still have to 'think' seriously about this relationship. There remain significant differences dividing the two countries, at the ideological, cultural, strategic, and economic levels. Against this complex backdrop, a popular view is that Sino-Western relations will for the foreseeable future remain characterised neither by open conflict nor by close friendship. In its Chinese version, it is that *Zhong-Mei guanxi huai budao naliqu, ye hao budao naliqu*.

When I began the journey of writing this thesis many years ago, this issue was very much on my mind. It still is as the PhD journey is about to end. Along the way, I have found the popular view outlined above increasingly unsatisfactory. Balanced and realistic as it is, it smacks of a sense of complacency and even fatalism, and it can hardly accommodate the complexities and unpredictability of the Sino-American

[1] Stephen R. Covey, *The Seven Habits of the Highly Effective People*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989, p. 89.
[2] Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Inter-State Structure of the Modern World-System," in Steve Smith, Ken Booth, and Marysia Zalewski eds., *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 106.
[3] John K. Fairbank, *China Perceived: Images & Policies in Chinese-American Relations*, London: André Deutsch, 1976, p. xi.

relationship particularly in the twenty-first century. It seems to me that plenty of things could go seriously wrong between China and the U.S. in the foreseeable future, as they have in the recent past, even under the new détente arrangements. Examples which readily come to mind are the Tiananmen upheaval of 1989, the Taiwan Strait missile crisis of 1995-1996, the 1999 Chinese Embassy bombing in Belgrade, and the 2001 Spy Plane drama. While the dramatic impact of these incidents has now largely faded away, their very occurrence underlines the inherent volatility of Sino-American relations. This volatility remains but I do think it is possible that better relations can be fostered between China and the U.S. and the West generally.

This was my state of mind as I began the thesis. As I read the mainstream literature on the subject I found it more aggravating than illuminating. In fact, more often than not, I found it to be an integral part of the problems at the core of Sino-American relations, even when it was in its contemporary (neoliberal) mode. Because of this, I changed my initial attitude to the thesis, in going beyond a straightforward empirical account of Sino-American relations and developing a less conventional approach, an approach centred in discourse analysis.

Thus, although this thesis remains very much concerned with everyday Sino-Western relations, it is not a conventional analysis of this relationship per se. Rather, it focuses on mainstream Western (particularly U.S.) literature on Chinese foreign relations, and offers a critical reading of the dominant discursive approaches within that literature. In particular, it focuses on (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism, approaches which have effectively reduced a complex, volatile, and multifaceted entity (China) to a set of narrow, simplified meanings which have come to define 'China' for Western analysts and policy-makers.

(Neo)realist and (neo)liberal literature is often insightful and impressive as far as it goes, but I will suggest here that it does not go far enough in explaining the process between theory and practice at the core of Sino-Western relations. For this reason, this thesis seeks to shed some light on the often obscured linkage between mainstream Western IR discourses on China and important political practices in Sino-Western/U.S. relations. In this way, the thesis seeks to provide an insightful context within which to expose and problematise the silences, limitations, paradoxes, and practical dangers associated with the conventional modes of seeing and 'doing' Sino-Western relations in general and Sino-U.S. relations in particular. It cannot hope to provide alternative

solutions per se, but it seeks at the very least to open up hitherto closed space for engaging with the many complex problems facing China and the West today.

For all the breadth of its concern, the thesis is not intended as a comprehensive survey of orthodox China scholarship in the Western IR and foreign policy community. Notably absent here is a substantial discussion on the neoconservative approach to China, an approach which has gained much popularity in the U.S. since George W. Bush came to power in 2001. At first glance, and given its huge influence on current U.S. foreign policy (especially in Iraq), this might appear unjustifiable. But I would argue that at present the very popularity of neoconservatism (on the Middle East) is also in part its weakness (on China). Or, put another way, its obsession with Iraq has allowed the continued predominance of the more conventional approaches in the field of Chinese foreign relations i.e. (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism. Therefore, while recognising the potential importance of neoconservatism to the China field, I concentrate primarily on the conventional discursive approaches, both of which, I argue, actually complement the neoconservative desire to "use American might to promote American ideals."[4]

More specifically, in Chapter 2, these mainstream discursive approaches are understood in terms of what I call a U.S. self-imagination, and in this context I explore some of their implications for U.S. foreign policy. In Chapters 3-4, I examine the question of how earlier varieties of the neo-neo approaches provided a legitimating force for Western control, conversion, and containment of China during the period between the mid-nineteenth century and the end of the Cold War, and how, as a result, they played an important constitutive role in the transformation of the Chinese worldview into a kind of 'intimate enemy' for the West. In a more contemporary setting, Chapters 5-7 continue to analyse the connections between Western IR discourses and particular Western policies on China on the one hand, and between Western discursive practices and the development of Chinese foreign relations on the other. I conclude the thesis by suggesting that conventional international relations knowledge of China—as a pregiven, problematic Other—is problematic as discourse and dangerous as practice, and needs to be radically reformulated.

Finally, a note on Romanisation. Throughout the thesis I adopt the official *pinyin* system in China, which is now commonly used in scholarship and journalism in the

[4] Max Boot, "American Conservatism: What the Heck Is a 'Neocon'?" *The Wall Street Journal*, December 30, 2002, p. A12.

West. There are some exceptions, however, with regard to certain well-known names of people and places, such as Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, Lee Teng-hui, and Hong Kong. And in some cases, both *pinyin* and old Romanisation names are provided, with the latter put in brackets to indicate the old usage, for example, Guangzhou (Canton).

1

Introduction

> *It is a curious fact of academic history that the first great center of area studies ... [was] in the Office of Strategic Service…. It is still true today, and I hope it always will be, that there is a high measure of interpenetration between universities with area programs and the information-gathering agencies of the government.*
>
> McGeorge Bundy[1]

> *...the process of discursive representation is never a neutral, detached one but is always imbued with the power and authority of the namers of makers of reality—it is always knowledge as power.... Discourse analysis seeks, in this way, to explain how power is constituted and how its premises and givens are replicated at all levels of society and to reveal its exclusionary practices in order to create space for critical thought and action*.
>
> Jim George[2]

Chinese Foreign Relations in the New Century: Remapping a Field

IF there is one thing that is certain about contemporary global politics, it is that the dawn of the new century has not ushered in any rosy new age. Despite the growing momentum of globalisation in the world economy, the international scene remains dominated by market uncertainty, poverty and inequality, environmental crisis,

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[1] McGeorge Bundy's 1964 speech at the Johns Hopkins University, quoted in Bruce Cumings, "Boundary Displacement: Area Studies and International Studies during and after the Cold War," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 29, no. 1 (1997), p. 6.

[2] Jim George, *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re)Introduction to International Relations*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1994, p. 30.

humanitarian catastrophe, terrorist threats, regional rivalry, and war. With more than 50 nations becoming poorer over the past decade, the global gap between rich and poor continues to grow.[3] The age-old Israeli-Palestinian struggle shows no sign of abating. And more than one year after George W. Bush declared 'mission accomplished' in the Iraq phase of the 'War on Terror' in May 2003, the daily occurrence of shooting, bombing, kidnapping, and sabotage are just some of the indications of how volatile and dangerous the region remains today. In some less precarious parts of the world such as the United States, Europe, and Australia, the shadow of terrorist threats continues to weigh heavily on the minds of decision-makers and the public alike. While relatively free from the fear of terrorism, the main business in Northeast Asia has not always been business. In this regard, the long-running North Korea nuclear stalemate is of particular significance. Despite some recent progress in six-way talks, the nuclear issue remains as intractable as ever. And one year after the mysterious outbreak of the SARS epidemic in 2003, the region is still reeling from the shocking after-effects.

Amid all these uncertainties, a huge question mark hangs over China, the world's most populous nation. On the one hand, its sustained economic boom has now begun to create a well-to-do middle class with both increasing openness to the outside world and an insatiable demand for quality goods, services, technology, and resources. In search of a slice of the world's fastest-growing market, foreign companies are racing each other to market their products and set up production bases in China. By 2001, 80 percent of the world's top 500 transnational enterprises had entered the country. And now a full member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), China has joined most major international institutions and has recently committed itself to a 'peaceful rise.'

But despite these heartening developments, some worrying signs remain. Among other things, a freer, more affluent society, rather than being accompanied by the emergence of a more democratic government, remains in the control of an authoritarian regime. China's burgeoning economy, as well as driving up world commodity prices and creating massive pollution that clouds its sky and spoils its rivers, has yet to make significant headway in tackling its chronic problem of poverty.[4] Unable to feed

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[3] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2003: Millennium Development Goals: A Compact Among Nations to End Human Poverty*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 33.

[4] For example, in 2003, China's imports rose 40 percent, or about US$118 billion, setting a world record for steel imports, driving up copper prices by 40 percent and lead prices 55 percent, as well as accounting for 35 percent of the global growth in oil demand. See Robert J. Samuelson, "The China Riddle," *The Washington Post*, January 30, 2004, p. A21. According to a survey done by the Chinese National Bureau

themselves on their small plots of land, millions of peasants stream into big cities looking for work and prosperity. Many try their luck abroad, sometimes ending up in the kind of tragedy that makes international headlines.[5] Things are changing too, in regard to China's worldview, to the extent that an ever increasing dependence on Middle Eastern and Central Asian oil supplies has seen China, now the second largest energy consumer after the U.S., beginning to play a more assertive role in these oil-rich regions, forming closer economic and military ties with Saudi Arabia, and strengthening the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Meanwhile, tensions between mainland China and Taiwan's independence-minded leaders continue to bubble up from time to time, threatening to destabilise the region and beyond.

Thus, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the rise of China is imbued with profound uncertainties, and for some observers, 'paradoxes.' Issues such as these demand urgent and thoughtful attention from world leaders, policy-makers, and international scholars. As the impact of China's ascendancy is increasingly felt around the world, at the forefront of global debate in recent years has been the pressing question of 'whither China in international relations?' William T. Tow correctly points out that "With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China (PRC) will play an integral role in shaping any new world order."[6] And yet, given its baffling contradictions, the specific implications of China's arrival on the world stage remain a subject of contention. China, in this context:

> poses the most difficult questions for the future of international relations. Whether scholars, pundits, and policymakers are interested in environmental impact, human rights, economic affairs, or traditional military-security issues, most who think about the dynamics of the international system in the twenty-first century believe it essential to consider the rise of China and its implications.[7]

This is the general context of this thesis, which seeks to address the vital issue of China's relations with the contemporary world. It will do so by means of a critical

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of Statistics, in 2003, the country saw an increase of 800,000 in the absolute poor population for the first time in 25 years. See Chen Wen, "The Pinch of Poverty," *Beijing Review* 47, no. 15 (April 2004), p. 30.

[5] In June 2000, 58 Chinese were discovered dead on the back of a lorry while they were being smuggled into England; in February 2004, 19 Chinese drowned while working as shellfish collectors in Britain; and in April 2004, seven Chinese workers were kidnapped in Iraq. See Tony Woodley, "The Underbelly of Globalisation," *The Guardian*, February 7, 2004; and Jim Yardley, "Why Were Chinese in Iraq? Like Many Neighbors, They Needed Work," *The New York Times*, April 14, 2004, p. A11.

[6] William T. Tow, "China and the International Strategic System," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, p. 115.

[7] Avery Goldstein, "Great Expectations: Interpreting China's Arrival," *International Security* 22, no. 3 (1997/98), p. 36.

engagement with the conventional way of understanding China in the field of Chinese foreign policy studies. Situated at the intersection of International Relations (IR) and China studies, the study of Chinese foreign policy is a rather nebulous and diverse field. Nevertheless, as a field of study it has some commonly recognisable features. For example, issues which normally fall into the scope of its inquiry are designated as both 'dependent variables' (China's official foreign policy and foreign behaviour) and 'independent variables' (domestic and/or international factors which affect the process and structure of foreign policy-making and foreign behaviour outcome). In this sense, just as mainstream IR theorists represent international relations as an independent, frequently dangerous realm 'out there,' "something we can stand back from and observe with clinical detachment,"[8] scholars of Chinese foreign relations routinely characterise their object of study as a set of pregiven questions and problems, reflecting "a typical view among well-informed people in the West that Chinese foreign policy reflects and is determined by 'the country's unique culture, history, its domestic politics and the geopolitical calculus.'"[9] As the noted expert on Chinese foreign policy Samuel S. Kim argues, "China has emerged as the biggest U.S. foreign policy challenge because by dint of what China *is* and what it *does*, it is inescapably part of both the world-order problem and the world-order solution."[10] Therefore, a main task of this field of China studies, as Kim puts it, is to develop "plausible hypotheses about causal relationships between these factors (independent variables) and behavior (dependent variable). These hypotheses must be tested as rigorously and verifiably as possible."[11] Thus understood, it then becomes logical for Western scholars to locate the sources of those problems *within* China, which is consequently held almost solely responsible for solving those problems.[12]

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[8] R. B. J. Walker, *One World, Many Worlds*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1988, p. 22.

[9] Colin Mackerras, *Western Images of China*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 227. Similarly, Jürgen Osterhammel observes that there have been repeated calls for studying China as "the way it is" from a "political culture" perspective, for it is believed that Chinese foreign behaviour is determined by "some kind of unchanging cultural essence and trans-historical 'Chineseness.'" Jürgen Osterhammel, "CCP Foreign Policy as International History: Mapping the Field," in Michael H. Hunt and Niu Jun eds., *Toward a History of Chinese Communist Foreign Relations, 1920s-1960s*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Asia Program, 1992, p. 135.

[10] Samuel S. Kim, "Chinese Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice," in Samuel S. Kim ed., *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998, p. 4.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[12] For instance, having spoken of some contradictions of China's foreign behaviour in Asia in this way, Harold C. Hinton "logically" concludes that "*Until China manages to resolve these contradictions*, at least to a significantly greater extent than it has to date, its prestige and influence in Asia are not likely to rise much above the present level [emphasis added]." Harold C. Hinton, "China as an Asian Power," in

While this field has been ploughed by scholars from all over the world, it is safe to say that it remains dominated by scholars in the English-speaking world of the West, particularly in the United States. Thus, in this thesis, what I mean by the conventional field of Chinese foreign policy studies is primarily American and, to a lesser extent British and Australian, scholarship and methodological attitudes. Throughout this thesis, for the sake of linguistic simplicity, I will frequently refer to this mainstream field under the rather sweeping term of 'Western studies.'[13]

In this thesis, I will seek to argue that this conventional field routinely takes 'China' as a pregiven starting point for its empirical analysis, and has as a result become increasingly inadequate in theory and potentially dangerous in practice in the new century. This is because the dominant ways in which China and its foreign relations are understood and acted upon are inextricably linked to the particular ways in which the West in general, and the United States in particular, imagine themselves in relation to China and seek to project this self-identity on the world stage. The way that America perceives itself as the indispensable nation with a special mission to lead the world and shape its future, for example, is intrinsic to the ways in which China is understood as a 'great opportunity' and/or as an 'emerging threat.' The main function of this knowledge of China is, therefore, effectively autobiographical, designed to illuminate 'who we are.'

In this context, I argue that mainstream Western discourses are neither objective knowledge nor an innocent, apolitical intellectual endeavour. Rather, they are engaged in the formation and legitimation of particular attitudes and policies towards China. These strategies, whether called 'engagement,' or 'containment,' or something in between, are predicated on the particular ways of constructing self and the Chinese 'Other,' rather than a necessary or natural response to an objectified China 'out there' in the real world. They are necessary only to the extent that they act to legitimate and sustain the power preponderance of America (and the West in general) in the post-Cold

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Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, pp. 370-371.

[13] I do *not* mean to suggest that Western studies of Chinese foreign policy in non-English speaking countries (such as France, Germany, and Russia), which are not covered in this thesis, are automatically to be understood in the same terms as their English-speaking counterparts. For contemporary European studies of China's foreign relations, see, for example, Richard Louis Edmonds ed., *China and Europe since 1978: A European Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. For an overview of Western studies of China in non-English literature, see also Tony Saich, "Contemporary China Studies in Northern Europe," Lucien Bianco, "Contemporary China Studies in France," and Gilbert Rozman, "Chinese Studies in Russia and Their Impact, 1985-1992," in Lucien Bianco et al., *The Development of Contemporary China Studies*, Tokyo: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for Unesco, 1994, pp. 115-127, pp. 129-141, and pp. 143-160, respectively.

War world, a world in which the invocation and control of the Chinese 'Other' has come to be considered crucial for that self-identity to function.

Furthermore, I want to argue that associated with Western control and domination is the social construction of Chinese foreign relations. Here, I refer not only to China's official foreign policy, but also underlying Chinese attitudinal and theoretical positions on issues concerning international relations in general and China's place in the world in particular. Issues associated, for example, with national interests, national identity, power, sovereignty, security, peace, war, interdependence, globalisation, the free market, economic development, democracy, human rights, international norms, and world order. Thus understood, the way we give meaning to China not only sets the conditions for how we deal with it, but also comes to influence and construct 'Chinese reality' in the international context. Contrary, therefore, to the orthodox assumption that China and its foreign relations belong to the category of pregiven, independent variables and a realm of pregiven knowable knowledge, I emphasise that this knowledge cannot be detached from mainstream Western studies of Chinese foreign relations. This position is basically in agreement with that of the late Edward W. Said, who wrote, in reference to Western constructions of Islam, that "even if we do not blame everything that is unhealthy about the Islamic world on the West, we must be able to see the connection between what the West has been saying about Islam and what, reactively, various Muslim societies have done."[14]

Such connection, more specifically, has been characterised by Ashis Nandy in terms of the phenomenon of the 'intimate enemy.' A phenomenon by which colonised peoples, striving to defeat the West at its own game, end up accepting and actively imitating the same kind of attitudes and strategies that the West had used to subjugate them. This, argues Nandy, effectively leads to a kind of 'self-Othering' or 'self-Orientalisation' on the part of the colonised,[15] and represents "the ultimate violence which colonialism does to its victims, namely that it creates a culture in which the ruled are constantly tempted to fight their rulers within the psychological limits set by the latter."[16] Although Nandy's concern is mainly about the relationship between the

[14] Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1981, p. xvi.
[15] On the "self-Orientalisation" theme, see, for example, Nevzat Soguk, "Reflections on the 'Orientalized Orientals,'" *Alternatives* 18, no. 3 (1993), pp. 361-384; and Arif Dirlik, "Markets, Culture, Power: The Making of a 'Second Cultural Revolution' in China," *Asian Studies Review* 25, no. 1 (2001), pp. 1-33.
[16] Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 3.

colonialists and the colonised, this phenomenon also has resonance within the context of historical and contemporary Sino-Western interactions.[17] Consequently, throughout this thesis, I will seek to illustrate how mainstream Western discursive practice contributes to the formation of an 'intimate enemy' relationship between the West and China.

I will pursue some of these themes later in the chapter. For now, it is worth reiterating that this thesis is underpinned by the belief that the process by which we give meaning to the world is always intrinsically connected to the way we act within it, and therefore always practically constitutive of it in one form or another. In this sense, the thesis is located consciously within a critical social theory tradition in general, and critical IR scholarship in particular. In the social sciences, this tradition has been variably labelled as 'critical theory,' 'postpositivism,' 'discourse analysis,' or 'post-structuralism.' It is a diverse tradition but one united by its dissenting voice "against the intellectual imperialism of the modern, post-Cartesian 'scientific' approach to knowledge and society and its foremost expression in positivist/empiricist discourse."[18] Inspired by (primarily) continental philosophical and intellectual endeavour, there has emerged in the past two decades or so a body of critical IR literature which has sought to question and challenge the positivist foundation of mainstream IR, especially in terms of its "cognitive validity, empirical objectivity, and universalist and rationalist claims."[19] Central to this critical challenge is the notion of discourse.[20]

Discourses, according to Michel Foucault, are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal

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[17] Before Nandy, Chinese American anthropologist Francis L. K. Hsu made a similar observation that "To ensure its own survival the rest of the world has been obliged to imitate the West. It is Western methods, beliefs and goals that have been accepted and utilized to combat Western control." Quoted in L. S. Stavrianos, *The World since 1500: A Global History*, 2nd ed., Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971, p. 645. Recently, Xiaomei Chen has touched on this issue by examining how Chinese Occidentalism is dependent on Western Orientalist ideas. Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. See also, Longxi Zhang, *Mighty Opposites: From Dichotomies to Differences in the Comparative Study of China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

[18] Jim George, "International Relations and the Search for Thinking Space: Another View of the Third Debate," *International Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1989), p. 270.

[19] James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro, eds., *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989, p. viv.

[20] Gillian Youngs, "Dangers of Discourse: The Case of Globalization," in Eleonore Kofman and Gillian Youngs eds. *Globalization: Theory and Practice*, London: Pinter Press, 1996, pp. 58-71.

and describe."[21] This 'more,' as Foucault explains, means primarily the inherent function of discourse as practice:

> We must not imagine that the world turns toward us a legible face which we would have only to decipher; the world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favor. We must conceive discourse as a violence which we do to things, or in any case as a practice which we impose on them.[22]

Thus understood, this discourse approach suggests that knowledge and power and theory and practice are always intrinsically connected. A discourse "is not a way of learning 'about' something out there in the 'real world'; it is rather, a way of *producing* that something as real, as identifiable, classifiable, knowable, and therefore, meaningful."[23] Cynthia Weber proposes that it is not possible to talk about something as an ontological 'thing' without at the same time engaging in the political practice of constituting that thing.[24] This does *not* dismiss the existence of reality; rather, it underlines reality's dependence on the social construction of a discursive strategy. In the words of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann:

> the objectivity of the institutional world, however massive it may appear to the individual, is a humanly produced, constructed objectivity…. In other words, despite the objectivity that marks the social world in human experience, it does not thereby acquire an ontological status apart from the human activity that produced it.[25]

In short, the theme of discourse, knowledge/power, and theory/practice, central to critical IR scholarship, motivates this present study of Chinese foreign relations. Drawing upon these critical insights, the thesis argues that the conventional interpretation of China is best seen as a particular body of discourse among many

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[21] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledg*e, London: Tavistock Publications, 1972, p. 49.
[22] Quoted in Michael J. Shapiro, *Reading the Postmodern Polity: Political Theory as Textual Practice*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992, pp. 2-3.
[23] Bradley Klein, quoted in George, *Discourses of Global Politics*, p. 30. In this context, it should be noted that discourse analysis shares many commonalities with a variety of other poststructuralist or postmodernist methods of analysis such as archaeology, deconstruction, genealogy, and intertextuality. For more information on this philosophical tradition, see, for instance, Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Frogmore: Paladin, 1972; Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978; Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*; Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1973; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Vantage Books, 1977; and Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980.
[24] Cynthia Weber, "Writing Sovereign Identities: The Wilson Administration's Intervention in the Mexican Revolution," *Alternatives* 17, no. 1 (1992), p. 314.
[25] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966, p. 78.

possible ways of interpreting 'China' in the global context. I am not alone in arguing this case. There are now a small number of scholars around the world who do likewise. For example, in a critical investigation of Cold War U.S. China studies, Tani E. Barlow focuses on the question of how the pretence of modern social science in the writings of Marion J. Levy, Lucian W. Pye, and John K. Fairbank has enabled the displacement of the colonial question from their scholarly inquiry. By casting these scholars' studies in terms of discourse or narrative, Barlow demonstrates how postwar China studies in the U.S., assuming that China is representable in natural and social scientific terms, were developed in close tandem with U.S. national defence interests and served as a legitimating instrument for the latter's geopolitical, colonial dominance throughout the Cold War era.[26]

Similarly, in an article published in a special issue of the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholar*s (now renamed *Critical Asian Studies*), Bruce Cumings reveals a direct link between knowledge and power in the development of U.S. area studies in general and China studies in particular. From this development, he traces a peculiar state/intelligence/intellectual nexus, which structured, financed, and set formative research agendas and methodologies for gathering information on foreign countries in the service of the national security state which began taking shape as the Cold War unfolded.[27]

Another work, by Rey Chow, focused on Hong Kong's 'handover' to China and the commentaries on it by Western 'China watchers.' Chow was amazed by "the persistence of all-too-familiar ideological tendencies" in this enterprise, particularly on the part of the Western media. She argued that the meaning of China today accorded by the U.S. media has been frequently framed within "a set of binary oppositions," and been represented "as opposed to all the positive values embraced by the United States." In this context, Chinese events frequently take on a meaning of "crises that require not only vigilance but intervention," whereas China itself is reproduced, implicitly or explicitly, as a primitive, violent monster, "deserving of exposure, discipline, and punishment."[28]

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[26] Tani E. Barlow, "~~Colonialism~~'s Career in Postwar China Studies," in Tani E. Barlow ed., *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997, pp. 373-411.
[27] Cumings, "Boundary Displacement," pp. 6-26.
[28] Rey Chow, "King Kong in Hong Kong: Watching the 'Handover' from the U.S.A.," in Xudong Zhang ed., *Whither China? Intellectual Politics in Contemporary China*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001, pp. 211-227.

And writing in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the United States in 2001, Jeffrey Wasserstrom touches upon a significant instance of Western representations of anti-Americanism in foreign countries. A phenomenon which is also an issue in Western studies of Chinese foreign relations. Drawing on the notion of 'thick description' as proposed by anthropologist Clifford Geertz, Wasserstrom argues that "even the simplest act can mean different things depending on the cultural codes at work." Consequently, rather than simply assuming the objectivity of 'meaning,' he suggests that there is a need for greater sensitivity towards different possible meanings associated with such acts as Chinese 'anti-American protests' following the U.S. (or NATO's) bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade during the Kosovo conflict in 1999. This is because, he argues, different meaning-giving strategies might make all the difference in the future political relationship between China and the United States.[29]

These are just a few notable examples of the emerging critical scholarship in the field of China studies that seeks to problematise the traditional ways of representing China. These studies, in combination with others, provide useful starting points for the inquiry undertaken here. And yet, despite these much-welcomed new interventions, most have emanated from, and focused on, other subfields and genres of China studies, with the contemporary field of Chinese foreign relations left largely undisturbed by the recent advent of critical IR scholarship I touched on earlier.[30]

As a consequence, the China field continues to share a positivist foundation with the orthodox discipline of IR, a foundation which, according to Harvard University Professor Ezra F. Vogel, "holds our argumentative China watching community together."[31] Hence, a consensus that the field as a whole is basically about collecting empirical evidence, and testing and falsifying conceptual and theoretical hypotheses so as to uncover and accumulate scientific knowledge on Chinese foreign relations has emerged.[32] In the opening paragraphs of a major theoretical study on Chinese foreign policy, a leading China scholar writes that "With the passing of the fortieth anniversary

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[29] Jeffrey Wasserstrom, "Anti-Americanisms, Thick Description, and Collective Action," <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/wasserstrom.htm>.

[30] Indeed, as Yongjin Zhang points out, there now exists a kind of mutual antipathy between the study of China's international relations and the field of IR theory. Yongjin Zhang, *China in International Society since 1949: Alienation and Beyond*, Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1998, p. vii. It seems to me, however, that this antipathy exists *not* between China studies and the IR field per se, but between the studies of Chinese foreign relations and *critical* IR thinking.

[31] Ezra F. Vogel, "Contemporary China Studies in North America: Marginals in a Superpower," in Lucien Bianco et al., *The Development of Contemporary China Studies*, Tokyo: Central for East Asian Cultural Studies for Unesco, 1994, p. 187.

[32] John W. Garver, "Forward," in Yong Deng and Fei-ling Wang eds., *In the Eyes of the Dragon: China Views the World*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999, p. viii.

of the PRC in 1989, it seemed a propitious time to step back and assess broad patterns in China's external behaviour in an attempt to build cumulative knowledge."[33] By the same token, Andrew J. Nathan proposes that "For China specialists, the task remains of helping to form a more objective and illusion-free public attitude on China as a foundation for a more stable American China policy."[34]

To highlight this positivist dominance is not to imply that Western scholars in the field have always taken an essentialist approach and have been unaware of the issue of discursive practice per se. In recent years, some scholars have utilised discourse as an analytical tool to understand the dynamics of Chinese foreign policy as well as its domestic politics. For example, Prasenjit Duara argues that the Chinese nation, instead of being an essential and unchanging identity, should be seen as the site "where very different [Chinese] views of the nation contest and negotiate with each other," and as "the space for forgetting and creating in accordance with present needs."[35] Likewise, David E. Apter suggests that the Chinese Communist revolution during the Yan'an period is "a consequence of stories told, theories constructed, and the collectivization of both in a 'mytho-logic.'"[36] Or take still another example in the work *The Living Tree*, where the authors explore how various discourses on China in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore (what they call 'the first symbolic universe') and the Chinese diaspora ('the second symbolic universe') have shaped the "changing meaning of being Chinese today."[37] All these studies, by examining how many taken-for-granted dimensions of China have been discursively constructed by various Chinese discourses, help shed important light on the understanding of the dynamic, socially constituted nature of Chinese domestic politics and foreign behaviour.

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[33] David Shambaugh, "Introduction," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, p. 1.
[34] Andrew J. Nathan, *China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 81. The attitude of studying China as "what it is" is also evident, for example, in David M. Lampton, "Think Again: China," *Foreign Policy*, no. 110 (1998), p. 13; and Robert B. Zoellick, "China: What Engagement Should Mean?" *The National Interest*, no. 46 (1996/1997), p. 22.
[35] Prasenjit Duara, "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 30 (1993), pp. 1-26. See also Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
[36] David E. Apter, "Yan'an and the Narrative Reconstruction of Reality," *Dædalus* 122, no. 2 (1993), pp. 207-232. See also David E. Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.
[37] Tu Wei-ming ed., *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994.

Nevertheless, it is clear that these critical gazes have been fixated mainly on Chinese discourses.[38] When it comes to its *own* disciplinary self-image, mainstream Western scholarship on China remains silent on the issues of discourse and the interconnectedness between theory and practice. In this context, to the extent that "a discipline's silences are often its most significant feature,"[39] I want to argue that it has become particularly necessary to apply the critical approach of discourse analysis to the conventional study of Chinese foreign relations so that its unquestioned claims to objective knowledge can be problematised, the neglected dimension of what Edward Said called the "sociopolitical role of intellectuals"[40] can be exposed, their moral and practical responsibility acknowledged, and alternative, more sensitive, and less dangerous ways of seeing China and Sino-Western relations constructed and evaluated.

This thesis, then, is not an empirical study aimed at offering its own 'value-free' observations of China's foreign relations in general and its foreign policy-making process in particular. Nor is it a traditional discussion of methodological issues in this field, although it may have implications for the issue of methodology. Nor will the thesis conduct a quantitative analysis or a comprehensive survey of the field of Chinese foreign policy studies per se. Rather, its primary purpose is to examine this conventional field as a particular "style of thought,"[41] as Edward Said did with 'Orientalism,' and to address the questions of how this particular kind of discursive strategy serves to impose its historically specific meanings upon China and what the implications of this imposition are for international relations in general and Sino-U.S. relations in particular.

Perhaps for this reason, I will occasionally be guilty of broad brush generalisation (e.g., by employing the terms 'mainstream Western scholars') and I might do violence to some individual China scholars. This is not my intention. And while I have misgivings about the general field of China studies, this is by no means to suggest that mainstream Chinese foreign policy scholarship has no valuable insight to offer. Nor,

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[38] For instance, in *The Living Tree*, the authors concentrate on the first and second "symbolic universes," while paying virtually no attention to the role of what they call the "third symbolic universe" (Western and Japanese studies of China). This is despite the book's editor Tu Wei-ming's acknowledgement that "For the last four decades the international discourse on cultural China has unquestionably been shaped more by the third symbolic universe than by the first two combined. Specifically, writings in English and Japanese have had greater impact on the intellectual discourse on cultural China than in Chinese." Tu Wei-ming, "Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center," in Tu Wei-ming ed., *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994, pp. 13-14.

[39] Steve Smith, "The Self-Images of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory," in Ken Booth and Steve Smith, eds., *International Relations Theory Today*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995, p. 2.

[40] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vantage Books, 1978, p. 327.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

indeed, is my position to imply that all Western students of Chinese foreign relations are invariably or equally 'guilty,' for I am perfectly aware that this 'whole' has never been entirely 'homogeneous.' Rather, my point is that the problem I will deal with here is a general mode of thinking which cannot be simply reduced to the individual level but which nonetheless has to be illustrated in relation to specific works.

Framing China in Contemporary Western IR Literature

The question, then, is how China has been framed in the mainstream field of Chinese foreign relations studies. Diverse as the field may be, two particular types of Western literature, namely, (neo)realist and (neo)liberal perspectives, stand out. In the pages that immediately follow, I will provide a quick survey of these two discourses, which will later become the specific focus of this thesis, in one form or another.

Debating Chinese Foreign Relations: The (Neo)Realist Perspective

From the realist or, more lately, neorealist perspective, China's ascendancy represents first and foremost a threat to the rest of the world. Neorealism (or structural realism) believes that, constrained by the structural imperative of self-help in world anarchy, states necessarily seek dominance or build alliances to balance against dominance, and that what matters most is the distribution of power among states.[42] From this point of view, John J. Mearsheimer argues that the "key to understanding the future distribution of power in Northeast Asia, therefore, is China."[43] With China's rapid economic growth in recent years and its newly minted WTO membership, many fear that its propensity for regional dominance will only grow, as it seems already well on track to overtake the United States and Japan as the leading economic powerhouse in Asia.[44] As a consequence, "it will not only be less susceptible to economic pressure from others but more capable of exerting economic pressure of its own," wrote Aaron L. Friedberg, former professor at Princeton University and now deputy national security advisor in the current Bush administration.[45] Thus, questioning the neoliberal wisdom of engaging

[42] The most representative work of neorealism is Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979.
[43] John J. Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 5 (2001), p. 54.
[44] James Brooke, "Tokyo Fears China May Put an End to "Made in Japan," *The New York Times*, November 20, 2001, p. A3; Jane Perlez, "China Emerges As Rival to U.S. in Asian Trade," *The New York Times*, June 28, 2002, p. A1.
[45] Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Struggle for Mastery in Asia," *Commentary* 110, no. 4 (2000), p. 19.

China which could only make it wealthier and stronger, Mearsheimer suggests that "the United States has a profound interest in seeing Chinese economic growth slow considerably in the years ahead."[46]

Added to this fear is the assumption that buoyed by its seemingly inexorable economic expansion, China will inevitably seek to flex its political and military muscle, thereby embarking on a path well-trodden by previous rising powers such as Wilhelmine Germany and fascist Japan.[47] At the political level, some observers see in Asia a worrying parallel being played out between China's ascendancy and U.S. relative decline in prestige and power.[48] Militarily, many are alarmed both by what they claim is the "fastest growing military budget" in the world in China,[49] and by its missile testing off the coast of Taiwan in 1995-1996, an apparently ominous sign of its intentions to use force against its neighbours.[50]

In addition to this structuralist explanation of a China threat is a domestic linkage or 'second-image' approach adopted by other neorealist scholars who believe that a better understanding should also include opening up the 'black box' of China, and examine how Chinese history, worldview, strategic culture, and national identity, among other things, affect its foreign policy behaviour.[51] With regard to strategic culture, for instance, Alastair Iain Johnston maintains that China is deeply influenced by

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[46] Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier," p. 57.

[47] Denny Roy, "The 'China Threat' Issue: Major Arguments," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 8 (1996), p. 762; Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997, p. 53; Thomas J. Christensen, "Chinese Realpolitik," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 5 (1996), pp. 37-52; Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995; Charles Krauthammer, "Why We Must Contain China," *Time*, July 31, 1995, p. 72; and Richard K. Betts and Thomas J. Christensen, "China: Getting the Questions Right," *The National Interest*, no. 62 (2000/2001), pp. 17-29. For the "Germany analogy" in particular, see, for example, Edward Friedman, "The Challenge of a Rising China: Another Germany?" in Robert J. Lieber ed., *Eagle Adrift: American Foreign Policy at the End of the Century*, New York: Longman, 1997, pp. 215-245; Robert Kagan, "What China Knows That We Don't: The Case for a New Strategy of Containment," *The Weekly Standard,* January 20, 1997, pp. 22-27; and Paul Wolfowitz, "Bridging Centuries—Fin de Siècle All Over Again," *The National Interest* no. 47 (Spring 1997), pp. 3-8.

[48] Robert W. Radtke, "China's 'Peaceful Rise' Overshadowing US Influence in Asia?" *Christian Science Monitor*, December 8, 2003, p. 9.

[49] Nicholas D. Kristof, "The Rise of China," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 5 (1993), p. 59.

[50] See, for example, Ross Munro, "Taiwan: What China Really Wants," *National Review*, October 11, 1999, pp. 45-49; Denny Roy, "Tensions in the Taiwan Strait," *Survival* 42, no. 1 (2000), pp. 76-96; Evan A. Feigenbaum, "China's Challenge to *Pax Americana*," *The Washington Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (2001), pp. 31-43; Allen S. Whiting, "China's Use of Force, 1950-96, Taiwan," *International Security* 26, no. 2 (2001), pp. 103-131; Robert S. Ross, "Navigating the Taiwan Strait: Deterrence, Escalation Dominance, and U.S.-China Relations," *International Security* 27, no. 2 (2002), pp. 48-85; Thomas J. Christensen, "The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict," *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2002), pp. 7-21.

[51] Alastair Iain Johnston, "International Structures and Chinese Foreign Policy," in Samuel S. Kim ed., *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998, pp. 55-87.

a realpolitik tradition, which favours war and the use of force as the most efficacious means of settling disputes.[52] Other scholars argue that China's national identity, organised on the basis of xenophobic nationalism, is also a source of concern to the international community.[53]

Not all realist understanding points to an unequivocal conclusion of the 'China threat.' Some believe that like the common Soviet enemy in the second part of the Cold War, the current common threat of terrorism could serve as a new basis for Sino-American cooperation.[54] However, while the war on terrorism has taken some heat out of the 'China threat' argument, most neorealist analysts insist that rivalry, not cooperation, best describes the pattern of China's relations with the West in general and the U.S. in particular. Aaron Friedberg argues that the differences between China and America on a range of issues "are as wide as they were before 11 September and, in some respects, even wider."[55] In a similar manner, George Tenet told the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that "September 11 changed the context of China's approach to us, but it did not change the fundamentals."[56] Indeed, during the heat of the war on terror, both the Pentagon's and the U.S.-China Security Review Commission's reports have repeatedly reminded people that China is a looming threat to the region's peace and stability.[57]

Debating Chinese Foreign Relations: The (Neo)liberal Perspective

In contrast to realist pessimism, scholars and officials from a liberal (especially neoliberal) perspective cast China in a basically optimistic light. Neoliberal theory

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[52] Johnston, *Cultural Realism*.
[53] Barry Sautman, "Racial Nationalism and China's External Behavior," *World Affairs* 160, no. 2 (1997), pp. 78-95.
[54] See, for example, David Shambaugh, "Sino-American Relations since September 11: Can the New Stability Last?" *Current History* 101, no. 656 (2002), pp. 243-249; David Shambaugh and Robert S. Litwak, "Common Interests in a Hazardous World," *The New York Times*, October 17, 2001, p. A3; and Richard Holbrooke, "A Defining Moment With China," *The Washington Post*, January 2, 2002, p. A13.
[55] Aaron L. Friedberg, "11 September and the Future of Sino-American Relations," *Survival* 44, no. 1 (2002), p. 44.
[56] Agence France Presse, "CIA Chief Fires New China Warning," February 7, 2002.
[57] See U.S. Department of Defense's 2002, 2003, and 2004 *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, Washington, DC, July 12, 2002, July 28, 2003, and May 28, 2004 respectively; and U.S.-China Security Review Commission, *Report to Congress: The National Security Implications of the Economic Relationship Between the United States and China*, Washington, DC, July 15, 2002, and *2004 Report to Congress of the U.S.-China Security Review Commission*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004. See also Jim Lobe and Tom Barry, "The Yellow Peril Revisited," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, July 12, 2002, <http://fpif.org/pdf/gac/0207china.pdf>; Joseph Perkins, "The China Threat Has Not Gone Away," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 19, 2002, <http://www.sullivan-county.com/id2/china.htm>; and Lev Navrozov, "China's Threat Grows as Everyone Watches Iraq," <http://www.newsmax.com/archives/ articles/2002/10/8/154035.shtml>.

argues that states, as rational actors, are essentially able to redefine their national interests and change national identities (as in the former Soviet Union) in accordance with international norms, thereby leading to the formation of a cooperative relationship or even a security community on the basis of common interests.[58] While mindful of the challenge posed by China's ascent, observers from this camp propose that the basic trend in China is for the better and hence encouraging. For example, urging Congress to approve the WTO deal between America and China, U.S. President Bill Clinton maintained in March 2000 that:

> By joining the WTO, China is not simply agreeing to import more of our products; it is agreeing to import one of democracy's most cherished values—economic freedom…. We know how much the Internet has changed America, and we are already an open society. Imagine how much it could change China.[59]

Along with its domestic political liberation, China is expected to also undergo a learning process in its foreign behaviour under the influence of the normative structure of international organisations.[60] In particular, liberal observers argue that China's deepening involvement in the global economic system and multilateral frameworks will create an 'opportunity for convergence' in the Asia-Pacific region, thereby helping bring about a trans-Pacific community defined by stability and prosperity. Robert Manning points out that the region's budding economic interdependence, thanks in no small measure to China's role, has begun to overcome its past rivalry and suspicion and create "webs of interests and a new regional demeanor."[61] Seen in this light, China will largely be a satisfied or conservative power, whose rise may have little disruptive effect on world politics.[62]

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[58] For works on neoliberal IR theory, see, for example, Stephen D. Krasner ed., *International Regimes*, Cornell University Press, 1983; Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World International Political Economy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984; Kenneth A. Oye ed., *Cooperation under Anarchy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986; Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Neorealism and Neoliberalism," *World Politics* 40, no. 2 (1988): 235-251; Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989; David A. Baldwin ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1993; and Charles W. Kegley, Jr. ed. *Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

[59] Quoted in Robert Wright, "Same Difference," *The New Republic*, March 27, 2000, p. 21.

[60] Samuel S. Kim, "China's International Organizational Behaviour," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, pp. 433-434.

[61] Robert A. Manning, "The Asian Paradox: Toward a New Architecture," *World Policy Journal* 10, no. 3 (1993), pp. 59-60.

[62] Robert S. Ross, "Beijing as a Conservative Power," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 2 (1997), pp. 33-34.

And with China emerging as the fastest growing exports market for the U.S. and some other Western countries, it is further argued that a stable and prosperous China means great opportunities for international investors and exporters, opportunities which will gain further momentum in the light of China's recent accession the WTO. As Peter F. Drucker, an international business guru, argues:

> a major business in the developed world, and especially a major manufacturing business, can probably not afford *not* to go into China, either as a direct investor or with a joint-venture partner…. A prosperous China that at the same time has a modicum of social peace, would be the greatest market opportunity since the tremendous recovery of the defeated Europe and defeated Japan in the years following the Pacific War.[63]

Obviously, the optimism about China's future is not evenly shared among all liberals. From a 'democratic peace' point of view, for example, some analysts argue that China, ruled by a Communist regime, may be prone to violence and the use of force both at home and abroad, as exemplified by its handling of the Tiananmen and Taiwan Strait crises.[64] Nevertheless, most liberal (particularly neoliberal) observers maintain that so long as China continues its current economic reform and opening up policies, the Beijing government will gradually make way for democratic change.[65] In the wake of 'September 11,' even the current Bush administration, riding to power on a foreign policy platform of treating China as a 'strategic competitor,' has now modified its harsh view and begun seeing China as a potential economic and political partner.[66]

Taken together, (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism have been the two dominant schools of thought in the contemporary China debate in mainstream Western IR circles. In times of diplomatic crises such as the Taiwan Strait missile exercises in 1995-1996, the 1999 Chinese Embassy bombing, and the 2001 Spy Plane incident, they have tended to polarise further into two distinctive camps—one known as the 'threat/containment'

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[63] Peter F. Drucker and Isao Nakauchi, *Drucker on Asia: A Dialogue between Peter Drucker and Isao Nakauchi*, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1997, p. 14-5.

[64] Denny Roy, "Hegemon on the Horizon? China's Threat to East Asian Security," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994), pp. 160-161; John Derbyshire, "Communist, Nationalist, and Dangerous: The Problem of China," *National Review*, April 30, 2001, pp. 31-33; Lucian W. Pye, "China: Not Your Typical Superpower," *Problems of Post-Communism* 43, no. 4 (1996), pp. 3-15; and Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, London: Touchstone Books, 1996.

[65] Jacob Heilbrunn, "Team W.," *The New Republic*, September 27, 1999, p. 24. See also Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Scribner, 1989, p. 250; and Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York: Free Press, 1992, pp. 33-34.

[66] David M. Lampton, "Small Mercies: China and America after 9/11," *The National Interest*, no. 66 (2001/2002), p. 111.

approach, the other the 'opportunity/engagement' perspective.[67] This is not to suggest that (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism are two mutually exclusive schools of thought. As I will illustrate throughout this thesis, underlying their seemingly different approaches and attitudes towards China are many, often unstated or understated, commonalities. Because of this, many China scholars are often attracted to both approaches at the same time, and come up with various mixed or ambivalent views.[68] Joseph Nye, for example, acknowledges that insofar as the goal of engagement is to ensure that China become a responsible and conformist power, engagement "contains elements of constraints."[69] Similarly, many 'China threat' theorists have not rejected (neo)liberalism altogether, perceiving some form of engagement as not only inevitable, but also useful in tying

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[67] See for example, Owen Harries, "A Year of Debating China," *The National Interest*, no. 58 (1999/2000), p. 141. For literature on these debates, see also David Shambaugh, "Containment or Engagement of China? Calculating Beijing's Responses," *International Security* 21, no. 2 (1996), pp. 180-209; Thomas A. Metzger and Ramon H. Myers, "Chinese Nationalism and American Policy," *Orbis* 42, no. 1 (1998), pp. 21-36; Barbara Hackman Franklin, "China Today: Evil Empire or Unprecedented Opportunity?," <http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/HL589.cfm>; James Morris, "Containment or Engagement: America's Choice," *Pacifica Review* 12, no. 2 (2000), pp. 197-201; David Shambaugh, "Sino-American Strategic Relations: From Partners to Competitors," *Survival* 42, no. 1 (2000), pp. 97-115; Ted Galen Carpenter and James A. Dorn, "China: Constructive Partner or Emerging Threat?"
<http://www.freetrade.org/pubs/articles/tc-5-10-00.html>; Richard J. Newman and Kevin Whitelaw, "China: How Big A Threat? Inside the Bitter Fight over Assessing China's Intentions," *U.S. News & World Report*, July 23, 2001, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/news/2001/07/usn072301.html>; Enbao Wang, "Engagement or Containment? Americans' Views on China and Sino-US Relations," *Journal of Contemporary China* 11, no. 31 (2002), pp. 381-392; Nicholas R. Lardy, "The Economic Rise of China: Threat or Opportunity?" <www.clevelandfed.org/Research/Com2003/0801.pdf>; Vincent Cable and Peter Ferdinand, "China As an Economic Giant: Threat or Opportunity?" *International Affairs* 70, no. 2 (1994), pp. 243-261; David Wall, "China As a Trade Partner: Threat or Opportunity for the OECD?" *International Affairs* 72, no. 2 (1996), pp. 329-344; and Frank Ching, "China: Threat or Opportunity?" <http://times.hankooki.com/lpage/opinion/200212/kt2002121816322911600.htm>. Sometimes taking on a more sophisticated shape, this polarisation revolves around a subsidiary debate over whether China is a "conservative," "status quo," hence largely peaceful power or a "revisionist" and dangerous challenger. See Ross, "Beijing as a Conservative Power"; Thomas J. Christensen, "Posing Problems Without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges to U.S. Security Policy," *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001), pp. 5-40; Peter Hays Gries and Thomas J. Christensen, "Correspondence: Power and Resolve in U.S. China Policy," *International Security* 26, no. 2 (2001), pp. 155-165; David Shambaugh, "China or America: Which Is the Revisionist Power?" *Survival* 43, no. 3 (2001), pp. 25-30; Alastair Iain Johnston, "Is China a Status Quo Power?" *International Security* 27, no. 4 (2003), pp. 5-56; and Alastair Iain Johnston, "Beijing's Security Behavior in the Asian-Pacific: Is China a Dissatisfied Power?" in J. J. Suh, Peter J. Katzenstein, and Allen Carlson eds., *Rethinking Security in East Asia: Identity, Power and Efficiency*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, forthcoming.

[68] See for example, Harry Harding, "Neither Friend Nor Foe: A New China Policy for the Nineties," *Brookings Review* 10, no. 2 (1992), pp.7-12; Jianwei Wang, *Limited Adversaries: Post-Cold War Sino-American Mutual Images*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000; and David Shambaugh, "Facing Reality in China Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 1 (2001), pp. 50-64.

[69] Joseph S. Nye Jr., "China's Re-emergence and the Future of the Asia-Pacific," *Survival* 39, no. 4 (1997/98), p. 75.

China into the international system.[70] Indeed, there has recently emerged a hybrid policy of 'congagement,' or a combination of 'containment' and 'engagement.'[71]

In spite of their dominant position, (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism are by no means the only approaches to understanding Chinese foreign relations. There are, for example, scholars who subscribe to the rather unorthodox claims that China, particularly in the economic sense, does not matter that much, and that China will emerge as a lively but peaceful alternative to the tired model of the U.S.-led West in international relations.[72] While all these views merit attention, they have not figured prominently in the China debate as distinctive schools of thought. Indeed, upon closer scrutiny, many of them actually fall into (neo)realist and (neo)liberal categories, to which much of my critical analysis in this thesis will therefore be directed.

In this context, worthy of note also is the neoconservatism which has recently gained rapid currency in the Bush administration and has begun (minimally) to address the China issue. For example, under the influence of neoconservatism, the U.S.-China Security Review Commission has recommended that America should "conduct a fresh assessment of the one China policy" with regard to the Taiwan issue. One neoconservative analyst even argues that the U.S. should "take full advantage of" its strategic gains in the war on terrorism to "tighten the security noose around Beijing's neck."[73] Although most neoconservative views on China so far come from members of Congress, congressional staff and conservative journalists, one notable exception is Arthur Waldron, a historian at the University of Pennsylvania, who shares the neoconservative view by suggesting that "if China continues on its current trend, which is repressing at home and building up… armaments, that becomes very dangerous. I agree with people who think regime change is key to a really stable peace."[74]

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[70] Gerald Segal, "Tying China into the International System," *Survival* 37, no. 2 (1995), pp. 60-73.

[71] The word "congagement" was coined by Zalmay M. Khalilzad of the RAND Corporation. This policy was designed largely for a Republican leadership in the U.S. which rejected the Clinton administration's "comprehensive engagement" but was divided on what to put in its place. See Zalmay M. Khalilzad et al., *The United States and a Rising China: Strategic and Military Implications*, Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1999. While other scholars may not use the term "congagement," they have expressed similar ideas. See, for example, James Shinn ed., *Weaving the Net: Conditional Engagement with China*, New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, 1996; A. D. McLennan, "Balance, Not Containment: A Geopolitical Take from Canberra," *The National Interest*, no. 49 (1997), pp. 52-63; and Bates Gill, "Limited Engagement," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 4 (1999), pp. 65-76.

[72] See, for instance, Gerald Segal, "Does China Matter?" *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 5 (1999), pp. 24-36; and Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus*, London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2004.

[73] *2004 Report to Congress of the U.S.-China Security Review Commission*, p. 9; and Gary Schmitt, "Our Ambivalent China Policy," *The Weekly Standard*, July 15, 2002, p. 17.

[74] Quoted in Robert G. Kaiser and Steven Mufson, "'Blue Team' Draws a Hard Line on Beijing: Action on Hill Reflects Informal Group's Clout," *The Washington Post,* February 22, 2000, p. A1.

Most neoconservatives have been preoccupied with Iraq and the war on terrorism, and their views have yet to sway the U.S.-China policy agenda. Furthermore, despite their significant departure from traditional realist and liberal approaches to international relations, the influence of both traditional schools is visible and significant in neoconservative approaches to China. As a result, other than being considered in relation to these two mainstream perspectives, the neoconservative perspective will not here receive substantial treatment in its own right.

At this point, it now seems natural to ask: What have the orthodox IR perspectives told us about contemporary Chinese foreign relations? In this respect, a general sense of smugness seems to pervade this field. According to David Shambaugh, "The fields of China's foreign relations and national security studies are filled with new research opportunities and source materials…. New research vistas have been opened. Cumulative knowledge is being built and conventional wisdom refined. Our understanding of China's external relations have been advanced more since 1987 than at any time since 1949."[75] In this thesis, however, I will focus primarily on the field's silences and on the unasked question of 'What have these perspectives *not* told us?' I will do so by contending that the main issue is not so much Western truth claims, as it is how these studies serve to discursively construct their 'object of study' on the basis of a particular kind of self-construction, and what implications these self/Other constructions have both for Sino-Western relations and for our study of Chinese foreign policy.

Writing Other, Constructing Self: Beyond the Positivist Dichotomy

"We do not see things as they are, we see things as we are," says the Talmud. More specifically, Ashis Nandy has argued that all Western interpretations of other societies are ultimately "autobiographical."[76] For instance, through his reading of Spanish

[75] David Shambaugh, "A Bibliographical Essay on New Sources for the Study of China's Foreign Relations and National Security," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, p. 618.

[76] Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, pp. 79-80. On this point, see also Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization*, New Brunswick, NJ: Dutton, 1974; Said, *Orientalism*; Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983; Francis Baker et al., *Europe and Its Other: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1984*, Colchester: University of Essex, 1985; James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988; James Clifford and George E. Marcus eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986; David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, rev. ed., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998; Michael J. Shapiro, *Violent Cartographies: Mapping Cultures of War*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

conquistadors' documents about the American Indians during the conquest of America, Tzvetan Todorov identifies numerous self/Other discursive strategies at work. In their knowledge of the Indians, he argues, two major "doctrines of inequality" played a central role. One was the Graeco-Roman tradition manifested in an Aristotelian dichotomy between masters and slaves. The other was the Judaeo-Christian tradition based on a fundamental opposition between Christian and non-Christian. These two doctrines, argues Todorov, informed Spanish hierarchical representations of the American Indians, either as totally different and inferior creatures or as essentially the same as the Christians and effectively *nothing else*. Either way, Todorov suggests, they merely reinforced their own "ego ideal" and, consequently, "[learned] nothing of the Indians."[77]

In another instance, in *Orientalism*, Edward Said initiated a ground-breaking attack on the genres of writing developed in the West to represent Orientals as 'Others.' Taking issue with the alleged objectivity of Western representations, Said argued that the Orient "was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action," but "a code by which Europe could interpret both itself and the Orient to itself."[78] Said maintained that by perceiving the Orient as "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different,'" and by setting itself against that Orient, Orientalism grants European culture strength and identity as something that is "rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal.'"[79] This theme is further illustrated in Said's study on Islam, in which he observed that Western (particularly U.S.) images of Islam "ultimately reveal as much about the West and the United States as they do, in a far less concrete and interesting way, about Islam."[80] He then went on to suggest that this is "an irony that has dogged all modern European or Western attempts to write about non-Western societies."[81]

This, I argue, is precisely how Western studies of Chinese foreign policy can also be understood. There is nothing unusual about nor essentially wrong with the autobiographical nature of knowledge per se, nor is this unique to Western knowledge. What is problematic, however, is that, as just noted in the case of China studies, mainstream Western knowledge has sought to *deny* or *conceal* this crucial trait, treating

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[76] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (trans. Richard Howard), Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, pp. 147-165.
[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 147-165.
[78] Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 3, 253.
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[80] Said, *Covering Islam*, p. 4.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

itself instead as objective, scientific, essential, absolute, and fixed. At the core of this problematic, I suggest, is positivism. While this is not the place to examine the issue of positivist epistemology per se, it is important to briefly look at how it is responsible for the dichotomised construction of self and Other in modern Western knowledge. Positivism, complicated as it is, rests on a simple ontological dichotomy between 'subject' and 'object.' Believing that there exists an essentially objective 'truth' which is knowable, positivist knowledge entails the existence of a rational human subject. "Such knowledge," as Robert Young points out, "is always centred in a self even though it is outward looking, searching for power and control of what is other to it."[82] Consequently, the positivist separation between subject/object is translated into a dichotomy, a hierarchical self/Other relationship which in natural sciences finds expression in the relationship between modern man and nature. In the social sciences, where the knowledge model of natural sciences is much envied and imitated, the man/nature dichotomy becomes a template, consciously or subconsciously, in the understanding of human relationships. As a result, "the sciences of society become the knowledge of the Self and of the Other."[83]

To come back to the main concern of this thesis, it is precisely in this context that the orthodox disciplines of IR in general and Chinese foreign relations studies in particular have developed. As David Campbell notes, "International Relations, like all the social sciences, was shaped by… the positivist conception of science…." [84] Accordingly, as the leading IR theorist Robert O. Keohane proposes:

> A major challenge for students of international relations is to obtain such knowledge of institutions, through theory and the application of theory to practice, but especially through empirical research…. We should demand that advocates of both rationalistic and reflective theory create *genuine research programs*: not dogmatic assertions of epistemological or ontological superiority, but ways of discovering new facts and developing insightful interpretations of international institutions [emphasis added].[85]

Founded on this positivist commitment to empiricist methodology and genuine research programs is the framing of global life in the IR orthodoxy in terms of a series

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[82] Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 4.
[83] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* Tokyo: United Nations University, 1986, pp. 14-15.
[84] David Campbell, "Recent Changes in Social Theory: Questions for International Relations," in Richard Higgott ed., *New Directions in International Relations? Australian Perspectives*, Canberra: The Australian National University, 1988, p. 12.
[85] Robert O. Keohane, "International Institutions: Two Approaches," *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1988), p. 393.

of dichotomies such as identity/difference, order/anarchy, domestic/foreign, inside/outside, security/threat, developed/developing, modernity/tradition, universality/particularity, the free world/rogue states, and good/evil.[86] Perceiving Chinese foreign relations as part of this dichotomised global life, IR specialists have played a central role in helping transform—in parallel with the simultaneous 'scientific' transformation of Sinology into modern China studies—the study of Chinese foreign relations into a particular field of positivist knowledge.[87] As Kurt M. Campbell points out:

> a newer crop of experts, who are much more likely to have a background in strategic studies or international relations than China itself… believe they bring a fresh perspective and some intellectual rigor into a world previously dominated by "panda huggers" [i.e., traditional China hands] who had a romanticized view of China and played down America's national security interests.[88]

Against the backdrop of the growing influence of positivist IR perspectives, not surprisingly, is the replication and incorporation of their self/Other dichotomy in mainstream Western studies of Chinese foreign policy. Studies which are best seen as particular constructions of Otherness based less on 'Chinese reality' than on the positivist dichotomy in which the West takes on an identity of the universal, rational knowing subject.

Consequently, and more specifically, neorealist perceptions of China as 'threat' need to be understood in terms of a particular discursive strategy closely connected to the construction of the U.S. as an 'indispensable nation' entitled to absolute security and 'bound to lead' the world, a world which would otherwise be plagued by anarchy, disorder and war, as (neo)realist observers *know* it. Indeed, in the post-Cold War era, in

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[86] George, *Discourses of Global Politics*, p. 32; see also, R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993; Richard Ashley, "The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a Critical Social Theory of International Politics," *Alternatives* 12, no. 3 (1987), pp. 403-434; Richard Ashley, "Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 17, no. 2 (1988), pp. 227-262; and Iver B. Neumann, "Self and Other in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 2, no. 2 (1996), pp. 139-174.

[87] John K. Fairbank, *China Perceived: Images & Policies in Chinese-American Relations*, London: André Deutsch, 1976, p. 214. See also, Barlow, "~~Colonialism~~'s Career in Postwar China Studies," pp. 373-411. On the professionalisation of foreign policy analysis in the U.S. in general, see Benjamin Schwarz, "The 'Amateur' and the 'Expert,'" *World Policy Journal* 14, no. 4 (1997/1998), pp. 97-99.

[88] Kurt M. Campbell, "China Watchers Fighting a Turf War of Their Own," *The New York Times*, May 20, 2000, p. B13. This intrusion of political scientists and strategists into China studies reflects a general trend in the recent debate between social science theorists and area specialists, with the former accusing area studies of lacking scientific rigor and theoretical advancement. See, for example, Robert H. Bates, "Area Studies and the Discipline: A Useful Controversy?" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 30, no. 2 (1997), pp. 166-169; Chalmers Johnson, "Preconception vs. Observation, or the Contributions of Rational Choice Theory and Area Studies to Contemporary Political Science," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 30, no. 2 (1997), pp. 170-174.

the absence of a major threat, the realist certainty of geopolitical rivalry would be lost and, as a result, many security-oriented government departments and agencies in the West and the U.S. in particular which have been created to deal with that certainty would be rendered irrelevant. Consequently, it is not surprising that in the eyes of (neo)realist analysts, a 'China threat' must exist to fill the vacancy left by the demise of the former Soviet Union. Starting from the *a priori* knowledge of the world in terms of the way it is, these analysts then can go on to lay authoritative claim to Chinese reality, insisting that they know China better than the Chinese possibly could, whether in terms of China's 'real' goal, its national interests, or its history and culture. Indeed, in many cases, because of this certainty, their foregone conclusion of the 'China threat' is justified even without regard to 'empirical evidence' of China's capabilities, intention, and international behaviour 'pattern.' A good example of this is William Kristol at the *Weekly Standard*, a leading advocate of the 'China threat' theory, who argues that expertise on China is not *essential* in analysing U.S. policy on China. "I'm not a China expert at all," he concedes. "My view of China… flows from my view of what you think U.S. foreign policy should be."[89] In Chapter 5, I will discuss in more detail how this preconstituted discursive strategy in the 'China threat' argument is enabled by the search for absolute security for the Western (U.S.) self.

In a slightly different way, as I will argue in Chapter 6, the (neo)liberal discourse of China has relied on and resulted in the same dichotomy of self and Other, a dichotomy which more often than not finds expression in a "China vis-à-vis the world" formula.[90] Here, with China explicitly or implicitly represented as a traditional, developmental problem that must be overcome in the supposedly unilinear and universal process of modernisation, this formula is founded on a Western self-image as belonging to a higher stage of human development, and as representing the future to which China should aspire. From this perspective, the value of China lies in its simultaneous signification of what 'we' have surpassed and who 'we' are now, in terms of, for example, the civilised world and/or the democratic, responsible leader of the international community. Consequently, I argue that this (neo)liberal discourse on China speaks primarily to a dichotomy of self and Other in a temporal sense, in which its understanding of China's opportunity for convergence and global integration is better understood in relation to Western development.

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[89] See Kaiser and Mufson, "'Blue Team' Draws a Hard Line on Beijing," p. A01.
[90] See Zhang, *China in International Society since 1949*, pp. 2-3.

In short, as Michael Shapiro points out, "making of the Other as something foreign… is closely linked to how the self is understood."[91] In this context, as is already evident, an adequate understanding of the Western self-construction cannot be achieved without looking further at the question of how the American self is understood. The reason is straightforward: diverse as it is, the dominant image of 'the West' since the mid-twentieth century has been constantly spoken with an American accent. Therefore, in the chapter that immediately follows, I will argue that (neo)realist and (neo)liberal perspectives in general and their 'threat' and 'opportunity' images of China in particular are, in fact, preconstituted meanings or categories of Otherness that are closely related to a particular way of U.S. self-imagination, an imagination which is dependent above all on a positivist faith in its ability to know absolute truth. As former *Foreign Policy* editor Charles William Maynes points out, "As in the days of Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, we are convinced that we know the way—politically and economically—and that therefore we have an obligation, if not also a right, to lead others to a better future."[92] Hence America's 'manifest destiny,' the need for the '(New) American Century,' America as the 'New World,' the 'frontier,' a 'city on the hill,' the 'indispensable nation,' the 'benevolent hegemon,' and so forth, are all examples of a whole range of self-imageries upon which Americans are able to first make sense of and then deal with their various others in terms of Other.

The point here, to reiterate, is that by committing themselves to a positivist theory of knowledge, mainstream Western scholars have not simply produced a body of cumulative knowledge on China, but rather contributed to a double discursive process in which Western understandings of China are dependent on its self-understanding and vice versa. At this juncture, for those who might think that my emphasis on discourse analysis is concerned too much with language and seems far removed from contemporary concrete 'real-world' issues of China's foreign relations, I want to suggest otherwise. Indeed, in contrast to mainstream China scholars who treat 'real-world' issues with clinical detachment, I will seek in this thesis to actively re-engage with those issues in a way that seeks to understand them not just in terms of 'the way things are,' but also to highlight our own complicity as China scholars in constituting them in practice, a point to which I now turn.

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[91] Michael J. Shapiro, *The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices in Biography, Photography, and Policy Analysis*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988, p. 101.
[92] Charles William Maynes, "Contending Schools," *The National Interest*, no. 63 (2001), p. 50.

The Intimate Enemy: Western Constructions of China's Foreign Relations

Western study of China is not a neutral, detached body of analysis, but a particularly powerful frame of discursive reference within which *certain* China policies are formulated and legitimated in international politics. In turn, these discursive frameworks and the policies based upon them have become an integral part of the practical context of global politics in which China comes to (re)define its place in the world and formulate its foreign policy.

In Chapters 5-7, I will speak to these themes in relation to (neo)realist and (neo)liberal constructions of Sino-Western relations more directly.[93] For now, in order to better understand the points being made here, it is useful to refer again to Said's critique of Orientalism and Todorov's semiotic analysis of early European imaginations of the native Americans I mentioned earlier. For Said, Orientalism had become in the twentieth century "an instrument of policy" with "a capacity for managing political movements, administering colonies, making nearly apocalyptic statements representing the White Man's difficult civilizing mission." [94] Consequently, "The relationship between Occident and Orient [in Orientalism] is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony."[95] Similarly, in the case of the Spanish conquest of America, insofar as the relationship between the Spaniards and the Indians was set by European scholars as that of superiority/inferiority or good/evil, Todorov argues that this kind of relationship 'logically' led to plunder, cultural extermination, and human enslavement.[96] Thus, according to Todorov, what is most remarkable about the European representations of the Indians is not their 'inaccuracy' or 'unfairness,' but their complicity in justifying violence against the Indians, which he justifiably calls "the greatest genocide in human history."[97]

With regard to mainstream Western discourses on China's foreign relations, I will seek to demonstrate how similar representations serve to promote and legitimate

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[93] I must point out that the constitutive influence of mainstream Western discourses of China in international relations is not confined to the bilateral relationship between China and the U.S.-led West. Given their status as the dominant form of knowledge on China, it is inevitable that they also contribute to shaping relations such as between the U.S. and other Western countries, between the U.S. and other Asian countries, and between China and its Asian neighbours. The question of how these relations are affected by Western IR discourse on China is worth investigating in its own right, but it belongs to a different study.

[94] Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 253-254.

[95] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[96] Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, pp. 150-160.

[97] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

particular strategies and policies while at the same time act to exclude and de-legitimate other possible ways of dealing with China. In Chapter 5, I will argue that within the 'China threat' frame of reference, for example, a particular policy of aggressive containment based on coercive power is often privileged as the only rational option to deal with China. Without a preconstructed 'China threat,' it is highly doubtful that the radical, Cold War-style policy could still be justified and widely supported in a post-Cold War environment. As Daojiong Zha has noted, by representing China as a security threat to the U.S. in the South China Sea, Western strategic analysts have transformed "a relatively peaceful area into one of serious security concerns," and as a result led to "the continuation of the low-intensity conflict in the South China Sea" since the early 1990s.[98] In a similar fashion, I argue that to understand the Taiwan question as primarily a security problem posed by China has provided a constant rationale for the continuation of U.S. arms sale policy to the island. This policy of provocation is not just in response to a 'real' threat per se, but from the beginning part and parcel of the discursive 'China threat' problem. For its primary function, rather than serving to keep an elusive 'strategic balance,' has been to embolden the independence forces in Taiwan,[99] and via this, to frustrate and antagonise the Chinese people on the mainland as well as their government, which has recently grown increasingly impatient and jingoistic and has stepped up its military build-up. This, in turn, has the real potential of sparking off a vicious cycle of arms racing and military competition across the Taiwan Strait. Consequently, what this kind of policy has promoted and achieved is not peace and balance, but rather the self-fulfilling prophecy of mutual distrust, hostility, and tension.

It is against this kind of backdrop, I suggest, that what is widely regarded as China's 'belligerency' in both the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait missile crisis and the 2001 Spy Plane incident can be better understood. To understand the issues this way is not to excuse Beijing from responsibility, but rather to put the 'China threat' back into its appropriate context, and to illustrate that this 'threat,' however real, is neither pregiven nor fixed, but to a large extent discursively constructed and provoked. Some Taiwanese people now agree, and are outraged by Taiwan's proposed US$18 billion arms deal with

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[98] Daojiong Zha, "Security in the South China Sea," *Alternatives* 26, no. 1 (2001), pp. 33-51.

[99] A Taiwanese professor said that while he does not believe America would sacrifice its soldiers for Taiwan's independence, "90 percent of the Taiwanese believe the Americans would fight, and that encourages Chen [Shui-bian] and other independence advocates." David S. Broder, "The Chinese Divide," *The Washington Post*, June 27, 2004, p. B7.

the U.S., protesting that instead of ensuring their security, this purchase would only raise the likelihood of a war with the mainland (not to mention the financial burden it would create for generations to come).[100]

The issue of the 'China threat' discourse as a self-fulfilling prophecy will receive more detailed analysis in Chapter 7, where I will draw almost exclusively on Chinese discourses from within China to illustrate how Chinese nationalism, realpolitik thinking, and a hardline worldview—themselves major symptoms of the 'China threat'—have been brought to the fore. This process has recently seen, for example, the emergence of the 'China Can Say No' sentiment and the upsurge of popular nationalism in response to Western, and particularly U.S., aggressive containment strategies, most notably America's show of force in the Taiwan Strait in 1996 and its 'accidental' bombing of the Chinese Embassy in 1999. Similar reactions to these incidents have also led a growing number of Chinese IR scholars to question China's official worldview in terms of 'peace and development,' and to categorise the government's dependence on international institutions as 'one-sided wishful thinking.' This has provoked a renewed call to reinvoke the so-called 'old thinking' centred on national interests, sovereignty, power politics, tit-for-tat strategies, and nuclear deterrence.[101]

Viewed in this context, there is more than a grain of truth in the (neo)realist representation of a 'China threat' but, I argue, Western realist scholars and practitioners have contributed to its emergence, by creating an intimate enemy which in many ways resembles the realist Western self. This kind of irony has not been lost, for instance, on Australian liberal observer Stuart Harris, who has cautioned against the current Bush administration's pursuit of pre-emptive strategy in its dealings with the 'Iraq threat.' As he explains:

> as China becomes substantially more powerful, as seems inevitable, it could pose problems globally, regionally and for Australia unless it abides by the international practices and norms of a rules-based international system. In learning how to fit into this international system, where it has already made much progress, it would be unfortunate if China learned that it was acceptable for a big power to take pre-emptive action whenever it wished to argue that its domestic security was threatened.[102]

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[100] "Delegation in U.S. to Discuss Arms Deal," *China Post* and Reuters, June 18, 2004, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/detail.asp?ID=49858&GRP=B>.
[101] Alastair Iain Johnston, "China's New 'Old Thinking': The Concept of Limited Deterrence," *International Security* 20, no. 3 (1995/1996), pp. 5-42.
[102] Stuart Harris, "First Strike Will Suit Opportunists," *The Australian*, October 10, 2002, p. 11.

Here, by confronting the 'intimate enemy' phenomenon associated with the constitutive effect of realist discourse, Harris and other liberal observers suggest that the (neo)liberal perspective, in conjunction with its engagement policy, is a more constructive approach to China. Madeline Albright, also, has argued that "The manner in which we engage China will have an important bearing on whether China becomes integrated as a constructive participant in international institutions."[103]

Harris and Albright could be right on this but in Chapter 6 I will suggest that while the engagement policies have generally distanced themselves from the militant strategy of realist containment, they are nevertheless concerned with power and dominance. Hence, for all its professed enthusiasm to make China "a power that is stable, open, and non-aggressive, that embraces free markets, political pluralism, and the rule of law, (and) that works with us to build a secure international order,"[104] the (neo)liberal perspective is interested primarily in guaranteeing that China will be socialised into the global capitalist order so as to become a giant and stable marketplace for investments and profits. In this context, it may be easier to comprehend why, despite the Western zeal to integrate China, it still took 15 years of negotiation for Beijing to be admitted to the WTO, a tortuous process characterised by concerted and persistent demands for more and more concessions from the Chinese government. Travelling to Beijing in late March 1999 in an effort to improve still further what already looked like a good deal, U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky made it clear that "Any deal that doesn't have the seal of approval of the [U.S.] business community isn't a deal worth doing."[105]

Consequently, the purpose of Western neoliberal efforts to change or integrate China is from the beginning an effort to re-establish and perpetuate the hierarchical power relationship between the West and China through non-military and perhaps more effective means. In this context, no longer can the neoliberal concern for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in China be taken at face value. Both Anita Chan and Michael Dutton have pointed out that Western liberals and human rights advocates have conspicuously excluded 'labour rights' in their Chinese human rights discourse, and remained insensitive to the plight of migrant workers living under the shadow of

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[103] Madeline Albright, "Engaging China Is Not Endorsing China: Policy Must Reflect American Values," June 22, 1998, <http://www.nyu.edu/globalbeat/asia/china/06221998albright.html>.
[104] Bill Clinton, "China and the National Interest," October 24, 1997. <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/uschina/clinton.htm>.
[105] Robert L. Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen: The Politics of U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003, pp. 365-366.

China's bright economic boom.[106] And no wonder, given that at the base of the neoliberal discourse on China are Western business interests and strategic domination. For this reason, it is indeed no surprise that human rights advocates in the liberal camp have often joined the chorus of the 'China threat' thesis in demanding trade sanction and containment against China when it seemed less than compliant with Western demands. And for the same reason, when cooperation from Beijing is assured, the engagement policies that are purportedly designed to transform and democratise China (via free trade) often end up serving as an international source of legitimacy for the Communist regime to continue its grip on power. In both cases, I will argue the avowed (neo)liberal goals of promoting human rights, democracy, and equality in China seem to be either a façade or at best wishful thinking.

Chapter 7 will seek to illustrate more specifically how this is the case. It will do so, in particular, by revealing a paradoxical development in China—mainly through the discursive lenses of Chinese literature—that has seen a growing influence of Western (neo)liberal discourses on Chinese foreign and security policy, alongside mounting disenchantment, discontent, and resentment towards the Western-induced economic reforms and integration policies among a large proportion of the Chinese populace. On the one hand, thus, there is an overwhelming official consensus on China's WTO entry, a consensus which believes that the free trade principle is the key to China's economic development and long-term prosperity, to which there is no alternative. As Xudong Zhang points out, "in the new [Chinese] scholastic imagination, the West has been collapsed into a homogenous institution, a standard to meet, and a norm to observe; thoroughly territorialized and de-historicized, it stands beyond time."[107]

On the other hand, however, beneath China's apparent enthusiasm for convergence, are some discordant trends that need to be taken more seriously than the neoliberal perspective has allowed. These trends include not only social and economic inequality and resulting social unrest across China, but also the emergence of the New Left. A political as well as intellectual phenomenon which has cast doubt on the official line of uncritically 'joining track with international norms' (*yu guoji jiegui*), particularly in the economic realm, and has begun to explore alternative ways of building a

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[106] Anita Chan, "Labor Standards and Human Rights: The Case of Chinese Workers Under Market Socialism," *Human Rights Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1998), p. 887; and Michael Dutton, "Street Scenes of Subalternity: China, Globalization, and Rights," in Xudong Zhang ed., *Whither China? Intellectual Politics in Contemporary China*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001, p. 365.

[107] Xudong Zhang, "Challenging the Eurocentric, Cold War View of China and the Making of a Post-Tiananmen Intellectual Field," *East Asia: An International Quarterly* 19, no. 1-2 (2001), p. 32.

prosperous and democratic China in contrast to the 'invalid dichotomies' between the West and China, modernity and tradition, and capitalism and socialism.[108]

The emergence of the New Left has been provoked by a willingness to accommodate the U.S.-led world order on the part of the new 'polished' Chinese leadership, and the attitudes of the new middle class who have shown little real commitment to democratic reform or human rights protection beyond the level of lip-service. Instead, with more than a little help from Western business interests operating in China an unholy alliance seems to have been forged between the new rich and the ruling political elites in perpetuating the authoritarian status quo. A prospect, of course, that has led to the realist fear of a rising 'China threat.' Indeed, alongside a middle class concern to become part of 'the international mainstream,'[109] there is a Chinese resolve to catch up with the West in terms of national strength, material consumption, and global competitiveness.[110] In consequence, when Western liberals talk about China's 'cognitive learning' of international norms, this learning process is not limited only to those positive things the West *wants* them to learn (as Stuart Harris has recognised). In integrating itself into the Western-dominated world order, China also aims to gain more than token respect from the West, and ultimately to enjoy what the West has enjoyed in the international system in terms of wealth and structural influence, though not necessarily to the point of seeking military domination. In this sense, I argue that China emerges again as an intimate enemy of the West, a situation which has much to do with the impact of the seemingly more constructive approach of (neo)liberalism.

Consequently, the China puzzle, if there is a puzzle at all, may be largely a manifestation of the ironic implications of (neo)realist and (neo)liberal theories at the base of Chinese foreign policy practice. These are themes that will be dealt with in more detail in Chapters 5-7. At this time, I will suggest that the intimate enemy relationship between China and the West has not taken shape overnight, nor is it a contemporary phenomenon. Rather, it is a product of a long socio-historical process of Sino-Western

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[108] See Xu Jilin, Liu Qing, Luo Gang, and Xue Yi, "In Search of a 'Third Way': A Conversation regarding 'Liberalism' and the 'New Left Wing,'" in Gloria Davies ed., *Voicing Concerns: Contemporary Chinese Critical Inquiry*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001, p. 202.

[109] Long Yongtu, "Jiaru Shimao zuzhi, rongru guoji shehui zhuliu" (Joining the WTO, Melting into Mainstream International Society), *Guoji maoyi wenti* (Issues of International Trade), no. 9 (1999), pp. 1-3.

[110] Many Western-based Chinese scholars believe that behind China's urge to integrate itself into international institutions and international society is its "realpolitik quest to restore its place among internationally recognized great powers." See Thomas J. Christensen, "Pride, Pressure, and Politics: The Roots of China's Worldview," in Yong Deng and Fei-ling Wang eds., *In the Eyes of the Dragon: China Views the World*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999, p. 240.

interaction. Thus, if we are to have a better understanding of the long-term implications of contemporary Western discursive strategies, a historical understanding is called for. This is why in Chapters 3-4, I develop a historical narrative of Sino-Western relations that centres on the way in which earlier varieties of realist and liberal discourses on China contributed to the country's emergence as an 'intimate enemy' of the West—from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the Cold War.

More specifically, in Chapter 3, I seek to illustrate that during the century of humiliation between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, Western 'conversion' strategies, unrelenting exploitation, and gunboat diplomacy compelled the Chinese to come to terms with Western notions of sovereignty, nationalism, modernisation, democracy, science and technology, and so forth. At the end of Chapter 3, I suggest that it was in this context that Chinese nationalism and Communism emerged and the 'Red Menace' was conceived in the West, a powerful Cold War discursive framework to which my analysis will turn in Chapter 4.

In that chapter I will argue that this 'Red Menace,' even if it seemed to correspond to China's reality at the time, was primarily a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, by perceiving the 'loss of China' as the work of a worldwide Communist conspiracy, Western discourse legitimated a Cold War strategy of containment and isolation as the only rational response to the newly established People's Republic of China (PRC). A strategy which, I argue, contributed enormously to the hardening of China's attitude and foreign policy towards the West in general and the U.S. in particular. Consequently, despite, or perhaps because of, the development of mutual hostility between China and the United States during the Cold War period, another 'intimate enemy' relationship was formed.

Put into this historical perspective, the implications of contemporary Western theory and practice on China should now become easier to understand. This is not simply to advocate a 'back to the future' scenario concerning the direction of contemporary Sino-Western relations, since much has changed since the end of the 'century of humiliation' and the 'Red Menace' period, and history never mechanically repeats itself. But inasmuch as contemporary Western approaches to China do not constitute a fundamental break with the old perceptions and strategies, it may not be an entirely futile exercise to argue that some dramatic historical precedents might resurface in the contemporary settings.

Chinese Foreign Policy as a Disciplinary Challenge: A Concluding Note

The foregoing sections have provided an overview of the main themes and general arguments of this thesis. By way of conclusion, I want now to reiterate that the ways in which China gives meaning to itself and the world are often greatly influenced by the ways in which Western scholars and practitioners give meaning to it, thereby giving rise to the intimate enemy phenomenon. In this context, Chinese foreign policy cannot be understood in a 'pure' Chinese context nor in an overly objectivist, structuralist, and ahistorical fashion, a problem which as already noted has been characteristic of the mainstream China field.

Having said this, it is important to note that the 'intimate enemy' model, while illuminating in many ways, cannot capture the full complexities of Sino-Western relations, and that China's worldview and foreign policy are not simply a passive, straightforward copy of what the West makes of it, either in theoretical or practical terms. China, however profoundly shaped by the West in the course of their interactions, is always something "more than an outpost of mindlessly replicated Western thought."[111] This is not only because there is no such thing as 'the West' in terms of a unitary, homogeneous entity, but also because—as exemplified by the rise of the New Left—ultimately any Western construction of China has to be interpreted, contested, negotiated, modified, and enacted by the Chinese in accord with their own diverse, contingent contexts.

As noted already, for all its scientific claims and totalising ambition, conventional Western theory and practice has not been able to play a totalising, all-encompassing role in the construction of Chinese reality. Therefore, there is nothing fatalistic about the 'intimate enemy' relationship between China and the West and new openings always exist for the construction of a different relationship, however difficult. As Berger and Luckmann have argued, "Institutionalization is not… an irreversible process, despite the fact that institutions, once formed, have a tendency to persist."[112] Similarly, American poet Christopher Mulrooney suggests that "Things become real as they are perceived, and change their existence as perception of them changes…."[113] In short, the Sino-Western relationship can always be reconstructed or at least modified to some degree, as

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[111] Chen, *Occidentalism*, p. 4.
[112] Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, p. 99.
[113] Christopher Mulrooney, "On Alfred Hitchcock," <http://www.thefilmjournal.com/issue8/hitchcock.html>.

was the case during the U.S.-China rapprochement in the 1970s. As I will illustrate in Chapter 4, Richard Nixon's tacit acceptance of some U.S. blame for China's xenophobia and antagonism made possible a shift in both American and Chinese attitudes and policies towards each other. If anything, this underscores the always crucial role of discourse in helping transform social reality. The reality of international relations in general and that of Sino-U.S. relations in particular are no exception. In particular, in the contemporary context, it is no longer plausible to continue to claim, for example, that the 'China threat' is something out there beyond human construction, as John Derbyshire does when he argues that "we simply have no leverage" over China's "increasingly militant and assertive nationalism," other than preparing for war.[114] As some IR theorists have noted, it is precisely this kind of 'realism' that often proves *unrealistic*, as it ultimately fails to explain important historical change such as the abrupt end of the Cold War.[115]

It is of course possible to overemphasise intellectuals' responsibility for the (re)formulation of actual and specific policy. As Robert L. Suettinger has argued:

> it is important to recognize that think tanks and academic discussions have only a limited and indirect impact on the thinking and decisions of key policymakers. Scholars may or may not have direct access to foreign policy officials, their articles may or may not be read, contradictory views may or may not cancel each other out. Generally, however, policy decisions have their own dynamics. Information flows and time horizons often do not accommodate dispassionate, lengthy, well-reasoned academic analysis.[116]

While recognising this point, we have to be very careful not to push it too far. Scholarly analysis is not the same thing as policy blueprint, but in general terms the two are intimately connected, not least in the sense that scholarly ideas can *limit* the horizons of political imagination and *exclude* certain action which might otherwise be taken into consideration as possible, perhaps more sensible, options. In the end, as Foucault puts it simply, "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations."[117] Thus, how we as scholars think and how we think differently matter.

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[114] Derbyshire, "Communist, Nationalist, and Dangerous," p. 33.
[115] George, *Discourses of Global Politics*, p. 4. See also John Lewis Gaddis, "International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War," *International Security* 17, no. 3 (1992/1993), pp. 5-58.
[116] Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen*, p. 419.
[117] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 27.

The question of how we can think differently cannot be satisfactorily answered in this thesis. However tempting, the thesis will promise no quick-fix solution to the difficult issues of Chinese foreign relations, particularly with the U.S. Nor is there simple, ready-made alternative to problems of Western discourse which I explore here. For 'alternatives' are themselves always in constant flux, and "the search for a source of meaning and order already in place" is in contradiction to the spirit of critical IR studies.[118]

Nevertheless, for all its reservations, the thesis does seek to indicate the possibility as well as the necessity of knowing China and its international relations in distinction from the conventional mode of knowledge. Given that at the centre of this disciplinary problem is positivist knowledge, tinkering around the edges of the China field is no longer enough. According to William Connolly, "It is not just this theory or that theory that needs disturbance and destabilization but the field of discourse upon which these theories contend with each other while naturalizing a network of common or complementary assumptions."[119] In this regard, Edward Said's critique of Orientalism is again of significance. Concerned with "questions as to how the production of knowledge best serves communal, as opposed to factional, ends, how knowledge that is non-dominative and non-coercive can be produced in a setting that is deeply inscribed with the politics, the considerations, the positions, and the strategies of power," Said argues that "Orientalism reconsidered in this wider and libertarian optic entails nothing less than the creation of new objects for a new kind of knowledge."[120]

Again, the question of how this new kind of knowledge could be created is beyond the scope of this thesis. In the very least, however, such knowledge will have to go beyond the confines of positivist certainties of subject and object, self and Other, and avoid reducing contingency and difference to either universal sameness or ahistorical Otherness to be controlled or transformed. Also, such knowledge will have to refrain from speaking for the 'object of study,' and allow the 'object' some kind of subjectivity and 'sovereign' voice of its own, though not to the point of reifying that voice as *the* truth. In short, such knowledge will have to be markedly different from the

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[118] Richard K. Ashley and R. B. J. Walker, "Introduction: Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissident Thought in International Studies," *International Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (1990), p. 265.
[119] William E. Connolly, "Identity and Difference in Global Politics," in James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro, eds., *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989, p. 334.
[120] Edward W. Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered," in Francis Baker et al., *Europe and Its Other: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1984*, Colchester: University of Essex, 1985, p. 15.

dichotomised, essentialist knowledge of China as offered by (neo)realist and (neo)liberal perspectives. Indeed, only by exposing the inadequacy and danger associated with the dominant Western discourses of China in international relations, can we prise open spaces for 'alternative' ways of knowing China in IR, and construct some more nuanced, more self-reflective, and less dangerous ways of engaging with the complex and important issues of China's relations with the contemporary world in this increasingly globalised era. In this context, as stated at the outset, we would do well to work more closely with critical social theory in general and critical IR scholarship in particular, and to give discourse analysis a more salient position in the study of Chinese foreign relations. This thesis represents a hesitative step in this direction. I want to begin this journey via a discussion of Western thinking on self and Other—a discourse primarily carried out in an American accent.

2

Constructing Self and Other: Speaking for 'the West' with an American Accent

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> *America's view of the world… is hampered not by the reality of its harmonious, liberal past, but by the myth. In short, we get the world wrong because we get ourselves wrong…. The motivation behind this latest summons to a foreign policy crusade, as with earlier summonses, lies not in external threats but in our own insecurities.*
>
> Benjamin Schwarz[1]

JUST as International Relations is "an American Social Science,"[2] so is the field of Chinese foreign relations studies, which has been closely related to the IR discipline. Indeed, associated with this American dominance in both fields of study is the fact that the contemporary Western self, as far as its political meaning is concerned, has been largely underpinned by the United States and articulated with a distinctively American accent. Since the end of the nineteenth century, and after British writer Rudyard Kipling's passionate plea for America to 'take up the White Man's Burden,' the U.S. has increasingly become the centre of gravity of 'the West.' This is both manifested in and perpetuated by a wide range of U.S.-dominated multilateral security frameworks (e.g., NATO, the U.S.-Japan alliance, and the ANZUS alliance) and economic and trade institutions (e.g. the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO).[3] Therefore, in order to better

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[1] Benjamin Schwarz, "Exporting the Myth of a Liberal America," *World Policy Journal* 15, no. 3 (1998), pp. 69, 76.

[2] Stanley Hoffmann, "An American Social Science: International Relations," *Dædalus* 106, no. 3 (1977), pp. 41-60.

[3] For instance, the "frontier/wilderness" imagery in the American self-identity has long been applied to the Australian context, describing a similar expansion of energetic people into "wilderness," which initially signified Aborigines and more recently Asians. See Lachlan Strahan, *Australia's China: Changing Perceptions from the 1930s to the 1990s*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 163-170. Similarly, it seems that the American claim to the "indispensable nation" status has a role to

grasp the 'theory/practice' linkage in Western discourse on China, it is now useful to locate it in the history of U.S. foreign relations, a history which not only exhibits a strong connection between American discourse of self/Other and U.S. power practice, but is also central to an understanding of the development of contemporary Western IR discourses of China.

The term 'American self-construction' refers here to a particular style of American self-imagination, namely, the envisioning of America as the 'indispensable nation' in global affairs. Even this particular imagination is riddled with controversies and competing visions over specific strategic options, such as the realist-based strategy of U.S. primacy and hegemonic dominance, the liberal-based strategy of democratic enlargement and cooperative security, and the non-interventionist (or isolationist) strategy of disengagement from the rest of the world.[4] But as will be demonstrated below, most of these strategic visions more or less concur that America is uniquely burdened with a special mission, or manifest destiny, to rid the world of evil and to lead it towards progress, democracy, and peace. In this sense, to say that the "United States may not have a global or overall strategy at all and may have too many strategic choices to form a grand master plan" can be misleading.[5] Indeed, since the end of the Cold War, as William Pfaff has pointed out, an imperial alliance has emerged: "international liberals, anxious to extend American influence and to federate the world's democracies, and unilateralist neoconservatives, who believe in aggressive American leadership for the world's own good, have joined forces in what some call the New Wilsonianism."[6]

This chapter is not about such American self-construction per se, however. Its main aim is to demonstrate that the way in which the U.S. understands itself is intrinsic both to America's perceptions of others in terms of Other, and to the making of its foreign policy towards those others. I begin with a general discussion of the theme of theory and practice associated with the American self-imagination in question. I then turn to a narrative of American discursive constructions of self/Other as power practice in U.S. foreign policy during four historical periods: from the Indian wars to World War II (WWII); the Cold War era; the post-Cold War era; and finally, the era of the 'war on

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play in Australian Prime Minister John Howard's 1999 comments on Australia's role as America's "deputy sheriff" in Southeast Asia.

[4] On this point, see, for example, Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, "Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (1996/1997), pp. 5-53; and Charles William Maynes, "Contending Schools," *The National Interest*, no. 63 (2001), pp. 49-58.

[5] Qin Yaqing, quoted in Robert L. Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen: The Politics of U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003, p. 421.

[6] William Pfaff, "The Question of Hegemony," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 1 (2001), p. 221.

terrorism.' By engaging these themes in a historical narrative, I want to illustrate how particular meanings of Other, such as 'threat' and 'opportunity,' have been (re)produced and taken for granted on the basis of those powerful ways of American self-understanding, and how such discursively constructed meanings of self and Other have supplied the legitimating power for the pursuit of certain political actions in America's relations with the world. In doing so, this chapter seeks to provide an important background for a better understanding of the practical implications of contemporary Western discourses on China.

The American Self-Construction and the Construction of Others as 'Threat' and 'Opportunity'

Like all other countries, the United States is an 'imagined community.'[7] Yet, it is a specially imagined community which originated not in 'America,' but in Europe. In other words, 'America' was largely a product of European adventures in the Enlightenment quest for security and freedom.[8] In his search for such a Utopia, Thomas More located his perfect society in America, the unexplored lands of the New World across the Atlantic Ocean. After the American Revolution, many Enlightenment philosophers found that America represented their dream of a new order.[9] Therefore, as Edmundo O'Gorman puts it, "Not only was America invented and not discovered… but it was invented in the image of its [European] inventor."[10]

From the outset, this powerful, enticing invention had its built-in real-world effect. Just as the certainty of *a priori* meaning ('the earthly Paradise') projected onto his proposed destination motivated Columbus to undertake the hazardous voyage to America, this European invention excited European settlers. Drawn to America in much the same spirit of the European intellectual quest for certainty, the settlers considered themselves the representatives of a divine truth in the New World. Alexis de

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[7] David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, rev. ed., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p. 91. On "imagined communities," see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed., London: Verso, 1991.

[8] For a discussion of the linkage between the self-understanding of early colonists in America and European heritage, see Ernest W. Lefever, *America's Imperial Burden: Is the Past Prologue?* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999, pp. 8-9.

[9] Jack P. Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity from 1492 to 1800*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993, p. 131.

[10] Edmundo O'Gorman, *The Invention of America: An Inquiry into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of Its History*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961, p. 140.

Tocqueville went so far as to say that "the whole destiny of America [is] contained in the first Puritan who landed on these shores, as that of the whole human race in the first man."[11] Inspired by this European-originated Puritan imagery of America, John Louis O'Sullivan, in an article in 1845, came up with the powerful notion of America's "*manifest destiny* to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions [emphasis added]."[12]

The phrase 'manifest destiny' is no longer so often openly invoked today, but the basic meanings are consistent with contemporary liberal construction of American self-identity. In his farewell speech in January 1989, Ronald Reagan reiterated the long-held belief that America is "a tall, proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace."[13] Similarly, in October 1991, George Bush Sr. argued that "As Americans, we feel we have a destiny to lead, to show the way by ideals, not just to ourselves but to the entire world."[14] In 1992, Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote:

> America is a remarkable nation. We are, as Abraham Lincoln told Congress in December 1862, a nation that "cannot escape history" because we are "the last best hope of earth." The president said that his administration and Congress held the "power and… responsibility" to ensure that the hope America promised would be fulfilled. Today… America is still the last best hope of earth, and we still hold the power and bear the responsibility for its remaining so.[15]

This sentiment was echoed by former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, who called America "the indispensable nation" and maintained that "we stand tall and hence see further than other nations."[16] More recently, speaking of America's dominant role in the current war on terrorism, Vice President Dick Cheney said: "Only we can rally the world in a task of this complexity against an enemy so elusive and so resourceful. The United States and only the United States can see this effort through to victory."[17]

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[11] Quoted in Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978, p. 19.
[12] This is where this phrase 'manifest destiny' first appeared. See Julius W. Pratt, "The Origin of 'Manifest Destiny,'" *American Historical Review* 32, no. 4 (1927), pp. 795-798.
[13] Quoted in Neil Renwick, *America's World Identity: The Politics of Exclusion*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, pp. 153-154.
[14] Quoted in Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, *American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy: Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War*, New York: Palgrave, 2001, p. 96.
[15] Colin L. Powell, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 5 (1992), p. 32.
[16] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 2 (1999), p. 37.
[17] David E. Sanger, "Allies Hear Sour Notes in 'Axis of Evil' Chorus," *The New York Times*, February 17, 2002, p. A18. See also Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*,

Needless to say, ethnocentric thinking is not unique to the United States. China had for centuries assumed it was the centre of the world. But what distinguishes U.S. from Chinese ethnocentric self-identities is that while the latter was based largely on the Confucian doctrine, the former is sanctioned by more powerful, more institutionalised regimes of truth, notably Christianity and modern science. For the early English Puritans, America was part of a divine plan and they were the Chosen People blessed by covenant with God.[18] With the advent of the European Scientific Age, a secular, liberal, and 'scientific' lustre was added to the highly religious import of American exceptionalism. Charles Darwin once argued that "the wonderful progress of the United States, as well as the character of the people, are the results of natural selection."[19] Ever since, the United States has been construed as the manifestation of the law of nature, with its ideas and institutions described not as historically particular, but as truly universal.[20] That is, "The US is utopia achieved."[21] It represents the "End of History."[22]

What does this religious-cum-scientific imagination of the American self have to do with the way in which it comes to know and do something about other societies? To put it simply, this kind of self-knowledge leads to two distinctive but interrelated ways of framing and dealing with others as Other. One is the liberal way of constructing Otherness. By envisioning a linear process of historical development with itself at its apex, the United States tends to place other countries on a common evolutionary slope, and sees them as occupying the lower, primitive end of that temporal slope and inevitably travelling towards the end of History that is represented by the U.S. itself. As the Other demonstrates the possibility of becoming more like 'us,' it is argued that the best way to deal with it is to transform it, by means, for example, of evangelism, economic development, democratisation, and institutional integration. One example of this logic is the Clinton Doctrine of 'democratic enlargement.'[23] Perceiving dangers of intrastate chaos and ethnic strife associated with failed states, Bill Clinton argued that

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New York: Basic Books, 1990; and Owen Harries ed., *America's Purpose: New Visions of U.S. Foreign Policy*, San Francisco, CA: ICS Press, 1991.

[18] Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*, p. 33.

[19] Quoted in Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands*, Chicago, IL: Qudrangle Books, 1936, p. 3.

[20] The leading China specialist Lucian W. Pye acknowledges that "much of what passes as wisdom in political science is really American area studies pretending to be universal knowledge." Lucian W. Pye, "Asia Studies and the Discipline," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 34, no. 4 (2001), p. 805.

[21] Jean Baudrillard, *America*, London: Verso, 1988, p. 77.

[22] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *The National Interest*, no. 16 (1989), pp. 3-18.

[23] See, for example, Douglas Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine," *Foreign Policy*, no. 106 (Spring 1997), pp. 110-127.

"ultimately the best strategy to insure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere. Democracies don't attack each other."[24]

This is a powerful frame of reference within which the China difference has long been understood in terms of an 'opportunity for convergence.' As Richard Madsen notes, "[American] China studies had its origins in religious institutions…. In the writings of early Protestant missionaries to China we can see a framework of assumptions about how to understand and what to do about China that still forms much of the intellectual and moral foundation of modern, secular China studies."[25] While missionaries saw the opportunity to make converts in China, contemporary liberal observers believe that China is slowly but surely reshaping itself in the image of the United States in areas like economy and popular culture, if not (yet) in political terms. Faced with a vast, ancient nation on the other side of the Pacific, the 'discovery' of those positive mirror-images of the American self seems profoundly satisfying and tempting.

While highly self-gratifying, such a liberal dichotomy of self and (changing) Other more often than not proves illusive in a world of diversity, contingency, and unpredictability, which is after all irreducible to universal sameness or absolute certainty. In this context, instead of questioning the fundamental validity of their teleological, megalomaniac scheme, many Americans try to dissolve the uncertainty by resorting to a geopolitical certainty. In this way, the 'unchangeable' other can again become knowable as the Other, in terms primarily of an absolute negation of, and hence a (realist, spatial) threat to, the allegedly universal American self. For example, to explain the contradiction between the promised certainty of the New World and the unexpected contingency during the settlement era, European settlers constructed the notion of the American Indian wilderness. "Why? Because this New World was a wilderness, a desert; an empty terrifying place, which, while empty, was at the same time filled with demons and dangers and destruction."[26] Associated with this imagery of wilderness is the invocation of the 'frontier' metaphor, which American historian Frederick Turner regarded as "the meeting point between savagery and civilization."[27]

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[24] Quoted in John M. Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (1994), p. 87.
[25] Richard Madsen, "The Academic China Specialists," in David Shambaugh ed., *American Studies of Contemporary China*, Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1993, pp. 164-165.
[26] James Oliver Robertson, *American Myth, American Reality*, New York: Hill & Wang, 1980, pp. 47-48.
[27] Frederick Jackson Turner, *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1961, p. 38.

In this dichotomous rendition, the paradox between certainty and danger was 'resolved,' and the image of 'wilderness' beyond the 'frontier' became a necessary condition for Euro-Americans to maintain their identity in terms of the 'New World.' As James Robertson points out:

> The sense of the existence of wilderness, the powerful imagery of contrast between civilization and wilderness, must be maintained if the logic of New World mythology is to be maintained. American myths tell us still that there is no New World without wilderness. If we are to be true Americans (and thus part of that New World and its destiny), there *must* be wilderness. The symbol is an imperative for our real world.[28]

Therefore, through the invocation of a threatening Other in realist sense, the American self-imagination becomes 'complete,' resting, as it were, on a 'safe' ground so that its paradox can be explained away. Just as "*Primitive*… is a category, not an object, of Western [modernist] thought,"[29] so the presence of a threatening Other is primarily not a kind of external reality out there, but a ready-made category of thought enabled by and useful to a very particular way of self-imagination. In the early days of American history, it was Europe, or the 'Old World,' that was 'found' to fill that role as its primary Other, threatening to corrupt the 'New World.'[30] Shortly after World War II, the Soviet Union emerged as a major deviance from, and hence an archenemy to, America's universal path toward progress via the free market and liberal democracy. After the demise of the Soviet Union, that vacancy was to be filled by China, one of the most attractive candidates available in the post-Tiananmen or post-Cold War world.[31] Explaining the unusually harsh attention paid to China after the Tiananmen crackdown, Richard Madsen writes that "the crackdown in China was for America a drama with an unexpected, incorrect ending. As such, it challenged the common meanings at the core of [America's] major public institutions."[32]

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[28] Robertson, *American Myth, American Reality*, p. 124.
[29] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 18.
[30] See Daniel J. Boorstin, *America and the Image of Europe: Reflections on American Thought*, New York: Meridian Books, 1960, pp. 19-20; Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America*, p. 122; and Samuel P. Huntington, "The Erosion of American National Interests," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (1997), pp. 29-31.
[31] On this point, see, for example, Bruce Cumings, "The World Shakes China." *The National Interest*, no. 43 (1996), pp. 28-41; and Rey Chow, "King Kong in Hong Kong: Watching the 'Handover' from the U.S.A.," in Xudong Zhang ed., *Whither China? Intellectual Politics in Contemporary China*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001, pp. 211-227.
[32] Richard Madsen, *China and the American Dream*: *A Moral Inquiry*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, p. 4.

Like the liberal construction of Other touched on above, this largely realist framing of Other carries with it some profound implications in practice. That is, when the Other is depicted as a fixed geopolitical threat, waging a war (or at least preparing for war) to destroy it often becomes the only rational option to fulfilling the universal self. In this regard, Robert Young notes that "war constitutes the [Western] philosophical concept of being itself. For being is always defined as the appropriation of either difference into identity, or of identities into a greater order…. War, then, is another form of the appropriation of the other…."[33] In this context, not surprisingly, war has figured prominently in U.S. foreign relations:

> War is always violent, bloody, and destructive. But American wars are fought for great and good ends, and they result in good for America. The Revolution created freedom, independence, and democracy. The Civil War resulted in the expansion of freedom, the destruction of slavery, the growth of industrial might and wealth, and the formation of a unified, powerful nation.[34]

Insofar as both liberal and realist framings of Other are derived from the same particular American self-construction, their different approaches to understanding global politics in general and China in particular are basically mutually complementary, rather than mutually exclusive. Recently, this relationship of mutual complement is particularly striking in the emergence of a 'two worlds' theory, and its various incarnations such as the new imperialism, liberal imperialism, the New Wilsonianism, and neo-conservatism.[35] As neoconservative commentators William Kristol and Robert Kagan put it, both 'moral clarity' and 'military strength' are essential if Americans are to continue to be proud of their leading role in world affairs.[36]

As noted already, it is these two perspectives that have dominated the China debate in the West. I will engage with these perspectives in relation to China more fully in later chapters. For now, in the remaining parts of this chapter, I want to provide a broader historical background for understanding the implications of Western representations of China by touching briefly on the question of how these particular

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[33] Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 13.
[34] Robertson, *American Myth, American Reality*, p. 324.
[35] See for example, James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, "A Tale of Two Worlds: Core and Periphery in the Post-Cold War Era," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992), pp. 467-491; Robert Cooper, "Why We Still Need Empires," *The Observer*, April 7, 2002, <http://www.observer.co.uk/ comment/ story/0,6903,680096,00.html>; and Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire,* New York: Penguin Press, 2004.
[36] William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 4 (1996), pp. 18-32.

ways of imagining self and Other in the United States have governed the relationships between America and its Others.

Self/Other Constructions as Power Practice (I): From the Indian Wars to World War II

Michael Shapiro suggests that American foreign policy making can be understood as "the process of making foreign or exotic, and thus different from the self, someone or – thing."[37] In American history, it was the American Indians who first bore the brunt of such a policy. The Puritan settlers' self-image of 'a home in the heart of darkness' not only set the Indians apart from the American self, but, more significantly, provided the rationale for the white settlers to conduct their earliest, and some of the most brutal 'foreign policy' towards 'Other.' A perfect miniature of how self-construction (the birth of the United States) simultaneously involved the destruction of Other, for instance, can be found in the American Revolution. While long being celebrated as a landmark of the American struggle for freedom from oppression, the revolution itself invoked a great deal of oppression, and proved a disaster to the Indians. In reprisal for the Indians' collaboration with America's enemy Britain, George Washington ordered 'destruction and devastation' of the Iroquois villages in 1779. Brutally carried out, it wrecked "the North American Indian's finest civilization north of Mexico."[38]

The relationship between white settlers and the American Indians was not always marred by a Hobbesian state of war. There were occasions when white people saw the possibility of winning over the Indian 'savages' by alternative ways such as conversion, or in today's foreign policy terminology, constructive engagement. Yet, this scarcely obscures the fact that the white missionaries were interested primarily in asserting the superiority of their own religion and, hence, making the conquest of the American Indians easier, rather than interested in bringing any real benefits to the converted.

The significance of the construction/destruction of the Indian Other is that it prefigures similar patterns of U.S. power relations with later 'Others' such as its Latin American neighbours, the Philippines, China, Korea, Vietnam, and, most recently, Iraq. For instance, it has been noted that America's dealing with the Indians left "an

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[37] Michael J. Shapiro, *The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices in Biography, Photography, and Policy Analysis*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988, p. 100.
[38] Quoted in V. G. Kiernan, *America, the New Imperialism: From White Settlement to World Hegemony*, London: Zed Press, 1978, p. 24.

invaluable legacy" of fighting experience for American soldiers in the Korean War.[39] In this account, much of what we have seen in relatively recent American history, including the reliance on strength to contain Communism, the resolve to use napalm to 'tame' the Vietnamese, and the exploitation of Third World resources in the name of modernisation and progress, may all to some extent trace their origins back to the era of the Indian wars.[40]

By the late nineteenth century, emerging from the Indian wars, European Americans had succeeded in the annexation of nearly the whole continent of North America from the Atlantic to the Pacific, 'from sea to shining sea.' As a consequence, in 1891, the U.S. Census Bureau officially declared that the 'frontier' no longer existed. At this point, the ambivalent attitude towards the frontier as both threat and opportunity was made plainly acute. On the one hand, this closure, together with the disappearance of the indigenous Other, brought to the fore a long-standing Puritan sense of urgency and insecurity. For, as Henry Luce put it in 1941, unlike other nations, "this nation, conceived in adventure and dedicated to the progress of man… cannot truly endure unless there courses strongly through its veins from Maine to California the blood of purposes and enterprise and high resolve."[41] But on the other hand, for over-confident Americans, the closure of the old frontier, rather than marking the end of America's destiny, signified a *beginning*, an opportunity to look further outward. Perhaps no one has expressed this two-pronged sense of threat and opportunity more forcefully than Frederick Turner. As Richard Hofstadter has noted, while recognising "the frightening possibility… that a serious juncture in the nation's history had come," Turner also praised the closing of a Western land frontier as an occasion enhancing "the formation of a composite nationality for the American people."[42] In other words, while the closure of the old continental frontier and the disappearance of the New World wilderness might have brought America's mission to a halt, it might at the same time give rise to a new sense of mission beyond the continent.

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[39] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[40] David Campbell argues that American "overseas adventures were justified in the same terms that had rationalized the oppression of the Indians and others at home: the need (if not duty) to civilize, educate, and look after 'primitive' peoples, and the anarchy, barbarism, and danger that would flourish if the United States did not act." See Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 135.

[41] Henry Luce, "The American Century," *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 2 (1999), p. 171. This article was originally published in *Life* 10, no. 7 (1941).

[42] Quoted in Christopher Thorne, *American Political Culture and the Asian Frontier, 1943-1973*, London: British Academy, 1986, p. 340.

Accordingly, from that moment on, "powerful and persuasive minds" in America began to focus on "the need to transform the idea and the tradition and the reality of continental empire into global empire."[43] One such mind was Alfred Thayer Mahan, a captain in the U.S. Navy. Viewing America as the guardian of the civilised world, Mahan believed that America's prosperity lay with the ability to project its influence as a sea power beyond its shorelines: "the United States by her geographical position must be one of the frontiers from which, as from a base of operations, the Sea Power of the civilized world will energize."[44] Thus, after the disappearance of the frontier 'at home,' America's 'manifest destiny' again found itself a way forward. It is worth noting that, at this juncture, American corporations emerged as a new agent to lead the way of this self-imagination, which closely aligned American security and prosperity with their ability to dominate the world economy. Thanks to this new development, U.S. long fascination with China as a lucrative market of alleged 400 million potential consumers began to take on greater importance.

The vast Pacific Ocean, however, seemed to stand in the way of America's dreams of limitless Chinese market opportunity and of a global power generally. "Bridge the Pacific!" cried the Philadelphia *Press*, while the New York *Journal of Commerce* advocated in December 1897 that to this end America needed an isthmian canal, the acquisition of Hawaii, and a big navy.[45] In this context, represented as relentless invaders and conquerors of the New World, Spain became America's more immediate Other.[46] Meanwhile, though itself a victim of imperial conquest, Cuba was also feared on the grounds that it could not uphold law and order on its own, or worse still, that a revolt in Cuba might establish a black republic beyond America's control.

Sanctioned by its 'manifest destiny,' the U.S. found war a justified and effective tool for dealing with the Spanish and Cuban Others.[47] On the eve of the Spanish-American War, Theodore Roosevelt, then assistant secretary of the Navy, wrote to a friend that "In strict confidence… I should welcome almost any war, for I think this

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[43] William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life: An Essay on the Causes and Character of America's Present Predicament, along with a Few Thoughts about an Alternative,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 101-102.
[44] Quoted in Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898*, p. 16.
[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 273-274.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 285.
[47] As the Presbyterian *Evangelist* suggested: "if it be the will of Almighty God, that by war the last trace of this inhumanity of man to man shall be swept away from this Western hemisphere, let it come!" Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 285.

country needs one."[48] Although President McKinley himself "did not want war," as Walter LaFeber notes, "he did want what only a war could provide; the disappearance of the terrible uncertainty in American political and economic life, and a solid basis from which to resume the building of the new American commercial empire."[49] Thus came the 'splendid little war' with Spain, which kick-started America's overseas imperial adventure. After the takeover of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Wake Island, and Guam, the U.S. pushed its 'frontier' all the way to the Philippines (which was then perceived as essential to America's access to Chinese markets), where another 'Indian War' was soon to be found necessary by American officials. In this new war in 1899, American troops killed 15,000 Filipinos, and 200,000 more died from their wounds, starvation, and the effects of concentration camps set up by Americans. On the basis of such killing and looting, as Mark Twain pointed out, the U.S. began its ascendancy as a 'World Power.'[50]

Until its new colonial acquisition in Asia, U.S. power had been confined largely to the western hemisphere. Yet, with the outbreak of World War I (WWI) in 1914, America found much greater geopolitical space for imperial adventure. At this turning point, it was Woodrow Wilson, the 28th U.S. President, who led the way of projecting America onto a truly global stage. Wilson began as a lofty isolationist with a firm belief in American exceptionalism. But in early 1917, the Wilson administration abandoned its 'neutrality' and declared war on Germany. In order to distinguish America's essentially self-interested war effort from the old game of European power politics, Wilson identified his government's actions as "the People's War, a war for the freedom and justice and self-government amongst all the nations of the world, a war to make the world safe for the peoples who live upon it."[51] As a result, the liberal image of America as the champion of humanity, liberty, and democracy on a world scale came to the fore. After winning the war, Wilson became more convinced that his dream had now come true, a dream that the world would "turn to America for those moral inspirations which lie at the basis of all freedom . . . [and] that her flag is the flag, not only of America, but

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[48] Quoted in Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, London: Longman, 1980, p. 290.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 297.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 309.
[51] Quoted in Charles Seymour, "Woodrow Wilson: A Political Balance Sheet," in Abraham S. Eisenstadt ed., *American History: Recent Interpretations (Book II: Since 1865)*, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1962, p. 283.

of humanity."[52] Consequently, he began to speak of American principles as "not the principles of a province or of a single continent. We have known and boasted all along that they were the principles of a liberated mankind."[53] Whatever America fought against would be not only its own enemy, but necessarily the enemy of the civilised world. This Wilsonian liberal way of imagining the American self and Other in international relations has proved to have far-reaching implications for U.S. foreign policy to the present day, a point to which I will come back later in this chapter.

The rise of the U.S. as a world leader after WWI further cemented the bondage between American corporate interests and a stable capitalist world order, in which external markets, raw material supplies, and investment opportunities could be secured and freely explored. The expansion of the American frontier increased both its stake in and vulnerability to the outside world, however. In this context, the potential spread of revolutionary nationalism in the 'backward' countries and conflict between the capitalist, industrial powers, among other things, came to be seen as new wilderness threats to America. To control these problems, with some lessons learned from the calamity of WWI power politics, the U.S. government turned to a liberal vision of the world by striving to build a system of law based on treaty systems, conferences, arbitration-mediation proceedings, and the World Court. Consisting of "clear and definite rules of action,"[54] the system was thought to be vital to civilising and disciplining the 'backward' nations, regulating international competition, and providing a safe, predictable playing ground for U.S. business and investments. Until the great crash of 1929, the U.S. had enjoyed the stability underpinned by such a system, which prompted President Calvin Coolidge, who was an enthusiastic advocate of this institutionalisation of the U.S.-dominated world order, to declare that "In the domestic field there is tranquillity and contentment… and the highest record of years of prosperity. In the foreign field there is peace, the goodwill which comes from mutual understanding…."[55] In the 'Far East,' for example, the 'new order' was embodied, following the Washington Conference of 1921-22, in the consolidation of the 'Open Door' in China and an accommodation among Western powers and a rising Japan.

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[52] Quoted in George W. Bush's Proclamation on Flag Day and National Flag Week, June 13, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020613-12.html>.
[53] Quoted in Boorstin, *America and the Image of Europe*, p. 21.
[54] Robert Freeman Smith, "Republican Policy and the Pax Americana 1921-1932," in William Appleman Williams ed., *From Colony to Empire: Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972, p. 259.
[55] Quoted in J. K. Galbraith, *The Great Crash 1929*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955, p. 30.

Yet, by the early 1930s, the challenge of Japan, Germany, and Italy in Asia and Europe had become so ominous that this 'new world order' based on legalistic moralism began to crumble. Finally, on 7 December 1941, the Japanese surprise attacks on Pearl Harbour proved to be the last straw. By taking away the American sense of certainty and invulnerability, Japan struck at the heart of American self-identity, thereby dragging a reluctant America into WWII. The U.S. likened the war against Japan to America's most savage Indian wars. In order to clear the way for the 'Chosen People' to march safely into the new 'wilderness,' American military dropped its then only two available atomic bombs on two Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki and killed 145,000 Japanese people instantly.

Ever since WWII, the historical experience with Hitler and 'Pearl Harbour' has made American officials more alert to the deadly consequences of the supposed self/Other struggle. As James Chace and Caleb Carr point out, one overriding lesson drawn by President Franklin Roosevelt was that "events that threatened security, even on the perimeter of U.S. interests, must always evoke an immediate and forceful American response."[56] For the sake of its absolute security, America, it was now believed, could ill afford to take chances on dealing with potential Others, even if they were far away. This historically specific lesson, as will become evident in the following discussion, would subsequently take on a lawlike quality and leave a lasting imprint on American attitudes to the Soviet Union in the Cold War, Iraq in the current war on terrorism, as well as China. Also, it was in this context that pre-World War II Wilsonian liberalism gave way to the renaissance of power politics realism as a dominant paradigm in the making of U.S. foreign policy as well as in the scheme of American self/Other imagination.

Self/Other Constructions as Power Practice (II): U.S. Foreign Policy during the Cold War

After the defeat of the Axis Powers in WWII, the United States ended up not only controlling two-thirds of the world's gold and producing half of the world's goods and services, but also mastering the 'top secret' of the universe, the atomic weapon. All these achievements, it seemed, confirmed the American sense of mission and presented

[56] James Chace and Caleb Carr, *America Invulnerable: The Quest for Absolute Security from 1812 to Star Wars*, New York: Summit Books, 1988, p. 217.

a 'God-sent' opportunity to consolidate its world leadership and finalise an orderly, U.S.-dominated international system (through, for example, the mechanisms of the newly created United Nations (U.N.), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank, as well as nuclear bombs). Little wonder that, Henry Luce, the influential publisher of *Life*, *Time*, and *Fortune*, sounded an upbeat note: "the world of the 20th century… must be to a significant degree an American Century."[57]

However, in the United States, the years immediately after WWII were marked also by great dilemmas.[58] On the international front, despite its new domination, America faced enormous challenges from the collapse of European economies, the upsurge of Communist influence in Europe and elsewhere, the 'loss of China,' as well as a seemingly recalcitrant Soviet Union. And domestically, in the face of both a hostile Republican-dominated Congress and a massive wave of labour strikes and post-war unionism, President Harry S. Truman was beset by the charges of corruption and Communist infiltration within his government.

Understandably, these complex social, economic, and political problems would require explanations and solutions. At the request of the U.S. government, George Kennan, then a U.S. diplomat in Moscow, sent out the famous 'Long Telegram' of February 1946, which blamed erratic Soviet conduct for many of America's frustrations.[59] This 'Long Telegram' (and the 'Mr. X' article in the journal *Foreign Affairs* a year later), as Charles Nathanson points out, "provided the conviction that there was an All-Powerful Enemy 'out there.' Whatever happened, the Enemy had a hand in it."[60] It caused a great sensation in Washington. In March 1947, seizing upon Kennan's assertion, Truman declared:

> At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life…. Our way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression…. The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their

[57] Luce, "The American Century," p. 168.
[58] Charles E. Nathanson, "The Social Construction of the Soviet Threat: A Study in the Politics of Representation," *Alternatives* 13, no. 4 (1988), pp. 445-450. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*, New York: Atheneum, 1992, p. 349.
[59] According to Kennan, a "traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity," together with Leninist interpretation of Marxist dogma, led the Soviet Union to "seek security only in patient but deadly struggle for total destruction rival power, never in compacts and compromises with it." George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, New York: Bantam Books, 1967, pp. 586-587.
[60] Nathanson, "The Social Construction of the Soviet Threat," p. 457.

> freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world – and we shall surely endanger the welfare of this Nation.[61]

While this discourse of a threatening Soviet Other did little to solve the problems facing Truman, it drastically simplified them. By now America had returned to the familiar binary opposition between an America and an external threat to it. What followed is well-known: a Cold War between a U.S.-led capitalist alliance and a Soviet-led Communist bloc. A war which, as will be illustrated below, was justified, sustained, and intensified by the continued discursive constructions of self and Other in the U.S. establishment (and, one may add, in the Soviet Union as well).

In early 1950, to drum up support for U.S. Cold War policy, an important document in U.S. Cold War history, National Security Council document number sixty-eight (NSC-68) came into being. This document began with a routine exercise of "scripting the self" in terms of "the fulfillment of the republic, the fundamental purpose of the nation, God-given rights, moral codes, the principles of European civilization, the fear of cultural and spiritual loss, and the responsibilities and duties thrust upon the gleaming example of America."[62] Looked through the lens of this self-fashioning, the Soviet Union appeared increasingly untrustworthy, abnormal and dangerous. As NSC-68 argued,

> unlike previous aspirants to hegemony, [the Soviet Union] is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world…. The Kremlin regards the United States as the only major threat to the achievement of its fundamental design [… and the] implacable purpose of the slave state to eliminate the challenge of freedom has placed the two great powers at opposite poles.[63]

Not all within the U.S. establishment agreed with such an extremely dichotomised, pessimistic interpretation of U.S.-Soviet relations. Henry Stimson, former Secretary of War in the Truman administration, wrote in 1947 that "I do not share the gloomy fear of some that we are now engaged in the preliminaries of an inevitable conflict."[64] Interestingly, even Kennan himself later became aware of the powerful constitutive effect of those U.S. discourses on the Soviet Union:

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[61] Quoted in R.J. Johnston, "The United States, the 'Triumph of Democracy' and the 'End of History,'" in David Slater and Peter J. Taylor eds., *The American Century: Consensus and Coercion in the Project of American Power*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1999, p. 150.
[62] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 31.
[63] Quoted in Chace and Carr, *America Invulnerable*, p. 248.
[64] Quoted in *Ibid*., p. 304.

> In this way not only is there created, for planning purposes, the image of the totally inhuman and totally malevolent adversary, but this image is reconjured daily, week after week, month after month, year after year, until it takes on every feature of flesh and blood and becomes the daily companion of those who cultivate it, so that any attempt on anyone's part to deny its reality appears as an act of treason or frivolity.[65]

In this sense, he rightly ascribed the influence of his long telegram to "the subjective state of readiness on the part of Washington officialdom to recognize this or that feature" of the Soviet Union.[66] Thus, from the start, U.S. knowledge of the Soviet Other was prodded by a political need for a clear American self-identity and by some vested strategic interests in solving problems in a violent, destructive way.[67] As Bruce Cumings puts it, "the ultimate force shaping scholarly studies of what used to be called 'the non-Western world' is economic and political power."[68]

It is worth noting that on the basis of similar conceptions of America's international role and strategic interests, a parallel construction of China as the 'Red Menace' was also under way. As Ezra Vogel notes, "During the cold war, Americans were preoccupied with their national role in leading the world's alliance against communism. In the view then dominant in the United States, China was a communist nation and a part of the world Communist alliance, and US China specialists had to work within this context."[69] Indeed, it was in response to this specific political need that the modern field of China studies was born, as a result of the marriage between Sinology and social sciences, with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency) acting as a midwife. This marriage, as John K. Fairbank put it, "came only as a shotgun wedding during and after World War II."[70]

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[65] George F. Kennan, "The United States and the Soviet Union, 1917-1976," in William P. Bundy ed., *Two Hundred Years of American Foreign Policy*, New York: New York University Press, 1977, p. 165.
[66] Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, p. 310.
[67] This is not to argue that the Soviet Union was blameless in the course of the Cold War. At some stages it was engaged in similar actions of dichotomising the world in terms of self against Other. This, however, I argue, does not make the U.S. less guilty in sparking off the Cold War.
[68] Bruce Cumings, "Boundary Displacement: Area Studies and International Studies during and after the Cold War," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 29, no. 1 (1997), p. 6.
[69] Ezra F. Vogel, "Contemporary China Studies in North America: Marginals in a Superpower," in Lucien Bianco et al., *The Development of Contemporary China Studies*, Tokyo: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for Unesco, 1994, p. 189.
[70] John K. Fairbank, *China Perceived: Images & Policies in Chinese-American Relations*, London: André Deutsch, 1976, p. 214. On the extraordinary connection between U.S. intelligence and military agencies and the creation of foreign area studies (as well as international studies) at leading American universities, see Cumings, "Boundary Displacement," pp. 6-26.

Inasmuch as "area studies were firmly rooted in the political demands of the time,"[71] area studies, particularly with their intelligence function, came back to serve and legitimate the strategic interests from which they arose. Thus, the 'knowledge' that the Soviet Union could only be stopped by "force of arms"[72] enabled Congress to quickly approve the $400 million aid to Greece and Turkey. To 'save' Europe from Communist aggression, Congress passed the Marshall Plan, a $13.2 billion economic rescue package in Europe. At the same time, a series of military pacts aiming at containing the Soviet Union such as the Rio Treaty and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) also came into existence.

For such unprecedented militarisation of U.S. foreign policy to be sustained, however, the self/Other discursive strategy had to be constantly deployed. In June 1950, when NSC-68 still encountered scepticism from some quarters of the U.S. establishment, the Korean War erupted. Zealous U.S. Cold Warriors quickly jumped to the conclusion that this war was not a local civil conflict, but represented the Communist crossing over the 'new frontier,' imagery which recalled the 'barbarian' threat of the early Indian wars.[73] In this context, American leaders believed in the necessity of confronting it in order to demonstrate the strength of the free world. In addition to swift U.S. military intervention in the Korean War and military build-up elsewhere in Asia, in September 1950, the Truman administration finally approved the radically bellicose plan suggested by NSC-68. Closely following the recommendations, Truman went ahead with the building and testing of the superbomb, submitted the $50 billion defence budget (nearly four times of the original $13 billion budget of six months before), doubled the number of air groups to ninety-five, increased army personnel by 50 percent to 3.5 million men, and established new bases in Morocco, Libya, and Saudi Arabia. It is little wonder that the Korean War was welcomed by the advocates of NSC-68. As one of Truman's advisors put it later: in June 1950 "we are sweating over it [NSC-68] and then…thank God Korea came along."[74]

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[71] Holly Carter and John Frankenstein, "The Political Culture of China-Watching," in Richard J. Samuels and Myron Weiner eds., *The Political Culture of Foreign Area and International Studies: Essays in Honor of Lucian W. Pye* (Washington, DC: Brassey's (US), 1992), p. 77.

[72] The words of Dean Acheson, quoted in Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750 to the Present*, 2nd ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1994, p. 470.

[73] Chace and Carr, *America Invulnerable*, pp. 251-252.

[74] Michael Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 132. Similarly, someone commented to Dean Acheson in 1954 that, in terms of helping the administration to achieve its goals, "Korea came along and saved us." The former secretary and the architect of this document answered simply, "I think you can say that." Chace and Carr, *America Invulnerable*, p. 249.

The Korean War resulted in more than 2 million casualties. In spite of its magnitude, it was merely a prelude to a still larger 'frontier war' that would follow in Vietnam. The new war, perhaps not coincidentally, started to escalate into a full-scale conflict during the presidency of John F. Kennedy, a man who invoked the persuasive power of 'The New Frontier' as well as the age-old American self-image of 'a city on the hill' to win the White House. In his acceptance speech of the Democratic Party's nomination as candidate for President on 16 July 1960, Kennedy asked his audience to see him as a new kind of frontiersman. But to make that self-image credible, a new kind of wilderness and threat had to be in place. Hence:

> I stand tonight facing west on what was once the last frontier. From the lands that stretch 3000 miles behind me, the pioneers of old gave up their safety, their comfort and sometimes their lives to build a new world here in the West…. [But] the problems are not all solved and the battles are not all won, and we stand today on the edge of a new frontier—the frontier of the 1960s, a frontier of unknown opportunities and paths, a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats….[75]

As Richard Slotkin observes, "the choice of the Frontier as symbol was not simply a device for trade-marking the candidate. It was an authentic metaphor, descriptive of *the way in which they hoped to use political power and the kinds of struggle in which they wished to engage* [emphasis added]."[76] Hence the Vietnam War, a war which, however scarcely relevant to U.S. security, became a new frontier war for the U.S. to take advantage of opportunities and fend off threats. Like his assassinated predecessor, Lyndon B. Johnson shared the same enthusiasm of going to war, which was based on a similar projection of America's mission and responsibility to the world. In *My Hope for America*, Johnson wrote:

> We have lived so long with crisis and danger that we accept, almost without discussion, the assumption of American concern for disorders that threaten the peace in other parts of the world. Yet this is a unique responsibility—unique for America and unique in history. First, we accepted this responsibility because at one time no other nation could do it. For the last twenty years, only under the shadow of our strength could friends keep their freedom. Second, we have learned, at painful cost, that we can no longer wait for the tides of conflict to touch our shores. Aggression and upheaval, in any part of the world, carry the seeds of destruction to our own freedom and to civilization itself.[77]

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[75] Quoted in Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 2.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[77] Lyndon B. Johnson, *My Hope for America*, London: Heinemann, 1964, pp. 56-7.

In line with this reasoning, in 1967, Johnson declared that Asia had become "the outer frontier of disorder" to be civilised.[78] Extremely confident in America's military might as well as moral superiority, Johnson carried on the war and turned Vietnam into a new colossal battlefield of 'civilisation' against 'barbarism.' American troops were sent to this new 'Indian country,' conducting search-and-destroy missions often called a game of 'Cowboys and Indians.'

Vietnam turned out to be the United States' longest war and one of the bloodiest in history. What the Vietnam War achieved was above all wholesale destruction and tremendous human losses. Some 58,000 US servicemen were killed and 150,000 more wounded; on the other side, 2 million Vietnamese died, and twice that number were wounded.[79] Three decades later, the sheer magnitude of the American effort to destroy an 'enemy' is still mind-boggling.[80] All this, it can be argued, could not have been possible without the construction of the Vietnamese anti-colonial struggle as a 'frontier war,' a new savage Indian war, and a war between totalitarian aggressors ('them') and the free world ('us'). In this sense, the Vietnam War was by no means an extreme aberration in U.S. foreign policy. As the famed scholar John Fairbank correctly argued, "Vietnam has been only an updated use of gunboat diplomacy, in lineal succession to the American expedition to Korea in 1871 or the suppression of Boxerism in 1900."[81]

By the first half of the 1970s, amid the Vietnam debacle, the oil crisis in the Middle East, and a collapsing Bretton-Woods system, a chastened United States realised that it could not continue to seek supremacy on its own, particularly using its military power alone. In this context, the U.S. search for global dominance took what was later termed a neoliberal turn, as reflected in the rise of neoliberal institutionalism in Western IR theory. In this latest move, the U.S. actively sought to maintain its global hegemony by stressing the importance of 'non-state' actors (mainly U.S. multinational corporations) in the global order and developing a mechanism of shared leadership with

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[78] Quoted in Thorne, *American Political Culture and the Asian Frontier*, p. 352.
[79] LaFeber, *The American Age*, p. 668.
[80] As Stephen Ambrose and Douglas Brinkley write: "First the headlines proclaimed that America had dropped more bombs on tiny Vietnam than in the entire Pacific Theater in World War II. By 1967 it was more bombs than in the European Theater. Then more than in the whole of World War II. Finally, by 1970, more bombs had been dropped on Vietnam than on all targets in the whole of human history. Napalm poured into the villages while weed killers defoliated the countryside. Never had any nation relied so completely on industrial production and material superiority to wage a war." Stephen E. Ambrose and Douglas G. Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938*, New York: Penguin Books, 1997, 8th ed., p. 204.
[81] Fairbank, *China Perceived*, p. 95.

other Western industrial countries through the channel of international institutions.[82] Such a policy shift was exemplified by the creation of the Trilateral Commission, with Zbigniew Brzezinski (later to become President Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor) as its first executive secretary and director. In an article in *Foreign Affairs*, Brzezinski wrote: "without closer American-European-Japanese cooperation the major problems of today cannot be effectively tackled, and ... *the active promotion of such trilateral cooperation must now become the central priority of US policy*."[83]

Yet, the neoliberal agenda had a rough ride through most of the 1970s, partly because U.S. accommodation with the Soviet Union and the constraints incurred by multilateral institutions were frequently seen as a sign of American weakness. On the eve of the 1980 presidential election, some hawkish U.S. policy-makers had grown uneasy about a perceived decline of U.S. hegemony and the 'tarnished' American dream. Amid this angst, President Ronald Reagan, former California Governor and actor, set out to reassure the nation by resorting again to the established discursive magic of American self imaginaries. To rekindle the 'American dream,' Reagan went out of his way to cite John Winthrop's famous phrase of "a city on a hill" and quoted from Thomas Paine that "we have it within our power to begin the world all over again."[84] At the same time, he cast the Soviet 'Other' in a new light to account for America's sense of 'defeatism': "the Soviet Union underlies all the unrest that is going on" and was "the focus of evil in the modern world… an evil empire."[85]

In this way, Reagan enjoyed almost a free hand in boosting military spending by more than 40 percent between 1980 and 1984 and was able to embark on the highly costly Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI or Star Wars), a project tagged as the 'high frontier.'[86] In practice, these moves, combined with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, effectively locked the two superpowers into a new round of the Cold War in the late 1970s and early 1980s.[87]

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[82] See, Jim George, "Creating (Neoliberal) Globalisation: The U.S. and Symbiotic Power Relations in the Post-World War Two Era," Paper prepared for the 43rd Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, 24-27 March, 2002, pp. 1-44.
[83] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "U.S. Foreign Policy: The Search for Focus," *Foreign Affairs* 51, no. 4 (1973), p. 723.
[84] Quoted in McEvoy-Levy, *American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy*, p. 31.
[85] Quoted in LaFeber, *The American Age*, p. 705.
[86] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 145.
[87] See Fred Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*, 2nd ed., London: Verson, 1986; and Simon Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War: The Discourse of Politics*, London: Pinter, 1990.

Self/Other Constructions as Power Practice (III): U.S. Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era

Symbolised by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the Cold War came to an end. Just as the closure of the North American frontier had not proved to be the consummation of American 'manifest destiny,' insofar as U.S. global identity hinges on absolute certainty and security, it seemed that neither the end of the Cold War nor the disintegration of the Soviet Union marked the final fulfillment of the American self. Instead, American foreign policy continued to be characterised by a series of U.S. efforts to re-invent self/Other dichotomies in the new global settings.

For a moment, the end of the Cold War produced a sense of euphoria in the United States, exemplified by Fukuyama's famous proclamation of the 'End of History.' This optimistic assessment seemed to conclude that liberal democratic ideals, the 'essences' of the American self, had finally had a global reach. In this context, there emerged anew an isolationist view on post-Cold War U.S. grand strategy. Given the disappearance of the Soviet threat to the U.S. national interest, while still believing that America was "uniquely situated to lead the world," neo-isolationists argued that the U.S. should begin to cash in the 'peace dividend' and seek to maintain its leadership mainly through moral examples, rather than direct political entanglement or military intervention.[88]

Others, liberals and conservatives alike, saw the end of the Cold War not as an occasion for retreat but as a great opportunity for America to finally shape the world in its own image once and for all, via, for example, the reinforcement of multilateral institutions, the enlargement of the democratic union (e.g., NATO), and proactive and unilateralist intervention in global disputes if necessary. Harvard Professor Joseph S. Nye for one was convinced that "The United States has both the traditional hard power resources and the new soft power resources to meet the challenges of transnational interdependence…. The United States remains the largest and richest power with the greatest capacity to shape the future."[89] In a more blatant manner, the neoconservative columnist Charles Krauthammer envisioned the post-Cold War American role this way:

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[88] See, for example, Patrick J. Buchanan, "America First—and Second, and Third," in Owen Harries ed., *America's Purpose: New Visions of U.S. Foreign Policy*, San Francisco, CA: ICS Press, 1991, pp. 23-34.
[89] Nye, *Bound to Lead*, pp. 260-261.

> For reasons of both American interests and American values, the responsibility to make democracy possible was a historical absolute…. A great power undertakes great battles because no one else can…. If the new age dawns and some new national purpose is to be offered and sold to the American people, I suggest that we go all the way and stop at nothing short of *universal dominion* [emphasis added].[90]

As mentioned before, the American self-identity had for long been defined in contrast to Other, be it the North American wilderness, the American Indians, Third World disorders, the Communist menace, or the Soviet 'Evil Empire.' Thus, if there was little left to fight for, the foundation of 'America as destiny' and Western unity could become questionable. Owen Harries observed that "The political 'West' is not a natural construct but a highly artificial one. It took the presence of a life-threatening, overtly hostile 'East' to bring it into existence and to maintain its unity. It is extremely doubtful whether it can now survive the disappearance of that enemy."[91] At home, without a threatening Other in place to serve as a rallying cry for the nation, it was feared that racial animosity would flare up, the sense of community would disappear, and worries about job security would override national security concerns, thereby giving rise to a sense of new pessimism.[92] Consequently, there was an anxiety about whether the U.S. could find a new comfortable niche for a secure national identity. As Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson observed:

> The cold war may have been won, but what did victory hold out for the American future? …. In a world in which the totalitarian challenge had so visibly failed and in which the institutions of freedom appeared almost everywhere ascendant, would the United States still be needed as freedom's great champion and defender? And if we were no longer so needed, would we continue to have a distinctive role?[93]

The sense of loss was particularly acute in some quarters of American society, such as the military-industrial complex, the national security bureaucracy, the intelligence community, and think tanks. For example, in 1989 and 1990 the Bush Sr. administration admitted to confusion associated with a loss of the familiar conceptual frameworks for understanding and ordering U.S. foreign policy.[94] Unless such conceptual frameworks were restored, many of those decision-makers themselves could be rendered politically irrelevant in the light of the dawn of a 'new age.' As journalist

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[90] Charles Krauthammer, "Universal Dominion," in Owen Harries ed., *America's Purpose: New Visions of U.S. Foreign Policy*. San Francisco, CA: ICS Press, 1991, pp. 9, 13.
[91] Owen Harries, "The Collapse of 'the West,'" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (1993), p. 42.
[92] Charles William Maynes, "The New Pessimism," *Foreign Policy*, no. 100 (1995), pp. 32-49.
[93] Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *The Imperial Temptation: The New World Order and America's Purpose*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992, pp. 2-3.
[94] McEvoy-Levy, *American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy*, p. 144.

Tom Bethell put it, "'Board game' conferences to discuss choke points and sea lanes will become harder to find, and those who used to attend them will have to find another line of work."[95]

At this juncture, with a virtual green light from the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990.[96] For many American strategists and policy planners, this invasion gave the previously illusive Other an immediately palpable shape.[97] As George Bush Sr. remarked with a visible sense of relief on 28 October, "The world is once again faced with the challenge of perfect clarity. Saddam Hussein has given us a whole plateful of clarity, because today, in the Persian Gulf, what we are looking at is good and evil, right and wrong."[98] With the newly found dichotomy between "the rule of law" and "the rule of the jungle," he was able to flesh out his vision for the "New World Order."[99] As a code for a renewed U.S. hegemony, the "New World Order" reactivated the idea of America as "the only nation on this earth that could assemble the forces of peace."[100] Indeed, as James Der Derian notes, "it was the Gulf War that gave the 'new world order' its discursive punch," and it reflected nothing more than "the pathological need to construct and destroy a lesser enemy to restore and revive US hegemony in the 'new world order.' Iraq served its purpose well as the enemy other which redefined our own essential identities."[101]

As the 'Iraq threat' began to be blown out of proportion, not only was any genuine understanding of Iraq out of the question,[102] but America's Iraq policy began taking on a violent dimension. In this context, any alternative to ruthless war, which clearly had existed, was categorically rejected, as in the words of Bush Sr.: "no negotiations, no

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[95] Quoted in Ted Galen Carpenter, *A Search for Enemies: America's Alliances after the Cold War*, Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 1992, p. 140.
[96] John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy*, no. 134 (2003), p. 54.
[97] This should not be misconstrued as an attempt to exonerate Iraq from its invasion of a sovereign state. The point is rather that this aggression, merely because of its perceived threat to American interests, was singled out as an excuse by the United States to try to consolidate its control over the Middle East, and particularly over oil supply.
[98] Quoted in McEvoy-Levy, *American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy*, p. 80.
[99] Bush's statement, quoted in Lawrence Freedman, "The Gulf War and the New World Order," *Survival* 33, no. 3 (1991), pp. 195-196.
[100] Tucker and Hendrickson, *The Imperial Temptation*, pp. 29-30.
[101] James Der Derian, *Antidiplomacy: Spies, Terror, Speed, and War*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992, pp. 161, 198. Moreover, in painting this conflict as a "one-on-one, American-Iraqi, George Bush vs. Saddam Hussein confrontation," Bush also secured his personal identity as a manly leader, after suffering from his "wimp" image during the 1988 presidential primaries. See McEvoy-Levy, *American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy*, p. 89; and Ambrose and Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism*, p. 387.
[102] See Fred Halliday, "The Gulf War 1990-1991 and the Study of International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 20, no. 2 (1994), pp. 114-115.

compromises, no attempts at face-saving and no rewards for aggression." [103] Consequently, what we saw in the Persian Gulf was an inferno of destruction ('Operation Desert Storm') unleashed by America and its allies. In punishing the Iraqi Other, U.S. troops used radioactive 'nuclear bullets' (depleted uranium munitions), napalm, and cluster bombs against Iraqis. On the 'Highway of Death' from Kuwait to Basra in south Iraq, a seven mile long convoy of fleeing soldiers, civilians, and foreign workers were bombed by American forces. The U.S. army estimated that 25,000 died in those highway attacks.[104]

In this sense, the Gulf War amounts to a post-Cold War version of the savage Indian wars, conducted in the same attempt to secure a coherent self-identity of 'America as destiny' through the violent punishment of a designated Other. The easy victory over Saddam, it was believed, not only served as a spectacular warning to other potential 'threats' in the region and beyond, but also convinced the U.S. that it had left the 'ghost of Vietnam' behind.[105] Indeed, as an American commentator acclaimed in 1999, "Bush's leadership in forging a winning team in the Persian Gulf War was a vigorous reaffirmation of our imperial responsibility."[106]

Yet, like the closure of the American frontier and the end of the Cold War, the quick defeat of Iraq in the Gulf War again produced the same paradoxical result for the American self-imagination. For many, particularly those who continue to paint the United States as the indispensable nation in need of absolute certainty and security, the absence of a certain enemy, instead of signifying opportunities, pointed to a rather threatening scenario of uncertainty. In this context, "reproducing the identity of 'the United States' and containing challenges to it are likely to require new discourses of danger."[107] That is, *the current identity crisis of the United States has to be solved through a re-invention of Other*.

It was against this background that the conventional themes of Otherness such as 'anarchy,' 'Old World disorder' and 'inferior races/civilisations' were once again in

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[103] Quoted in Tucker and Hendrickson, *The Imperial Temptation*, p. 39.
[104] See Valdas Anelauskas, *Discovering America As It Is*, Atlanta, GA: Clarity Press, 1999, pp. 428-429.
[105] With the death of less than 300 American soldiers (compared to the cost of about 100,000 Iraqi lives) in the Gulf War, George Bush Sr. once exclaimed that "By God, we've kicked the Vietnam Syndrome once and for all." See Der Derian, *Antidiplomacy*, p. 177.
[106] Lefever, *America's Imperial Burden*, p. 118. For similar triumphalist sentiments, see Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1991), pp. 23-32; Charles Krauthammer, "Bless Our Pax Americana," *The Washington Post*, March 22, 1991, p. A25; Joshua Muravchik, "At Last, Pax Americana," *The New York Times*, January 24, 1991, p. A19; and Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Selective Global Commitment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 4 (1991), pp. 1-20.
[107] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 170.

vogue. One such major threat to U.S. security, according to John Mearsheimer, is the end of the Cold War bipolar stability.[108] For Samuel Huntington, the danger lies not in the old game of geopolitical struggle among nations, but in even grander clashes among civilisations, particularly between the U.S.-led Western civilisation and the Islamic and Confucian civilisations.[109] Meanwhile, for Robert D. Kaplan, it is the "increasing lawlessness" as exemplified in West Africa that looks particularly ominous.[110]

At a more concrete level, shortly after the Gulf War, Charles Krauthammer identified the new enemy of America and the West as "the small outlaw states, the Iraqs of the future." With the possession of weapons of mass destruction, "relatively small peripheral and backward states will be able to emerge rapidly as threats not only to regional, but also world security."[111] During the Clinton presidency, America's primary Other was 'rogue states.' When George W. Bush came to power, it became 'rogue *nations*,' which served as "the cornerstone of Mr Bush's still unstable foreign and security edifice."[112] And in addition, there remains a lingering fear of the collapsed Soviet Union.[113]

In this context, the connection between the construction of Other and neoconservatives' vision of the American self merits particular attention. Neoconservatives, a term originally referring to a number of self-styled intellectuals and high-ranking Reagan administration members, are characterised primarily by their shared vision of America's international role in terms of "benevolent global hegemony" based on "a neo-Reaganite foreign policy of military supremacy and moral confidence."[114] With such self-construction, it follows that "no rival superpower is allowed to emerge in Western Europe, Asia or the territories of the former Soviet Union," an objective which should be obtained by an aggressive, unilateral, and military approach if necessary. First outlined in the leaked classified document the "Defense

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[108] John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990), pp. 5-56.
[109] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, London: Touchstone Books, 1996.
[110] Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *The Atlantic Monthly* 273, no. 2 (1994), pp. 44-76.
[111] Charles Krauthammer, "Do We Really Need a New Enemy?" *Time*, March 23, 1992, p. 76; Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," p. 32.
[112] "Bush Needs the Bad Guys," *The Guardian Weekly*, March 15-21, 2001, p. 14. On the relationship between the construction of "Other" and America's drive for building national missile defence system, see Tan See Seng, "What Fear Hath Wrought: Missile Hysteria and the Writing of 'America,'" Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Working Paper No. 28, Singapore: Nanyang Technological University, 2002, pp. 1-28.
[113] Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "American Strategy after Bipolarity," *International Affairs* 66, no. 3 (1990), pp. 513-521.
[114] Kristol and Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," pp. 18-32.

Planning Guidance" drafted by the Pentagon (by Lewis Libby and Paul Wolfowitz) in early 1992,[115] this 'strategic instinct' was further taken up by the 'Project for the New American Century' (PNAC), a Washington-based neoconservative organisation founded in 1997. In September 2000, its report, *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century* unequivocally reaffirmed that the Defense Planning Guidance "provided a blueprint for maintaining U.S. preeminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests."[116]

Characteristic of this particular American self-imagination, I argue, is an intolerance of Otherness at its most extreme. This, for example, has allowed Robert Kagan and William Kristol to identify a "present danger" to America, which was "one of declining strength, flagging will and confusion about our role in the world." They went on: "It is a danger, to be sure, of our own devising. Yet, if neglected, it is likely to yield very real external dangers, nearly as threatening in their own way as the Soviet Union was a quarter century ago."[117] This identification of an open-ended danger to the United States was shared by a high-ranking Pentagon official, who, in arguing for the continuation of U.S. Cold War alliances, tellingly asked, "If we pull out, who knows what nervousness will result?"[118]

While a flurry of attempts to redefine new threats to ('our') security emerged in the wake of the end of the Cold War, these newly identified 'threats' were either too vague to effectively galvanise the public imagination or too trivial to warrant the call for continued U.S. global hegemony. It is in this context that attention began turning to China. The China threat, as Bruce Cumings explains, is basically "a metaphor for an enormously expensive Pentagon that has lost its bearings and that requires a formidable 'renegade state' to define its mission (Islam is rather vague, and Iran lacks necessary weight)."[119]

As noted earlier, the U.S. construction of Other in the post-Cold War era does not always take the realist line of identifying a (geopolitical) threat. Frequently, the U.S. is

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[115] See Patrick E. Tyler, "U.S. Strategy Plan Calls For Insuring No Rivals Develop a One-Superpower World," *The New York Times*, March 8, 1992, p. 11.
[116] The Project for the New American Century, *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century*, September 2000, p. ii, <http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>.
[117] Robert Kagan and William Kristol, "The Present Danger," *The National Interest*, no. 59 (2000), p. 58.
[118] Benjamin Schwarz, "Permanent Interests, Endless Threats: Cold War Continuities and NATO Enlargement," *World Policy Journal* 14, no. 3 (1997), p. 30.
[119] Cumings, "The World Shakes China," p.39.

thrilled by its liberal vision of opportunities of free trade and democratic enlargement elsewhere. Among such opportunities, for instance, are the expansion of free trade zones in North America, the discovery of rich oil reserves in West Africa, and, above all, the emergence of a lucrative Chinese market and a more open and Western-influenced Chinese society. Within such liberal imageries, however, the self/Other frame of reference has not been abandoned, but merely made less visible. In fact, in the eyes of U.S. officials, these countries and regions remain as Other, objects ready for 'our' exploitation and/or heroic experimentation in the names of modernisation, democratisation, and/or nation-building, rather than as equal subjects with similar rights, needs, and concerns. Indeed, the United States is so well aware of this nature that it often tries to conceal the linkage. For instance, on the one hand, the second Bush administration is delighted about the prospect of African oil playing an important role in satisfying 'our energy security,' with Secretary of State Colin Powell promptly announcing that "we're here to stay." On the other hand, to avoid generating a perception that it cares only about Africa's resources, the administration has decided not to trumpet publicly its interest in African oil.[120]

Nevertheless, at the core of this liberal vision of Other remain economic exploitation and social, cultural, and ecological destruction, which are carried out more by the tyrannical force of the free market than by military means. For example, a coalition of environment, religious and development groups has recently produced two reports showing that Africa's biggest development project, a 1,000km, $4.4bn oil pipeline from Chad to Cameroon, which will provide income of $4.7bn for the US oil giant Exxon, has jeopardised the interests of people along its entire length: water supplies have been damaged, pygmies have lost hunting lands, farmers have lost land and crops, and an influx of immigrant workers has brought child prostitution and the spread of AIDS. It has also caused inflation, doubling the price of basic foods and causing malnutrition among the poor.[121] Thus, as this example has illustrated, with the American self/Other construction firmly in place, U.S. post-Cold War practices have not changed the violent nature which was characteristic of its foreign policy in the previous savage Indian wars and the Cold War. As Campbell explains:

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[120] James Dao, "In Quietly Courting Africa, White House Likes Dowry," *The New York Times*, September 19, 2002, p. A1.
[121] Paul Brown, "Chad Oil Pipeline Condemned for Harming Poor," *The Guardian Weekly*, October 3-9, 2002, p. 7.

> If we understand the cold war to be a struggle related to the production and reproduction of identity, the popularly heralded belief that we are witnessing the end of the cold war embodies a misunderstanding: while the objects of established post-1945 strategies of otherness may no longer be plausible candidates for enmity, their transformation has not by itself altered the entailments of identity that they satisfied.[122]

Self/Other Constructions as Power Practice (IV): U.S. Foreign Policy in the 'War on Terrorism'

Amid the U.S. attempts to re-draw the boundaries between self and Other into the new century, three planes hijacked by terrorists struck New York and Washington on 11 September 2001, with a fourth hijacked plane crashing into the ground in Pennsylvania. From that moment on, the threat of terrorism has become the rallying cry for American security policy.

With the horrific images of the burning and collapsing twin towers of the World Trade Centre replayed over and over on the TV screen, terrorism as a new threat seems all too real. While the danger posed by terrorists is indeed beyond doubt, the dominant meaning assigned to 'terrorism' in the aftermath of September 11 is nevertheless subject to discursive construction, if only for the sake of the particular kind of American self-identity envisioned by neoconservatives to be readily enacted and deployed in global political practice. In this context, the graphic images of terrorist attacks began to take on a meaning that went far beyond what happened on that tragic morning. For example, George W. Bush goes out of his way to categorise terrorists as "the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century," declaring that "by sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions—by abandoning every value except the will to power—they follow in the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism." By affording terrorism a fixed meaning of 'pure evil' beyond any hope of redemption, Bush is able to simultaneously carve out for the U.S. an identity of universal good. Consequently, it follows that the war on terrorism, as Bush argues, is not "just America's fight…. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom."[123] In his 2002 State of the Union address, utilising rhetoric reminiscent of Truman's March 1947 speech on two opposite

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[122] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 169.
[123] Bush's Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People on 20 September, 2001, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>.

ways of life, Bush made such a discursive contrast between 'them' and 'us' more explicit:

> Our enemies send other people's children on missions of suicide and murder. They embrace tyranny and death as a cause and a creed. We stand for a different choice, made long ago, on the day of our founding. We affirm it again today. We choose freedom and the dignity of every life.[124]

In this way, not only can America's benevolent global hegemony be justified, but Bush himself has "acquired a kind of certainty that perhaps eluded him before. He is sure about what he should be doing."[125] In this sense, as John Pilger puts it, the "threat of 'terrorism', some of it real, most of it invented, is the new Red Scare."[126]

But now as then, by viewing the world as "full of terrorists and rogue regimes dedicated to our destruction and not responsive to therapy or social work,"[127] the U.S. establishment has created a deadly dichotomy of self and Other that can only be resolved through an Armageddon-like violent struggle, a struggle in which every nation is now required to take side: "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."[128]

While the Bush Jr. administration easily got the war they wanted in Afghanistan, for a war with Iraq to be legitimated, discursive strategy had to be specifically honed to depict Saddam's Iraq as equally, or even more, dangerous as al-Qaeda. Not long after 'September 11,' this strategy had been set in motion. Indeed, some Washington hawks, centred around PNAC and other neoconservative institutes and foundations, had been arguing for removing Saddam from power ever since 1990-91 the Gulf War: "The only acceptable strategy is one that *eliminates the possibility* that Iraq will be able to use or threaten to use weapons of mass destruction [emphasis added]," a position most clearly stated in an open letter to President Clinton in January 1998.[129] In this context, it was clear that the 'Iraq threat' was not simply out there, but rather was created through the discursive lens of U.S. self-identity in terms of the 'indispensable nation' with a 'natural right' to absolute certainty and security. But knowing that the 'Iraq threat' they envisioned could not explode on its own, those advocates were prepared to wait for a

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[124] "President Delivers State of the Union Address," <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/print/20020129-11.html>.
[125] Frank Bruni, "For Bush, a Mission and a Role in History," *The New York Times*, September 22, 2001, p. A1.
[126] John Pilger, "The Colder War," *Daily Mirror*, January 29, 2002, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/allnews/page.cfm?objectid=11574035&method=full>.
[127] Thomas Friedman, "Colin Powell's Eyebrows," *The New York Times*, November 10, 2002, p. 4.13.
[128] Bush's Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People on 20 September 2001.
[129] Elliot Abrams, Richard L. Armitage, et al., "Letter to President Clinton, January 26, 1998," <http://www.newamericancentury.org/iraqclintonletter.htm>.

spark, or in their own words, "some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor."[130]

Now that the spark was in hand, and that they had been back in power (many of the PNAC members, most notably, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz, hold top positions in the new Bush administration), they believed the wait was over. The morning after the September 11 attacks, even before it became clear who might be responsible, at a Cabinet meeting Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld singled out Saddam's Iraq as "a principal target of the first round in the war against terrorism." It was temporarily spared only because Colin Powell persuaded Bush that "public opinion has to be prepared before a move against Iraq is possible."[131] What Powell meant by preparing public opinion was really a euphemism for Othering Iraq. In an attempt to push for war, Powell asserted with remarkable certainty before the U.N. Security Council that "the facts and Iraq's behavior show that Saddam Hussein and his regime are concealing their efforts to produce more weapons of mass destruction…. In fact, they can produce enough dry biological agent in a single month to kill thousands upon thousands of people."[132] To make his case about the naivety of dealing with Saddam by non-military means, Dick Cheney insisted that "Saddam has perfected the game of cheat and retreat, and is very skilled in the art of denial and deception."[133] For former CIA Middle East analyst Kenneth Pollack, Saddam was simply irrational and "unintentionally suicidal," and was "a risk-taker who plays dangerous games without realizing how dangerous they truly are."[134] At the end of the day, captivated by the web of meanings they themselves had spun, the American political establishment and a large percentage of the American public were convinced that a war with Iraq was no longer a choice, but a reality. As Representative Tom DeLay of Texas argued, "The question we face today is not whether to go to war, for war was thrust upon us."[135]

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[130] *Rebuilding America's Defense*, p. 51.

[131] See <http://pilger.carlton.com/print/124759>. On 17 September 2001, six days after the terrorist attacks, President Bush signed a document marked "TOP SECRET" that outlined the plan for going to war in Afghanistan as part of a global campaign against terrorism. Almost as a footnote, the document also directed the Pentagon to begin planning military options for an invasion of Iraq, senior administration officials said. See Glenn Kessler, "U.S. Decision On Iraq Has Puzzling Past: Opponents of War Wonder When, How Policy Was Set," *The Washington Post* January 12, 2003, p. A1.

[132] "U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell Addresses the U.N. Security Council," February 5, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030205-1.html>.

[133] "Vice President Speaks at VFW 103rd National Convention," <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html>.

[134] Kenneth M. Pollack, "Why Iraq Can't Be Deterred," *The New York Times*, September 26, 2002, p. A29.

[135] Alison Mitchell and Carl Hulse, "Congress Authorizes Bush to Use Force Against Iraq, Creating a Broad Mandate," *The New York Times*, October 11, 2002, p. A1.

While it might well have been a nuisance for U.S. strategic planners, Iraq, as we know it today, did not constitute an immediate, uncontainable threat to its region, much less to America. So far, neither the allegation of its collaborative link to al Qaeda nor of its weapons of mass destruction has been substantiated. Indeed, in Cairo on February 24, 2001, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell himself said: "He [Saddam Hussein] has not developed any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass destruction. He is unable to use conventional power against his neighbors."[136] At that time, national security advisor Condoleezza Rice held almost identical views.[137] However, this assessment changed dramatically after 'September 11,' not because Iraq's threat had increased overnight, but because the terrorist attacks provided the so-called 'opportunity of ages' for the American hawks to go after their long-cherished though largely unspoken designs of controlling Middle Eastern oil resources and maintaining a firm grip on that region.

Let me make it clear that the Saddam regime *was* ruthless and dangerous, especially for the people under its control. Yet, in the lead up to U.S. assaults on Iraq from 20 March 2003, what seems to me equally, if not more dangerous, was the mentality of paranoia which facilitated the construction of Iraq as an imminent threat, a mentality which is derived from the modernist tradition of self-imagination in terms of the rational knowing subject and a Manichean obsession with good versus evil. Indeed, by claiming to know for sure something is a threat even before it emerges as such, the United States becomes, as it were, the rational knowing subject *par excellence*. It is precisely on the basis of this rationalist claim to 'knowledge' of threatening Others that there has emerged the Bush Doctrine of pre-emption in U.S. foreign policy: to live in absolute security, the United States must leave nothing to chance. In other words, any possibility of challenge to U.S. primacy must be immediately eliminated whatever it takes. Outlining his pre-emptive strategy in a speech at West Point in June 2002, George W. Bush proclaimed that "If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long…. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge."[138] Making the case for the urgency of pre-emptive strikes against Iraq, Bush asserted in his 2003 State of the Union address

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[136] U.S. Department of State, "Press Remarks with Foreign Minister of Egypt Amre Moussa," <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2001/ 933.htm>.
[137] See E. J. Dionner Jr., "In Search of a War Rationale," *The Washington Post*, August 16, 2002, p. A25.
[138] The White House, "President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point," see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/ releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>.

that "If this threat is permitted to fully and suddenly emerge, all actions, all words, and all recriminations would come too late. Trusting in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein is not a strategy, and it is not an option."[139]

All this is not surprising, for this strategy is very much in tune with the American self-imagination offered by the neoconservative agenda: "it is important to shape circumstances before crises emerge, and to meet threats before they become dire."[140] In other words, this strategy was not prompted by the Iraq threat, or for that matter, any foreign threat, per se, but rather integral to the longstanding U.S. goal of obtaining absolute security and unipolar domination as most eagerly promoted by PNAC, and now enshrined in the 2003 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*.[141] Indeed, this strategy is so radical that even classical and neo-realists have raised their eyebrows. For instance, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt point out that those who favour war with Iraq "are in the business of selling a preventive war, so they must try to make remaining at peace seem unacceptably dangerous. And the best way to do that is to inflate the threat, either by exaggerating Iraq's capabilities or by suggesting horrible things will happen if the United States does not act soon."[142]

At the time of writing, the battle for post-Saddam Iraq continues. The underlying source of this problem is not merely intelligence failure or bureaucratic incompetence and arrogance, nor merely the neoconservatives' disdain for Iraq's internal complexities and eagerness for war, but rather the dichotomy of self and Other etched in the American self-imagination, which is shared by commentators such as Mearsheimer and Walt, whose quarrel with neoconservative hawks lies mainly in tactics. Bearing in mind the same goal of ensuring America's absolute security, Mearsheimer and Walt opt for a policy of containment and deterrence, rather than risky pre-emption. Prudent as this strategy might seem, this more conventional therapy has been responsible all along for the enormous human sufferings, frustrations and resentments in Iraq and the Middle East generally, which have constantly provided supportive oxygen for terrorism in the first place.

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[139] The White House, "President Delivers 'State of the Union,'" <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/ 2003/01/20030128-19.html>.
[140] *Rebuilding America's Defense*, p. 1.
[141] "We must build and maintain our defenses beyond challenge," the document says. See the White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, p. 29, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>.
[142] Mearsheimer and Walt, "An Unnecessary War," pp. 58-59.

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the political implications of the American self-construction for U.S. foreign policy which has been characterised by the simultaneous construction and destruction of Other from the white settlement period to the 'war on terrorism.' While this account has not said much directly about Western images of China, I argue that it is largely in this context that the common meanings of China as Other (in terms of both 'threat' and 'opportunity') take shape, meanings which, as discussed above, are not particularly pertinent to Chinese reality per se but are rather entailed by the particular way of American self-construction. In this sense, the investigation of how the images of the Indian Americans, the Vietnamese, and the Iraqis have been constructed in the American self-imagination helps us better understand the meanings and practical consequences of Western IR discourses of China, particularly in terms of 'opportunity' and 'threat.'

Before I engage with these two discourses on China in the contemporary context in Chapters 5-7, in the two chapters immediately to follow, I want to turn to a historical narrative of the political consequences of Western representations of China during the period between the Opium War and the end of the Cold War. Then as now, the realist image of a 'threat' and the liberal notion of an 'opportunity for convergence' provided basic frameworks for traditional Western perceptions of China. If history is any guide, an examination of these representations and their dramatic consequences for Sino-Western relations in the past is necessary in order to shed light on some of the paradoxical and dangerous implications of contemporary Western framings of China and its international relations, particularly in relation to their constitutive influence on the evolution of the Chinese worldview and foreign behaviour.

3

The Lost 'Opportunity': Social Constructions of Sino-Western Relations 1840-1949

> *The irony of the Westernization which occurred in the new urban centers of late-nineteenth-century China was that it brought in Western ways that eventually turned China against the West. It did this because it fostered Chinese nationalism. Foreign contact has often led to anti-foreignism, but in this case the Western example of aggressive nationalism induced more and more Chinese to respond in kind and shift from their old-style culturalism to become modern patriots.*
>
> John K. Fairbank[1]

IN Western IR literature, as introduced in Chapter 1, some of the favourite frames of reference within which to interpret contemporary Chinese foreign policy and predict its future trajectory have been Chinese domestic factors and the anarchical international system. For realist scholars in general and China threat theorists in particular, domestic factors such as a 'Middle Kingdom' mentality, Sinocentric ambition, realpolitik strategic culture, nationalist sentiment, among other things, add up to a scenario in which China will resume its dominant position in the region and threaten its neighbours. From a structural perspective, neorealists argue that China's foreign policy, determined by the self-help logic of world anarchy, is bound to be assertive and aggressive. Liberal scholars, on the other hand, believe that China, as its development is subjected to the influence of universal principles such as democracy and the free market, can be changed for the better. When puzzled by China's reluctance to become like 'us,' some liberals tend to fall back on a domestic explanation, seeing China's cultural legacy and political

[1] John K. Fairbank, *China Perceived: Images & Policies in Chinese-American Relations*, London: André Deutsch, 1976, pp.79-80.

tradition as the major obstacles to its democratisation and peaceful foreign policy making.

In this chapter and the chapter to follow, rather than taking Chinese domestic factors and the international structure as unproblematic, pregiven starting points for analysis, I want to examine how they were discursively, socially and historically constructed. I will do so by focusing on the history of Sino-Western interactions in the period between the Opium War and the end of the Cold War. I want to illustrate, in particular, how Western discourses and policies on China in that period played a crucial, constitutive role in this socio-historical process. Thus understood, the two chapters are not about the history of Sino-Western relations per se. Rather, they are a particular historical narrative that seeks to place Chinese foreign policy in the context of Western construction of it.

The present chapter covers the period between the beginning of Western colonial dominance in China in the mid-nineteenth century and the victory of the Chinese Communists in the civil war in 1949. It is a period of the so-called 'century of humiliation' which, as David Shambaugh has put it, "serves as the most fundamental of all reference points in modern China's worldview" and whose importance "in the Chinese worldview is genuine and not to be underestimated."[2] In this period, as I will illustrate, Western representations of the 'Chinese Other' in terms of 'opportunity' and, to a lesser extent, 'threat,' were based primarily on Western self-interest, and therefore informed and legitimated Western imperialist aggression and domination in China. In doing so, they played a crucial role in both constructing an anarchical, self-help international system between China and the West and transforming a complacent, relatively peaceful 'Middle Kingdom' into a Westphalian-style nation-state. The result was a country which became, as it were, an 'intimate enemy' of the West, as it took to heart Western ideals such as nationalism, power politics, and Communism in response to the West. Consequently, Chinese domestic factors were not pregiven nor purely domestic in character; nor was the international system between China and the West inherently anarchical. Rather, as Ssu-yu Teng and John Fairbank pointed out, "modern China, including the communist rise to power there, can be understood only against the background of its contact with the West."[3] In the following chapter, I will pursue the

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[2] David Shambaugh, *Beautiful Imperialist: China Perceives America, 1972-1990*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 81.

[3] Ssu-yu Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey 1839-1923*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954, p. 2.

same thematic concern with regard to Western interpretation of Chinese foreign policy in the Cold War period.

Before proceeding further, it is worth reiterating that to take this approach is by no means to imply that the Chinese government and intellectuals simply acted in response to stimuli from Western imperialism. This would itself be an ethnocentric view that denies Chinese agency.[4] Despite its powerful presence, the West was not the only force that affected Chinese worldview and foreign relations, which were simultaneously constructed by the Chinese within their specifically social and historical context. In this sense, Chinese foreign relations are by definition always *Chinese* constructs. Nevertheless, more often than not this 'Chineseness' has been overemphasised to the extent that Western responsibility in this constitutive process becomes almost completely overlooked, as if, for example, the 'century of humiliation' were merely a Chinese fictional construct or an imaginary product of China's siege mentality.[5] This treatment of China "in isolation from the international context" has recently been criticised by Peter Hays Gries, who argues that "Metaphorically putting China 'on the couch,' safely debating from afar whether China is strong or weak, benign or malign, dangerously dismisses the role that other nations plays in shaping Chinese behavior."[6] Insofar as much of modern Chinese foreign relations was defined by interacting with the Western powers, it is therefore important to examine the role that they played in the construction of Chinese world outlook and foreign policy.

'Traditional' Chinese Worldview and the Onset of Western Domination

Insofar as history is always a product of social construction, we have no prototypical Chinese history to return to. Nevertheless, in order to better understand the social constitutive effect of Western domination on China, it is necessary to briefly 'return' to Chinese history prior to the arrival of Western powers, and examine how 'traditional' China back then had perceived and conducted its relations with the outside world. I will argue that far from being dominated by realpolitik thinking, 'traditional' Chinese

[4] For a critique of such a Western-centric approach to the study of Chinese history, see Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

[5] See, for example, Edward Friedman, "Reflecting Mirrors across the Taiwan Straits: American Perspectives on a China Threat," in Herbert Yee and Ian Storey eds., *The China Threat: Perceptions, Myths and Reality*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002, p. 76.

[6] Peter Hays Gries and Thomas J. Christensen, "Correspondence: Power and Resolve in U.S. China Policy," *International Security* 26, no. 2 (2001), p. 157.

worldview was characterised mainly by the idealpolitik worldview of (largely) Confucianism, which made no absolute distinction between self and Other and preferred morality to power politics in conducting 'foreign relations.' In doing so, I make no pretension to reveal a quintessential, pregiven Chinese worldview. For what I 'discover' is also a contingent historical pattern which cannot be separated from the specific social, historical, and international context in which China found itself at the time. And because of this, as I will illustrate in the following chapters, this kind of relatively non-essentialist worldview would be subjected to change under the influence brought to bear on China by the Western powers.

While 'traditional' China had no foreign relations in the contemporary sense, there was no shortage of Chinese thinking on its relationship with the world. Indeed, this relationship was a central theme of many Chinese philosophical writings. Mainstream Chinese philosophical thinking long distinguished conceptually between the self and the world (as other), and considered the two to be basically in agreement or in mutual complement rather than in stark contradiction.[7] For example, Confucius believed that the relationship of the self and the world, while often differentiated by proximity and by priority, was not a distinction of the internal versus the external or of the important versus the unimportant.[8] Similarly, the Taoist philosopher Zhuang Zi (Chuang Tzu) argued that "Heaven and earth coexist with me; all the myriad things and I are one."[9]

In contrast to the Confucian and Taoist views, the Legalist tradition in Chinese philosophy believes that selfishness is the basic nature of human beings, who have no regard for the interest of others and are incapable of good and benevolence. While influential in the periods of the Warring States and Qin (475-206 BC), this tradition fell into disgrace with the quick downfall of Qin dynasty. With the coming of the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), Confucianism was established as the orthodox belief.[10] With few exceptions, the orthodoxy of Confucianism was observed by succeeding dynasties for the next two thousand years.

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[7] Roland Bleiker, "Neorealist Claims in Light of Ancient Chinese Philosophy: The Cultural Dimension of International Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 22, no. 3 (1993), p. 406.
[8] Kung-chuan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought, Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to the Sixth Century A.D.* (trans. F. W. Mote), Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 103.
[9] Quoted in *Ibid*., p. 302. While they hold similar views on the unity of the self and the world, Confucian and Taoist notions of self and other have different social implications. On this issue, see also *Ibid*., pp. 302-306.
[10] Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, New York: Free Press, 1967, p. 191.

For Chinese officials, scholars, and the ordinary people alike, the Confucian belief in the unity of the self, the ruler (Son of Heaven), and the whole world (*tianxia*, or all-under-Heaven) seemed to have provided a relatively sufficient sense of self-identity.[11] Because of their perceived unity, there was no absolute distinction between 'domestic' and 'foreign' in the Western sense. Certainly, the *hua-yi* differentiation between the Middle Kingdom (*hua*) and the 'barbarians' (*yi*) on the periphery, for example, did exist.[12] However, as William L. Tung points out, there is much misunderstanding about the Chinese conception of foreigners as *yi,* which, though commonly but incorrectly translated into 'barbarians,' originally signifies only the minority peoples from the east and later refers broadly to foreigners.[13] Thus, the differentiation did not have the same connotation as the 'domestic/foreign' dichotomy has today, and traditional Chinese 'foreign relations' were basically the extension of the order of Chinese 'domestic' society. Just as benevolence (*ren*), proper ceremonies (*li*) and right principles (*li*) were deemed essential to the order of Chinese society proper, so were they allegedly to the order of the outer world. Consequently, the Chinese world order, typically known as the 'tribute system,' was organised on the basis of culturalism, rather than modern nationalism that has underpinned the anarchical Westphalian international system in much of Europe.[14] On this point, C. P. FitzGerald writes:

> The circumstances of the ancient Chinese prevented the rise of the concept of nationality in the sense in which it appears at a very early period in the Western world. The Chinese distinguished between civilized and barbarous peoples, but they did not put all the latter into one category, nor did the names they gave them have the same semantic force as the term 'barbarian' had to Greeks and Latins.[15]

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[11] Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 3.

[12] According to Lien-sheng Yang, since Late Zhou (Chou) times (down to 221 BC), a distinction was made between *tianxia* and the more spatially defined term *Zhongguo* (the central state, or the Middle Kingdom). Outside the central Chinese state was *fan*, where lived foreign "barbarians" (*yi*), ferocious animals, and evil spirits. Lien-sheng Yang, "Historical Notes on the Chinese World Order," in John K. Fairbank ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968, pp. 21, 27.

[13] William L. Tung, *China and the Foreign Powers: The Impact of and Reaction to Unequal Treaties*, Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, 1970, p. 3.

[14] See John K. Fairbank ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relation*s, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968; Ishwer C. Ojha, *Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition: The Diplomacy of Cultural Despair*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1969, p. 3; Zhang Yongjin, *China in the International System, 1918-20: The Middle Kingdom at the Periphery*, London: Macmillan, 1991, p. 9.

[15] C.P. FitzGerald, *The Chinese View of Their Place in the World*, London: Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 3-4.

It is certainly true that Chinese practice was sometimes not consistent with Confucian teachings.[16] For example, the Legalist use of force as a means of punishment, which often played a role in maintaining domestic order, was not entirely absent in Chinese 'foreign relations,' especially in dealing with 'barbarians.'[17] The period of the Three Kingdoms (220-265) may also be seen as the prototype of "an amoral interstate system characterized by constant maneuver and ruthless competition" based on "the classic realist calculus."[18] Yet, on the whole, it is safe to say that for much of Chinese ancient history, China had maintained its world order through the tribute system and ritual performance, with the use of force only playing second fiddle to the Confucian principles.[19]

It is worth reiterating that I do not claim that China is inherently peaceful while the West is intrinsically aggressive. My point is that the main reason why Confucian principles became dominant may be found in the specifically historical context of interactions and social construction between China and its neighbours, as well as among early Chinese states. In other words, it might have something to do with the fact that until the nineteenth century China did not encounter any formidable Others as did European countries, hence "there was no need for China to modify its image of the world."[20] Moreover, while China had more than once been conquered by the nomadic peoples from the north, the fact that most of those conquering peoples themselves eventually became assimilated into Chinese culture usually reinforced rather than undermined the dominant status of the Confucian worldview in China. Consequently, traditional Chinese rulers had been led to believe that Confucianism captured the

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[16] See Xu Xin, "Wanqing Zhongguo waijiao: Lishi chongtu zhong de shiluo yu gengxin" (Late Qing China's Foreign Relations: Disillusionment and Renewal in Historical Conflicts), in Yuan Ming ed., *Kua shiji de tiaozhan: Zhongguo guojiguanxi xueke de fazhan* (Challenges of the New Century: The Development of the Chinese International Relations Discipline), Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1993, pp. 369-397; and Zhang Yongjin, *China in the International System*, pp. 9-10.

[17] Tung, *China and the Foreign Powers*, p. 1.

[18] Michael H. Hunt, "Chinese Foreign Relations in Historical Perspective," in Harry Harding ed., *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 7. But even during this period, power was viewed as evanescent, and greater forces might not always prevail if they were devoid of morality or lacked the proper use of "stratagems." See Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997, p. 22.

[19] On this point, the famed Jesuit Matteo Ricci had this to say: "though [the Chinese] have a well-equipped army and navy that could easily conquer the neighboring nations, neither the king nor his people ever think of waging a war of aggression. They are quite content with what they have and are not ambitious of conquest. In this respect they are much different from the people of Europe, who are frequently discontent with their own governments and covetous of what others enjoy." Matteo Ricci, *China in the sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610* (trans. Louis J. Gallagher), New York: Random House, 1953, p. 55.

[20] Yongjin Zhang, *China in International Society since 1949: Alienation and Beyond*, Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998, p. 7. See also FitzGerald, *The Chinese View of Their Place in the World*, pp. 13-21.

'essential reality' of the world and therefore was the sufficient guide to any effective response to the 'barbarians.' It indeed had been an effective ruling principle until the early nineteenth century when 'barbarians' of a different stock, the Europeans, came to disrupt the traditional Chinese world order and began to transform the way in which the Chinese viewed the world and conducted their foreign relations.

Initially perceiving the arrival of European powers as just "the most recent in a long series of invasions of alien cultures carried by alien peoples,"[21] China continued to apply its arrogant approach to dealing with the 'new barbarians,' as best known in the 'kowtow' drama during the McCartney mission of 1793.[22] Although this arrogance can be partly attributed to the influence of the aforementioned traditional images of self and barbarian others,[23] it is worth noting that in its long history China had not been always close-minded or xenophobic.[24] It was mainly from the seventeenth century onward that China's approaches to foreigners had turned overtly hostile.

In a broader context, what happened in the interval was the beginning of European expansion into China, a process by which, I suggest, the European-centred anarchical international system was to be imposed upon China through gunboat diplomacy. Before that period, mainstream European perceptions of China were neither 'threat' nor 'opportunity,' but were instead long marked by indifference and/or lofty curiosity. As a late-comer in Western colonialist expansion, the United States' indifferent attitude towards China survived even into the twentieth century.[25] But from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on, the conventional wisdom, even among the sympathetic Jesuits and Enlightenment philosophers, gradually became that China was simply a backward and stagnant country. The upshot was that China represented a 'fallen human race' that must be regenerated or managed by foreigners, presumably Westerners. Such

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[21] John K. Fairbank, *The United States and China*, 4th enl. ed., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983, p. 82.

[22] John K. Fairbank, *China: The People's Middle Kingdom and the U.S.A.*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1967, p. 11; and Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, 5th ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 158.

[23] See John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer, and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia: The Modern Transformation*, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965, pp. 313-315.

[24] For instance, China in the Tang period (618-907) was highly tolerant of foreign religions and cultures. In the eyes of Marco Polo, China in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) was an open and prosperous society. Even at the beginning of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), the imperial court was relatively responsive to Christianity and European technology. See Tung, *China and the Foreign Powers*, p. 2; and Hunt, "Chinese Foreign Relations in Historical Perspective," p. 7.

[25] Warren I. Cohen suggests that "For most of the 200 years after independence, the prevailing American attitude toward China was indifference and disinterest." Warren I. Cohen, "American Perceptions of China," in Michel Oksenberg and Robert B. Oxnam eds., *Dragon and Eagle: United States-China Relations: Past and Future*, New York: Basic Books, 1978, pp. 54-55.

conceptions, which had more to do with mounting European self-confidence than with 'Chinese reality,' encouraged many of early European explorers (initially mainly Portuguese) arriving on the Chinese coasts to imitate their conquering patterns in Africa and behave in an arrogant and brutal way, such as refusing to follow Chinese laws, harassing the local population, and taking slaves.[26] As a result of these Portuguese outrages, the Chinese emperor banned trade with the Portuguese and the Chinese image of the Europeans as 'uncivilised barbarians' began to take root.

This kind of early encounter provided an unpleasant yet significant historical backdrop for later Sino-Western mutual perceptions and interactions. By the late eighteenth century, as the West, led by the British, became industrialised and developed a keen interest in making profit, it began to see other parts of the world increasingly through the lens of 'market opportunities,' a lens which would soon be applied to China. For instance, British merchants in the nineteenth century once calculated that if every Chinese added just one inch to his shirt tail, the mills of Lancashire could be kept busy for a generation. Therefore, this imagery was more of a subjective projection than an objective reflection of Chinese reality, as the ancient kingdom continued its ban on foreign trade at all Chinese ports except Guangzhou (Canton).

Nonetheless, this meaning given to China was to have profound practical implications for Sino-Western relations in the decades to follow. Thrilled by China's 'prospect' of becoming a vast market for their products but frustrated by the obstacles standing in their way, Western merchants and later their governments, who "had grown far more concerned with the rule of gold than with the golden rule [of a consideration of others],"[27] turned increasingly to the illicit opium trade. In 1840, in reprisal for China's ban on the opium trade, the British government sparked the Opium War, the first major application of Western power politics strategy to China. As the investigative reporter Sterling Seagrave puts it:

> In the south, Western traders at Canton and Macao flouted the law, smuggling in massive quantities of cheap Indian opium, driving a spike into the heartwood. *Opium became a symbol of China's sovereignty and whether foreigners could violate that sovereignty at whim*…. It became a game among Westerners to provoke the Chinese at every turn and, when the Chinese struck back, to demand concessions from local mandarins. If concessions were not forthcoming, gunboats were called in; China found herself at war

[26] Wolfgang Franke, *China and the West*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967, p. 27.
[27] Michael Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 12.

> over issues that were trumped up and incidents that were greatly exaggerated or entirely imaginary. Many Westerners built successful careers out of bullying the Chinese.[28]

Predictably, all this could only serve to heighten Chinese grievances and mistrust towards the West, even though the Chinese, ensnared within their age-old tradition, failed to develop appropriate means to tackle the new challenge.[29] The invasion aroused some strong though futile local resistance from the Cantonese populace, which prefigured an increasing awareness of Western power politics and the rise of modern Chinese nationalism. For example, its vulgar terms aside, a denunciation of the British posted by the villagers of San Yuan Li signified one of the earliest appeals for nationalism in reaction to Western pressure. It read that "We note that you English barbarians have formed the habits and developed the nature of wolves, plundering and seizing things by force…. If we do not completely exterminate you pigs and dogs, we will not be manly Chinese."[30] In 1842, the Opium War ended with China's defeat and acceptance at gunpoint of the Treaty of Nanjing (Nanking) with Britain. In this treaty, China was required to meet the demands of an indemnity of $21 million, the opening of more trade ports, and the cession of Hong Kong. Through separate unequal treaties, other powers such as France and the United States quickly followed suit to extract similar privileges.

Even now, by adhering to its traditional 'foreign policy' of conciliation and appeasement, China continued to refuse to be drawn into the European-dominated international system.[31] This led the British plenipotentiary John Davis to speak disparagingly of China's "inability to comprehend the observance of good faith on the part of the strongest," and saw Qing's old-fashioned diplomacy as "tiresome" and "childish."[32] For Americans, like the "opening of the American West," the opening of the treaty ports "was the adventurous pioneer work on a frontier. The problem of the frontier in China, however, was not how to overcome nature but how to deal with the

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[28] Quoted in Rey Chow, "King Kong in Hong Kong: Watching the 'Handover' from the U.S.A.," in Xudong Zhang ed., *Whither China? Intellectual Politics in Contemporary China*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001, p. 214 (Chow's emphasis).
[29] In charge of suppression of the Canton opium traffic, the imperial commissioner Lin Zexu continued to base his anti-opium measures on common sense and the Confucian principles. See Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, pp. 25-26.
[30] Quoted in *Ibid*., p. 36.
[31] John G. Stoessinger, "China and America: The Burden of Past Misperceptions," in John C. Farrell and Asa P. Smith, eds., *Image and Reality in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1967, p. 89; and Zhang Yongjin, *China in the International System*, p. 16.
[32] Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, pp. 198-199.

ancient Chinese way of life."[33] With the treaty ports becoming the latest American frontier, the vast country and the people behind them were equated accordingly to nature and wilderness, exhibiting dangers as well as opportunities. As such, like the American Indians, the Chinese, supposedly having no capacity for reason, could only understand the language of force. Thus, the American commissioner Robert M. McLane declared that "Diplomatic intercourse can only be had with this government at the cannon's mouth."[34]

This is what happened in the Second Opium War (1856-1860), in which the troops of the Anglo-French alliance marched all the way to Beijing, leaving a trail of horrific destruction, including the infamous burning of the old Summer Palace (*Yuan Ming Yuan*). Through this war, according to Hosea Ballou Morse, "The [power] politics of Europe had been transferred to China."[35] Describing the lasting impact of the burning of the Summer Palace on the Chinese psyche, Morse wrote:

> Possibly a necessary act, possibly even a wise one; but there remained for many years in the minds of the Chinese, who had forgotten the original offence or paid little attention to it, a vivid memory of the looting of the palace by the French and its destruction by the English.[36]

Deeply alarmed by the humiliating defeats at the hands of European powers, the imperial commissioner Lin Zexu came to the conclusion that "ships, guns, and a water force are absolutely indispensable" for China's dealing with foreign powers.[37] As a consequence of all this and the utter failure of the imperial court to hold off the 'barbarian' attacks, as Kuang-sheng Liao points out, Western power politics "shook the ruling authority of the dynasty for the first time since its founding in the seventeenth century."[38] And from the 1860s on, the intensification of Western encroachment finally began to bring a change in the court's attitude and foreign policy.[39]

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[33] John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: The Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1954*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 155.
[34] Foster Rhea Dulles, *China and America: The Story of Their Relations since 1784*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946, p. 48.
[35] Hosea Ballou Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 1, New York: Paragon, 1962, p. 608.
[36] *Ibid*., pp. 611-612.
[37] Quoted in Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 28.
[38] Kuang-sheng Liao, *Antiforeignism and Modernization in China: 1860-1980*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1986, p. 26.
[39] Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 47.

'Opportunity,' Gunboat Diplomacy and the Making of an Intimate Enemy: 1860-1919

What was changed in the aftermath of the Second Opium War was that the Chinese became increasingly aware of and attracted to Western ideas of power politics and nationalism. In contrast to the old days of the tribute system, now its "domestic political life was totally shaped by the needs of foreign policy rather than the other way around."[40] In a period of over half a century from the 1860s to 1919, bombarded with Western concepts such as power politics, wealth, security, nationalism, sovereignty, and reform, China carried out self-strengthening measures, nationalist reform and revolution, and cultural regeneration. While those concepts were not entirely new to traditional China, their growing popularity at this particular juncture must have something to do with the sustained Western gunboat diplomacy, in which the Western denial of power, wealth, security, and sovereignty to China made the latter painfully aware that to effectively resist Western pressure, it had to, paradoxically, learn from the West.

Meanwhile, Western gunboat diplomacy continued to hinge on the knowledge of China as a great opportunity for making profits and/or converts. In an image that would be reinvoked time and again, China was described as "holding out greater possibilities for trade than any other part of the world."[41] Yet, reflecting the newly developed Western self-image as the source of industrial and moral progress, this optimistic talk was more about Western self-interest (be it commercial, political, or religious) and its will to power than about a fundamental empathy towards China. For this reason, as soon as its self-interest was unfulfilled, the 'positive' image could easily shift to negative perceptions such as the 'sick-man of Asia' or a 'China threat.' Consequently, as two sides of the same coin of Western self-interest, both images entailed a power politics strategy in dealing with China.

As a result, as China was "at the centre as a target of European imperialist power politics in East Asia,"[42] the first Western ideas accepted by the Chinese were the realist notions of power and security. By the mid-nineteenth century, though not yet completely abandoning the old Confucian ways of conducting foreign relations, many Qing officials started to emphasise the importance of military power in dealing with the

[40] Ojha, *Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition*, p. 20.
[41] Dulles, *China and America*, p. 100.
[42] Zhang Yongjin, *China in the International System*, p. 20.

West. Puzzled by the question of "Why are they small and yet strong? Why are we large and yet weak?," Feng Guifen, an influential scholar-official and exponent of 'statecraft,' found the answer in China's ignorance of the outside countries and of their military technology in particular. Thus, he concluded that "What we then have to learn from the barbarians is only the one thing, solid ships and effective guns."[43] Eventually, the Tongzhi emperor accepted such suggestion, and launched the Self-Strengthening Movement as part of the Tongzhi Restoration.

Because of the emphasis on military power, the Self-Strengthening Movement was primarily a Western-style military reform, which included the establishment of a national army, the revival of the militia system, and the modernisation of armaments. As another Qing official Li Hongzhang put it, "The method of self-strengthening lies in learning what they [the Western powers] can do, and in taking over what they rely upon."[44] In 1865, the Jiangnan Arsenal was set up in Shanghai, which soon became one of the biggest and most impressive in the world. This was followed by the opening of the Fuzhou shipyard in 1866, the creation of the Board of Admiralty in 1885, and the establishment of the Beiyang (Northern Ocean) Fleet in 1888.

As the modernisation of armaments progressed, the reformers in the Qing government further realised that military power could not exist independently of economic strength. Thus, Li Hongzhang argued that without a strong economy, China would still be subjected to foreign control and its military power would be unsustainable. He urged China to develop its natural resources, produce commodities of daily necessity, and seek to compete for market and profit.[45] In this spirit, after the early effort of military Westernisation in the 1860s, China slowly began to also imitate Western forms of industrial development, such as building railways, telegraph lines and other infrastructures. It also opened coal and iron mines and set up profit-oriented factories. In the Self-Strengthening process, the Chinese even invited American Minister to China Anson Burlingame to represent them at the Courts of all the Treaty Powers. China's willingness to turn to the West for wisdom led a flattered Burlingame to believe that great opportunities abounded for Americans "to plant the shining cross on every hill and in every valley." As a consequence, "the idea of America's mission to lead China along the path of progress had never been lost to sight."[46]

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[43] Quoted in Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, pp. 52-3.
[44] Quoted in *Ibid*., p. 109.
[45] *Ibid*., p. 110.
[46] Dulles, *China and America*, p. 136.

However, unlike the Japanese reform in the Meiji period, the *modus vivendi* of the Self-Strengthening Movement amounted to a limited application of Western means to pursuing traditional Chinese ends, whose priority was to restore domestic order, especially in the wake of the devastating Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864). Therefore, it turned out that the Tongzhi Restoration and the Self-Strengthening Movement did not constitute a thorough transformation of the Confucian empire into a modern nation-state in the image of Western powers. While China's quest for military might and economic power followed the model of the West, political life in China was still "motivated by loyalty to the cultural order, by culturalism, rather than nationalism."[47]

The Self-Strengthening Movement ended with the disastrous Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 when China's prestige was dealt a body blow with its defeat by its former 'pupil.' After the war, Theodore Roosevelt doubted that the Chinese, unlike the Japanese, could ever become 'civilized.'[48] The perception of an 'uncivilised Chinese Other,' typical at that time, legitimated and emboldened Western powers to intensify their 'scramble for concessions' in China in 1897-1898. Preoccupied with the Spanish-American War, the United States missed out on the first round of 'carving of the Chinese melon,' but made up for its 'missed opportunities' with the proclamation of the Open Door policy in 1899-1900. A policy which, in the name of equal commercial opportunity, demanded that China allow America any trade privileges and concessions it might give to other powers. In this context, a confident U.S. Senator both captured the jubilant mood of the Western powers and revealed their self-interested motives in China by proclaiming that "The booming guns of Dewey's battleships sounded a new note on the Pacific shores, a note that has echoed and re-echoed around the world, and that note is that we are on the Pacific, that we are there to stay, and that we are there to protect our rights, promote our interests, and get our share of the trade and commerce of the opulent Orient."[49]

Despite or perhaps because of the Western relish for the China 'opportunity,' the Chinese, by contrast, found themselves in an enduring state of national crisis. With the traditional Confucian order crumbling fast, many prominent Chinese figures found no

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[47] Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig, *East Asia: The Modern Transformation*, p. 84. For the theme of "culturalism versus nationalism," see also Joseph R. Levenson*, Confucian China and its Modern Fate: A Trilogy*, Vol. 1, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968, pp. 98-104.
[48] Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*, 3rd ed., New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 57.
[49] Quoted in Dulles, *China and America*, p. 101

alternative but to look to the West for ideas and inspiration, and where they found nationalism. As John Fairbank's study illustrated:

> The generation of Chinese that lived through this long continued upheaval… experienced a deepening crisis. The sacred values of proper conduct and social order proved useless. The ancient faith in China's superiority as a civilization was slowly strangled. The privileged foreigners came in everywhere and gradually stirred up a Chinese nationalism.[50]

In 1895, Kang Youwei, a leading advocate of the 1898 Reform Movement, wrote that:

> Our enfeebled China has been lying in the midst of a group of strong powers and soundly sleeping on the top of a pile of kindling…. If we do not plan in advance, but suddenly are divided among ourselves… then, alas, the fate of our sacred race will be unspeakable, utterly unspeakable![51]

In 1900, Liang Qichao, another reformer, wrote that Europe and Japan stigmatised China as a nation without patriotism and that the sickly state of Chinese patriotism was the root cause of the nation's accumulated weaknesses.[52] By then, China began to call the Western powers '*Lieqiang*' (the various Powers) instead of 'barbarians,' not only in recognition of their military superiority,[53] but as a sign of its realisation that China was only one weak nation-state in the European-centred international system.

With the sense of nationalism came fresh notions of international politics, state sovereignty, and national security. Wang Tao, a gifted journalist, was one of the first Chinese to understand the nature of the Western world order as an inter-*national* system of power politics. Based on his observations of the European balance of power, he refuted the traditional Chinese idea of using barbarians against barbarians because those 'barbarians' did not behave in accordance with China's imperial order, but with their own calculation of national interest*s*.[54] And with his awareness of the conception of sovereignty, Wang Tao led the call for the abolition of Western extraterritoriality in China, which the Qing court had previously accepted as an expedient way of allowing the 'barbarians' to apply their own laws to themselves without involving China.[55]

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[50] Fairbank, *China: The People's Middle Kingdom and the U.S.A.*, p. 94.
[51] Quoted in Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, pp. 152-153.
[52] See Joseph R. Levenson, *Liang Ch'i Ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 111.
[53] Liao, *Antiforeignism and Modernization in China*, p. 55.
[54] Quoted in Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 137.
[55] Stoessinger, "China and America," p.89.

Furthermore, with the growing influence of Western ideas of science in the late nineteenth century, the international struggle for power was given a 'scientific' lustre, and was accepted as such by leading Chinese intellectuals. For example, Yan Fu, who strongly advocated the creation of "the organs of a rationalized national state,"[56] introduced the theory of social Darwinism through the translation of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*. Thanks mainly to his brilliant translation of an array of Western works, the "doctrines of the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest caught the imagination of the Chinese literati and soon became common expressions in the mouths of orators and in the writings of journalists."[57]

By the end of the nineteenth century, amid increasing Western grip on China, the upsurge of nationalism culminated in the Reform Movement of 1898, which was characterised, paradoxically, by both anti-foreign sentiment and pro-Western feelings. On the one hand, the Reform Movement of 1898 was aimed to preserve and strengthen Chinese sovereignty and end foreign domination.[58] On the other hand, many reformers, amenable to the modernist, linear view of human development, saw the hope for the survival of the Chinese race in learning from the superior white race, in terms not just of firearms and machines, but also of institutions, government, and political ideas. For instance, Kang Youwei was deeply impressed by the orderliness and efficiency of the British-dominated municipal governments in Hong Kong and Shanghai, and was quick to accept Social Darwinism.[59] Another leading reformist thinker Tan Sitong even advocated a 'complete Westernisation' (*quanpan Xihua*) of China. Given the apparent deep soul-searching, it seemed that the Reform Movement of 1898 represented a 'high point' of Westernisation in China and stood a good chance of success. Yet, this movement lasted only 103 days and ended with a coup d'état by the Empress Dowager Cixi.

While Chinese tradition and conservative forces were doubtless responsible for the reform's failure, the Western powers also played a role here. Well aware of the political consequences of this kind of Westernisation in China, the Western powers had little interest in its success. Indeed, nineteenth-century Westerners, who "were

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[56] Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 185.
[57] Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 150.
[58] John E. Schrecker, *Imperialism and Chinese Nationalism: Germany in Shantung*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971, pp. 46-47.
[59] Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 362; John K. Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution: 1800-1985*, New York: Harper & Row, 1986, p. 133.

interested neither in total conquest nor in full-scale Westernization [of China],"[60] wanted to have a stable Chinese government for the sake of their vested self-interests and continued trade, rather than a nationalist (hence less tractable) government that would be likely to emerge from the reform. Owen Lattimore and Eleanor Lattimore understood this Western strategy quite well when they stated that:

> Defeats had destroyed the prestige of the government, and the indemnities paid for defeat had put a larger and larger share of China's revenue under foreign control. Yet the foreigners, not quite ready to partition China, always gave back to the Manchu court just enough power to keep on ruling badly, without being able to rule effectively.[61]

This strategy, as I will illustrate in later chapters, would be employed again and again by the Western powers. As Foster Rhea Dulles observed, the real American (Western) policy in China was always to uphold "the existing government or [support] the more conservative faction in order to promote the stability that we felt would best safeguard our own trade and investments."[62] In some sense, the contemporary strategy of engagement with China bears the same hallmark. Consequently, some Chinese, who were puzzled by the fact that their Western 'teachers' did not want their Chinese 'students' to put their learning into practice, became gradually disillusioned with Western sincerity.[63]

In contrast to the Western reluctance to see the old Chinese regime be replaced by a modern, nationalist government, eager missionaries were busy converting Chinese to Christianity. In the late nineteenth century, the collapse of China's old order of things was believed to present "a supreme missionary opportunity."[64] Missionary Geraldine Guiness once remarked that "of all the heathen nations of the world, China stood first in line."[65] A century later, this powerful image would still weigh heavily on the West. As Jimmy Carter would write in his memoirs: "My interest in China was kindled when I was a small boy during the 1930s, studying about Baptist missionaries there. From the slide programs put on by itinerant missionaries on furlough I was taught to look upon

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[60] Ojha, *Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition*, p. 4.
[61] Owen Lattimore and Eleanor Lattimore, *The Making of Modern China: A Short History*, London: George & Unwin, 1945, p. 123.
[62] Dulles, *China and America*, p. 255.
[63] Later Mao Zedong wrote that "Is it strange that teachers always invaded their students? The Chinese had learned a lot from the West. But they could never be put to practice." Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. 4, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1961, pp. 412-413.
[64] Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands*, Chicago, IL: Qudrangle Books, 1936, p. 281.
[65] See T. Christopher Jespersen, *American Images of China: 1931-1949*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996, pp. 4-5.

the Chinese as friends in urgent need of hospitals, food, schools, and the knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Savior."[66]

Motivated by this knowledge of China as a country of darkness that cried for help, some missionaries were engaged in some laudable, well-intentioned educational and medical efforts in China. However, the missionary movement as a whole was not designed to improve Chinese education and health per se. Rather, it wanted primarily those Chinese who received education and medical treatment in Christian schools and hospitals to also receive a free dose of Christianity, so as to facilitate Western control. Consequently, "Out of this grew up a tradition of reliance on China hands, men on the spot who could be asked to handle things whenever a naval diplomat or a politician-commissioner was not available."[67] But missionaries acted to supplement, rather than replace, the role of Western diplomats or soldiers. With the latter often coming to the aid of the missionaries when they encountered Chinese resistance and hostility to 'salvation,' one American missionary praised Western troops as "instruments of God clearing away the rubbish that impeded the advancement of Divine Truth."[68] Such a close working relationship in the imperialist project was demonstrated, for example, in a 1896 commission put together by the U.S. government to travel to China to insist on American rights. The commission, as Thomas McCormick noted, "consisted of the American Consul at Tientsin, a missionary, and a naval officer—the expansionist trinity."[69]

Similarly, in response to a missionary case in 1898, German Bishop Anzer did not hesitate to demand that "German troops be marched to I-chou in order to *make an impression on the mandarins* [emphasis added]."[70] To quieten the Chinese population, the German military expedition in March 1899 resulted in the burning of two villages. After this outrageous act, the Germans maintained smugly that "nothing was taken from the people but a few weapons… They were completely quiet and showed not the slightest trace of agitation or bitterness."[71]

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[66] Quoted in Richard Madsen, *China and the American Dream*: *A Moral Inquiry*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, p. 137.
[67] John K. Fairbank, *Chinese-American Interactions: A Historical Summary*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1974, p. 57.
[68] Cohen, "American Perceptions of China," p. 58.
[69] Quoted in Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad since 1750*, 1st ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1989, p. 206.
[70] Quoted in Schrecker, *Imperialism and Chinese Nationalism*, p. 94.
[71] *Ibid*., p. 97.

This was of course anything but the case. As the Western powers continued to capitalise on the so-called China opportunity, hamper Chinese reform efforts, and join forces to safeguard their privileges, the frustrated Chinese, including the Qing government, seemed left with no option but to turn to a more violent form of resistance.[72] Appalled by the atrocity in Shandong, the government warned the Germans that a gunboat policy would only engender widespread hatred and violence against them by its "poor but proud" people.[73] The Shandong governor Li Bingheng argued that China should rely on the use of force because, it seemed to him, armed resistance was the only effective way to gain Western respect.[74]

Indeed, it was against this backdrop that the Boxer Uprising took place in 1899-1900. In the summer of 1900, the Boxers' antiforeign frenzy reached a climax with the siege of the foreign legations in Beijing. In the West, this uprising is now frequently remembered and denounced for its mob violence, and at times is referred to as a sign of inherent xenophobia in the Chinese mindset. This, I argue, is at best a partial understanding, which conveniently ignores the historical context of foreign aggression which bred such xenophobia in the first place. For example, in the following Boxer notice, it was the terrifying scramble for concessions and the evil doing of the missionaries in particular that sparked their strong antiforeign sentiment: "The Catholics since the Hsien-feng period (1851-1861) have conspired with foreigners, have caused China trouble, wasted our national revenue, broken up our monasteries, destroyed Buddhist images, and seized our people's graveyards. All these myriad acts of evil should be bitterly resented."[75]

Failing to see the link between their repeated aggression and the rise of Boxer antiforeignism, Western accounts of the uprising at the time invariably began with reference to Chinese atrocities inflicted on missionaries. Such accounts in turn fuelled Western desire for swift military revenges, actions which, now justified as a reasonable reaction to Chinese brutality, were designed deliberately to cause maximum destruction

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[72] John K. Fairbank suggested that "The disaster that hit China in the nineteenth century is one of the most comprehensive any people has ever experienced. The ancient tradition of China's superiority, plus this modern phase of disaster, undoubtedly produced one first-class case of frustration." Fairbank, *China: The People's Middle Kingdom and the U.S.A.*, p. 93.
[73] Schrecker, *Imperialism and Chinese Nationalism*, p. 99.
[74] *Ibid*., pp. 50-51; and Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 394.
[75] See Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 189.

so as to leave a memorable 'brand' on the land and its inhabitants.[76] It was in this context that an international force was put together by eight powers, which occupied and looted Beijing. As the Eight-Power Allied Forces marched to the Chinese capital, American missionary Fredric Brown collected information and acted as a guide for the forces, for which he received an award from the commander of the allied forces. One year later, the humiliated Qing government was forced to accept the Boxer Protocol, which included an indemnity of 450 million taels ($333 million), to be paid over forty years at interest rates that would more than double that amount. This demoralising punishment, as the then British newspaper *North-China Daily News* commented, was intended to teach the Chinese "never to forget" the lesson of the Boxer Uprising.[77]

Its lasting effect on the Chinese psyche, however, as Claude A. Buss put it, "was the nurturing of a deep antiforeignism."[78] But immediately following the suppression of the Boxer Uprising, and the humiliating realisation that China was no match for the West in terms of power, the Chinese were forced again to look for less costly alternatives to national salvation. This time, viewing their own cultural tradition and political institution as the main source of China's backwardness and suffering, more and more Chinese began turning increasingly to domestic revolution. Having lost its credibility during the botched Boxer Uprising, the Qing government became the first casualty of a Chinese nationalist movement led by Sun Yat-sen. After the collapse of the Manchu dynasty in 1911, Sun Yat-sen believed that the next challenge facing China was the overall ignorance of the Chinese people. "The weakness of China today," he argued, "is caused not only by the shortage of able people, but also by the large number of ignorant people."[79] Alongside his harsh criticism of traditional Chinese culture and the 'ignorant' Chinese people was the perception of the West and particularly the U.S. as the last hope for Chinese national salvation.[80] It was argued that although the Western powers inflicted damage upon China, they were not the only one to blame given the iron law of social evolution. The only thing China could do, according to

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[76] James L. Hevia, "Leaving a Brand on China: Missionary Discourse in the Wake of the Boxer Movement," in Tani E. Barlow ed., *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997, pp. 113-139.
[77] Hu Sheng, *Imperialism and Chinese Politics*, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1955, p. 243.
[78] Claude Albert Buss, *The Far East: A History of Recent and Contemporary International Relations in East Asia*, New York: Macmillan, 1955, p. 163.
[79] Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 225.
[80] Zi Zhongyun, "Bainian sixiang de chongji yu zhuangji" (A Hundred Years of Ideological Impact and Clash in Sino-U.S. Relations), *Meiguo yanjiu* (American Studies), no. 4 (1996), pp. 15-16.

Liang Qichao, was to "investigate extensively the methods followed by all other nations and races in becoming independent."[81]

By 1915, this kind of enthusiasm for learning Western ideas and culture developed into a New Culture Movement. Taking to heart such Western concepts as 'science' and 'democracy,' this movement was marked by unprecedented anti-traditionalism, anti-Confucianism, and wholesale Westernisation. In 1919, Chen Duxiu wrote that "We are convinced at present that only these two gentlemen [Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy] can cure the dark maladies in Chinese politics, morality, learning, and thought."[82] So much so that the Chinese, in a desperate search for a certain answer, came to accept as reality the dichotomy between the West and China in terms of "one right and one wrong, one good and one evil, one suitability and one unsuitability."[83] In doing so, the New Culture Movement has been often hailed as a milestone in the process of China's modernisation, or the 'Chinese Renaissance.'[84] As I will discuss in Chapter 7, its legacy can be felt to the present day in many Chinese intellectuals and officials who argue for a whole-hearted embrace of globalisation and international norms.

But we must not forget that from the beginning China's modernisation (or Westernisation) was driven by a sense of nationalism, which, thanks to Western behaviour in China, had by now grown too strong to be ignored. In the wake of WWI and the diplomatic fiasco of the Chinese delegation at the Versailles Peace Conference, questions were soon to be asked about the future of this elite-led Westernisation in China, particularly as a new chapter of China's nationalist response to the West began to unfold in the outburst of the May Fourth Movement in 1919 and the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

A Troubled Relationship with the 'Family of Nations' and the 'Loss of China': 1919-1949

The period between 1919 and 1949 saw the rise in nationalist resistance to foreign aggression and Communist revolution in China. This rise again could not be adequately

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[81] Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, pp. 221, 223.
[82] *Ibid*., p. 239.
[83] Hu Shi, see *Ibid*., p. 254.
[84] Hu Shi, "The Chinese Renaissance," in H. T. Montague Bell and H. G. W. Woodhead eds., *The Chinese Year Book*, Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1924-25, pp. 633-651; and Ray Huang, *China: A Macro History*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1988, p. 229.

understood without reference to the ways in which China was perceived and treated by the Western powers, which by now referred to themselves increasingly as the 'family of nations.' Among other things, the family of nations promised to uphold Chinese sovereignty and give China its rightful place within it. Yet, for all the promises, the Western powers were not ready to accept it on equal terms, despite the fact that China had participated alongside Allied powers in WWI and had come a long way to meeting international standards. If anything, they continued their pre-war power politics practice in China, whose image remained one of a less civilised Other lacking—in the words of American President Woodrow Wilson—"full international statehood." Consequently, "The treaty system continued its operation, though not without modifications…. [and the treaty powers] still arrogated themselves the right to intrude into China's internal affairs when they felt their interests threatened."[85] It was primarily against this background, as I will argue in this section, that the Chinese, first excited by Western promises, were soon plunged into deep disappointment and forced to seek a radical alternative to their long-frustrated quest for wealth, power, and recognition from the international community. This radical alternative eventually brought the Communists to power and put to an end a century of Western jockeying for opportunity and privilege in that country.

'The Game Has to Be Stopped':
Chinese Disillusionment and the May Fourth Movement

As noted above, at the beginning of the Chinese Republican Revolution and the New Culture Movement, many Chinese intellectuals obtained a favourable impression of the West in general and the U.S. in particular.[86] Sun Yat-sen, an admirer of the West, assumed that the Western powers, even if not sympathetic to China, would at least allow it to reform itself along bourgeois democratic lines.[87] In particular, the end of WWI, allegedly marking the "end of militarism and the dawn of humanism,"[88] heightened the Chinese expectations. Having participated in a victorious war, and heartened by Woodrow Wilson's liberal doctrine of national self-determination, the Chinese seemed to have good reason to believe that:

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[85] Zhang, *China in International Society since 1949*, pp. 13, 15.
[86] With regard to favourable Chinese perceptions of the United States, see Yang Yusheng, *Zhongguoren de Meiguo guan: Yige lishi de kaocha* (Chinese Images of America: A Historical Survey), Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe, 1996.
[87] Hu Sheng, *Imperialism and Chinese Politics*, p. 173.
[88] Cai Yuanpei, quoted in Yang Yusheng, *Zhongguoren de Meiguo guan*, p. 74.

> China is now free to tell the world her grievances without fear of further outrages being committed against her, and moreover the Great Powers which have been fighting on the side of Righteousness are now more determined than ever to maintain the cause of Justice throughout the world…. In the view of President Wilson's declarations regarding the freedom and independence of small and weak states, and the entry of England into the war to uphold the sanctity of treaties, we can safely trust these two Great Powers to see to it that justice is rendered to us.[89]

With a long list of humiliations and sufferings at the hands of foreign powers, China harboured a great deal of hope for the upcoming peace conference to resolve its historical grievances and resume its rightful place in world affairs. However, at the Versailles Peace Conference, the Allies decided to maintain the colonialist system in China and turn over the former German concession areas in Shandong to Japan. When this news broke out, it instantly plunged China from high expectation to almost utter disappointment. To the Chinese, it seemed that the Western postwar "reconstruction of order in East Asia simply meant a restoration of the old order and a return to old patterns and to old days."[90] Chen Duxiu, who had described Wilson as the "first good man in the world" just a few months before, proclaimed that "Be it justice, permanent peace, or President Wilson's Fourteen Points, all turns out to be utterly worthless empty talk!"[91]

It was against this background that a massive student demonstration took place in Beijing on 4 May 1919. It quickly spread to other major cities, and was joined by industrial workers, shopkeepers, and employees in the commercial establishments throughout the country. The May Fourth Movement represented a turning point in Chinese responses to the West, not only in scale, but also in character. If previously the Chinese had shied away from fully embracing realpolitik thinking, they now saw power and self-help as indispensable for achieving national goals.[92] The influential Shanghai newspaper *Shen bao* ran an editorial which made a clear reference to the heightened relevance of the realist self-help principle to international affairs:

> At the outset of the Paris Conference, we heard a lot of what was called "the triumph of right and justice," "the upholding of the rights and privileges of small and weak nations,"

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[89] Quoted in Zhang Yongjin, *China in the International System*, p. 42.
[90] *Ibid*., p. 103.
[91] Quoted in Yang Yusheng, *Zhongguoren de Meiguo guan*, p. 77.
[92] As the British Minister Jordan wrote in early 1920, the European war and China's disappointment at Paris "impressed more strongly on the Chinese the necessity for seeking their salvation through their own exertions rather than through reliance on the support of foreign powers, more often than not accorded merely in order to obtain advantages over political or commercial rival." Quoted in Zhang Yongjin, *China in the International System*, p. 138.

> but what do we get? Whoever expects help from others is doomed to be disappointed. *Let our countrymen understand today once and for all that their only course is to act by themselves* [emphasis added].[93]

Reflecting on the public mood of the Chinese people at the time, the first Foreign Minister of the Republic of China, Liang Ruhao wrote:

> I consider that it is about time that our China should make a diplomatic stand against the present aggression, for our easy yielding in their most immoral international conduct would in my opinion lead to other equally uncalled for claims on the part of other land grabbing nations of which we had too sad experience during the recent period of the late reign…. The game has to be stopped, otherwise this paring process must inevitably end in our extinction as a nation.[94]

Furthermore, if previously many Chinese intellectuals had placed their hope in the West, the May Fourth Movement also marked the beginning of a disillusionment with Western values and behaviour. For example, Yan Fu, who as mentioned earlier had been a staunch advocate for Western learning, was disgusted by the "Faustian element in Western civilization" after WWI.[95] He observed that:

> The culture of Western countries since this European war has been corrupted completely… I feel that the three centuries of progress of their races have only accomplished four things, that is, to be selfish, to kill others, to have no integrity, and to lose the sense of shame…. This is not what I alone say; even Europeans who have good minds also gradually have got such notions.[96]

Another notable example was the influential reformer Liang Qichao. His account of his travels to Europe after WWI argued that Europeans overemphasised science and overdeveloped their material culture. This fostered the habit of serving up the weak as the meat for the strong, and created a society where people fought each other. Western civilisation was bankrupt; scientific inventions had encouraged warfare and the ruthless destruction of cultural traits.[97]

This was indeed a dramatic about-turn from the previous advocacy of Westernisation. Ironically, while many Chinese became increasingly aware that the Western game had to be stopped, they wanted to do so primarily by emulating the game themselves. Also, having condemned Western domination, many nevertheless accepted its underlying dichotomised way of looking at the world, and turned the dichotomy

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[93] Quoted in Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 504.
[94] Quoted in Zhang Yongjin, *China in the International System*, p. 38.
[95] Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, p. 242.
[96] Quoted in Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 151.
[97] See *Ibid*., p. 232.

between Western modernity and Chinese tradition on its head. For example, in the search for answers to the Chinese predicament, many reformers such as Kang Youwei, Yan Fu, and Liang Qichao now came full circle by returning to an advocacy of a 'Chinese essence.'

The West's 'New Order' in Asia and the Russian Influence on China

With the shock of the May Fourth Movement, notions of 'upholding Chinese territorial integrity' began to be heard more frequently from Western powers. President Wilson went to some length to assure the Chinese that wrongs done to China would be redressed by the League of Nations.[98] However, there is little doubt that beneath the Western goodwill gestures was a continued concern for their own political and commercial interests and the balance of power in China rather than for China per se.[99] Thus, even after the May Fourth Movement, still believing that China "cannot govern themselves, but must have a master,"[100] Western leaders saw no reason for a change of strategy on China. In 1923, U.S. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes proposed a business as usual approach and refused to surrender America's special privileges.[101] Certainly, with corporate interests now at the forefront of Western expansion, the business as usual approach often took a less violent form, as exemplified by trade. For example, the 1935 Hollywood film, *Oil For the Lamps of China*, featured a climactic scene in which a group of starry-eyed salesmen listened to an oil company executive who said:

> The company is sending you out to China to dispel the darkness of centuries with the light of a new era. Oil for the lamps of China. American oil. Helping to build a great corporation, helping to expand the frontier of civilization is a great ideal, gentlemen. But you have the youth, the vision and the courage to follow that ideal and with the unbounded faith of Galahads going into a strange land.[102]

In reference to their enduring resonance in Western foreign policy, Michael Schaller writes that "With only a few minor changes, the words might have been those of later presidents as they sent off economic advisers and soldiers to remake Asia in the

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[98] Zhang Yongjin, *China in the International System*, p. 120.
[99] *Ibid*., pp. 111, 116, 124.
[100] Rodney Gilbert, quoted in Colin Mackerras, *Western Images of China*, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 72.
[101] Paul Hibbert Clyde, *The Far East: A History of the Impact of the West on Eastern Asia*, New York: Prentice-Hall, 1948, p. 533; and Cohen, *America's Response to China*, p. 89.
[102] Quoted in Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, p. 18.

1950 and 1960s."[103] Thus, in an ostensibly altruistic way, the U.S., Japan, and other Western powers continued to jockey for the lion's share of China's market and resources. Meanwhile, foreign police and mercenaries acted to protect Western interests from Chinese anti-imperialist agitations with such highhandedness that the decade of the 1920s was filled with what the Chinese called *can'an*, or "cases of atrocious murder."[104] Faced with a formidable foreign omnipresence, the Chinese were deeply frustrated with the dilemma between the bitter experience that "In a world where might is right, national dignity and prestige [could not] be long sustained without national power"[105] and the virtual impossibility that China could catch up and compete with the Western powers in any foreseeable future. The nationalist movement of 1919 might have served as a highly symbolic victory over the imperialist powers, but it was a far cry from its professed goal of national salvation.

Amid this immense frustration came the news of the victory of the Russian October Revolution in 1917. The new Soviet government decided to abolish the unequal treaties between Tsarist Russia and China and relinquish all its privileges in China, including extraterritoriality and its share of the Boxer indemnities. Little wonder that this revolution caused a great sensation in China, as it seemed to have "showed the [Chinese] people the way to struggle to break away from the clutches of imperialism and gave them confidence in victory."[106] In this context, contrary to the popular explanations of the growth of Marxism and Communism in China as both the 'contagion' of the October Revolution and the work of a handful of Chinese fanatics with an instinctive taste for radical ideas,[107] its growth was primarily the end result of persistent Western aggression, which even pushed some key Chinese liberals into converting to Marxism and Communism. As Fairbank observed, "Even if Communism had never been invented, we would probably face today a great deal of Chinese hostility. The origin of the Peking-Washington impasse cannot be blamed wholly on Marx and Lenin."[108] Indeed, it might well be speculated that had the Western powers not behaved the way they did in China, there might have been a different Chinese reaction to the Russian Revolution.

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[103] *Ibid*., p. 19.
[104] Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 531.
[105] Tung, *China and the Foreign Powers*, p. 145.
[106] Hu Sheng, *Imperialism and Chinese Politics*, p. 246.
[107] For a brief description of such explanations, see Hunt, "Chinese Foreign Relations in Historical Perspective," pp. 4-5.
[108] Fairbank, *China: The People's Middle Kingdom and the U.S.A.*, p. 111.

One of the first Chinese to recognise the revolution's significance was Li Dazhao. He claimed that the revolution "is the victory of the red flag; it is the victory of the labor class of the world; and it is the victory of the twentieth century's new tide."[109] Chen Duxiu agreed and converted to Marxism. Now disenchanted with the West, Chen regarded democracy as no more than a tool used by the bourgeoisie "to swindle mankind in order to maintain political power."[110] In 1921, it was these two figures who founded the CCP. To a lesser extent, Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Chinese Nationalist Party, or the Kuomintang (KMT),[111] was also influenced by the Russians, after his disappointment with the lack of Western support for his international development plan for China.[112] In 1924, the KMT and the CCP formed a revolutionary united front.

After the death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925, the KMT leadership was taken by Chiang Kai-shek. As a trained military leader from the lower level of the ruling gentry class, Chiang "belonged to the generation of Chinese patriots who felt that China could be saved from imperialism only by military strength," and therefore had "no vision of the social revolution through the incorporation of the masses in politics."[113] Consequently, with the support of the Shanghai-Nanjing financial circles, Chiang split with the Communists. Furthermore, perceiving Communism as a threat to his political ambition, Chiang ordered his military forces to wipe out the Communists.

Meanwhile, partly due to the partial retreat of the European powers after the WWI destruction and partly due to Chiang's consolidated control of a reunified China from 1928, Republican China gradually made some headway in applying its learned experience of power politics to its relations with Japan and the Western Powers.[114] In 1928-31, China negotiated with a number of countries to replace unequal treaties with new treaties based on the principles of equality and reciprocity.

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[109] Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, pp. 246-247.
[110] Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 516.
[111] The KMT's precursor was the Tongmeng Hui founded in 1905, which was reorganised into the Chinese Revolutionary Party in 1914, before changed to its presence name in 1919.
[112] Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, pp. 518-519. At that time, Sun Yat-sen was ridiculed by some Westerners as "a dreamer of dreams" and "a blind leader of the blind," whose "ideals of government and reform are the result of undigested Socialistic theories combined with a purely imaginative and idealised conception of China and the Chinese." J.O.P. Bland, *Recent Events and Present Policies in China*, London: William Heinemann, 1912, pp. 51-52.
[113] Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution*, p. 213.
[114] William C. Kirby, "The Internationalization of China: Foreign Relations At Home and Abroad in the Republican Era," in Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Richard Louis Edmonds, eds., *Reappraising Republican China*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 188-190.

However, for all the diplomatic uplift, China's entry into the family of nations was largely symbolic. Whenever possible, the Western powers strived to hold on to the privileges in their spheres of influence, as their attitude towards the Chinese 'Other' remained characterised by contempt and condescension. As the sailor in the novel *The Sand Pebbles* remarked: "… China is like Indian country in the old days in the States…. The businessmen and the missionaries are the settlers."[115] Nebraska's Republican Senator Kenneth Wherry, a leading advocate of Chiang Kai-shek's cause, once told a group of Americans that "with God's help," they could "lift Shanghai up and up, ever up, until it is just like Kansas City."[116] Consequently, in the hope of winning more Chinese to Christianity, American missions like the 'China for Christ' movement gained new momentum in the lead up to World War II.

The 'Loss of China': Western Policies and the Chinese Communist Victory

While Chiang Kai-shek and his elite followers were content to see China's entrance into the international power system in the late 1920s as a tangible sign of the Chinese Renaissance, it in fact constituted only a renaissance of China's old gentry class, which had become, as it were, part of the dominant Western establishment in China. The masses, far from reaping its benefits, bore the brunt of the increasing burden of China's 'modern' development. The 1920s has been called by some Western scholars a time of "economic and cultural innovation and creativity to which contemporaries should turn for inspiration."[117] But this is also a period which saw widespread famines across China's vast rural areas.[118] This situation may partly explain why the Chinese Communist Party remained politically relevant in China, despite a series of major military setbacks at the hands of the KMT. When many natural catastrophes in rural China "passed hardly noticed in the Western world, and even in the coastal cities of China,"[119] the CCP came to realise that its strength lay in fighting for the cause of the

[115] Robert Freeman Smith, "Republican Policy and the Pax Americana 1921-1932," in William Appleman Williams ed., *From Colony to Empire: Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972, p. 284.
[116] Cohen, *America's Response to China*, p. 179.
[117] Marie-Claire Bergère, "Civil Society and Urban Change in Republican China," in Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Richard Louis Edmonds, eds., *Reappraising Republican China*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 55.
[118] For example, as Edgar Snow reported, during the great North-West famine in the late 1920s, the death toll from a conservative semi-official figure was 3 million. Alongside such a great catastrophe was the morbid prosperity in the towns and cities. See Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, rev. ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972, pp. 247-252.
[119] *Ibid*., p. 247.

oppressed peasants and therefore "was able increasingly to make itself the leader of a profound social revolution that was long overdue."[120]

In 1935 during the Long March to circumvent Chiang Kai-shek's determined onslaught, Mao Zedong became the CCP's new leader. Growing up "under the shadow of World War I and the possible loss of Shandong to the Japanese," Mao developed a realist understanding of international affairs as "perpetual and incessant inequality and lack of freedom as well as the threat of war."[121] Seeing the collaboration between the imperialist powers and China's ruling class as the root cause of the country's daunting problems, Mao believed that the solution must combine national revolution against imperialism with a proletariat revolution against the ruling class. In this way, Mao Zedong showed himself as much a realist nationalist as a Marxist or Communist. Based primarily on realist principles of the national interest and the balance of power, he identified "the fundamental issue before the Chinese people today" as "the struggle against Japanese imperialism," and was willing to cooperate with what he once called "friendly and nonaggressive democratic capitalist powers" like America, Britain, and France.[122]

At the same time, the game of power politics among the Western powers not only lingered on, but was brought to a new height by their favourite Asian pupil Japan, which formally occupied north-eastern China (Manchuria) in 1931. Apart from their non-recognition policy, the United States and the toothless League of Nations did nothing to stop the aggression. After all, Japan might as well be forgiven for playing "our game in Asia," as Theodore Roosevelt once remarked.[123] Indeed, the emergence of a belligerent Japan in the 1930s was viewed largely as a success story of the Western conversion of an Asian nation. Many American top officials, even those most sympathetic towards China, now lost faith in the Chinese government's ability to modernise and concluded that "Japanese domination of China would be in the best interests of the United States—and of China as well!"[124] Still, with China left to its own devices in the struggle for national survival, Chiang Kai-shek, not confident that his army would stand up to Japan's military assault, continued to bet on mediation by the 'family of nations.'

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[120] Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution*, p. 218.
[121] Quoted in Niu Jun, "The Origins of Mao Zedong's Thinking on International Affairs (1916-1949)," in Michael H. Hunt and Niu Jun eds., *Toward a History of Chinese Communist Foreign Relations, 1920s-1960s*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Asia Program, 1992, p. 3.
[122] Snow, *Red Star Over China*, pp. 120-121; Niu Jun, "The Origins of Mao Zedong's Thinking on International Affairs," pp. 8-9; and Zi Zhongyun, "Bainian sixiang de chongji yu zhuangji," p. 22.
[123] Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, p. 32.
[124] Cohen, *America's Response to China*, p. 113.

Not until Japan's military offensive expanded from China into Southeast Asia did the Western powers begin to take seriously the danger posed by Japan, as Western interests in their Asian colonies now came under direct threat. Finally, it took the surprise Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor in 1941 for the U.S. to enter WWII. It seemed that only at this time did the West wake up to the irony that it was precisely the Westernised Japan that proved one of its most dreadful enemies. And only in this context was China:

> … transformed by Pearl Harbor into a gallant ally, battered but still eager to fight and lacking only American arms and guidance to smite mightily the common foe…. China's great importance in Roosevelt's grand strategy was in the postwar world where China would take the place of Japan as the leading oriental power, but a friendly one collaborating with the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union to create a better world.[125]

Indeed, during WWII, Western images of China changed from a benighted country in need of Western tutelage and governance to a country of great courage and potential, sharing a common cause. For example, the U.S. Office of War Information in its manual for the movie industry emphasised that Hollywood should portray China as "a great nation, cultured and liberal, with whom, inevitably, we will be closely bound in the world that is to come."[126] At the time, many Americans believed that a China, led by Chiang Kai-shek who behaved like a decent "Protestant Anglo-Saxon," looked set to make "ultimate progress toward a liberal, democratic, and friendly government."[127] In addition, Chiang Kai-shek's public conversion to Christianity and his marriage to an American-educated woman were widely taken as visible signs of China's willingness to become more like 'us.'[128]

However, the perceptual change was neither because China had changed overnight nor because America had regretted its past treatment of China. Rather, it was primarily because China, which had by now endured a decade of Japanese aggression, could now be an asset in the defence of U.S. national interests against Japan. Perhaps more importantly, the growing sympathy with China had much to do with the fact that,

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[125] John Paton Davies, "America and East Asia," in William P. Bundy ed., *Two Hundred Years of American Foreign Policy*, New York: New York University Press, 1977, p. 127
[126] Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation*, New York: BasicBooks, 1995, p. 59.
[127] Cohen, *America's Response to China*, pp. 114, 136.
[128] Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, p. 44.

as Fairbank pointed out, the ruling Kuomintang regime, "with all its evils, it is a known quantity and *looks to us for leadership* in international affairs [emphasis added]."[129]

In this context, any internal challenge to Chiang Kai-shek would be considered a threat to the U.S. as well. Therefore, though officially pursuing a neutral policy of bringing about a united and democratic China by peaceful means, the U.S. government "intervened from the beginning on the anti-Communist side."[130] Bolstered by American money, weapons and advisors, Chiang Kai-shek felt no need to negotiate with the Communists for a previously agreed 'coalition government.' Following the end of World War II, Chiang resumed his anti-Communist offensive and precipitated a three-year civil war, a war, together with China itself (except the Taiwan island), eventually lost to Mao Zedong-led Communist forces in 1949. Without the American aid to the KMT, Chinese historian Jian Bozan argued, China might have been spared a bloody civil war.[131]

The 'loss of China' to the Communists proved as shocking to the United States as it did to Chiang Kai-shek. The U.S. believed that it had done nothing to deserve such a betrayal from China, which it had long 'befriended' and tried hard to 'save,' whether through its Open Door policy or the missionary movement. After all, they held dear a long-standing self-imagery that it was America's manifest destiny to lead the world to peace, freedom, and progress. And it was mainly through this lens that China had been looked at fondly as an 'opportunity' by Americans, who loved to invoke the notion of its "longstanding friendship for the people of China,"[132] and expected the Chinese to show due gratitude to its benevolence. Thus, when that 'opportunity' and special relationship suddenly evaporated, it was little wonder that Americans felt betrayed by China, which could now only be comprehended as a threat within an either/or, black/white framework. That is, were it not for an evil force 'out there,' the China 'loss' would not have been possible. That 'evil force' was quickly identified as Communism. Indeed, many believed that the 'loss of China' could only be explained in terms of Mao Zedong's ideological commitment to Communism and his intrinsic view of world

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[129] Fairbank, *China Perceived*, p. 6.
[130] Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution*, p. 261.
[131] See Yang Yusheng, *Zhongguoren de Meiguo guan*, pp. 201-202.
[132] Statement by President Harry S. Truman, November 16, 1950. Quoted in John G. Stoessinger, *Nations at Dawn: China, Russia, and America*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994, p. 52. On the American perception of a "special relationship" with China, see Michael H. Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

politics as a final struggle between revolution and counter-revolution,[133] which was part of a worldwide Communist conspiracy led by the Soviets and aided by certain 'communist sympathisers' at the top level of U.S. government.

Yet, again, their discursive construction of the American self hindered an understanding of their own active contribution to the 'loss of China' and to the creation of the enemy. While Mao Zedong's ideological commitment was no doubt an important factor, it is erroneous to say that whatever else the United States and other Western powers might have done in China, Mao would by nature set China inevitably on a collision course with the West.[134] Fairbank wrote that "We [Americans] were and are involved in East Asian power politics at least as much as in those of Europe…. Once we see ourselves as an integral part, and now the major representative, of the Western world that was the nineteenth-century agent of traditional China's downfall, perhaps we can reduce our own resentment at Mao's resentment."[135] And if indeed, as Tang Tsou put it, the Communists were guilty of stirring up intense popular enthusiasm through propaganda,[136] the predatory behaviour of Japan, the United States and other Western powers in China certainly had long made such propaganda more rather than less credible to the Chinese populace. As Jack Belden notes,

> One did not have to be an international spy to discover that many Chinese intellectuals in Peiping, outside of government circles, believed that America was primarily responsible for the continuance of the civil war in China because she was arming Chiang Kai-shek. Nor did one have to be a prophet to conclude that the longer American troops stayed on Chinese soil the easier would it be for the Communists to sell their propaganda line to the people that Chiang Kai-shek had become a tool of the United States.[137]

To sum up, throughout the century, much like today, China had been widely perceived as full of opportunities for religious conversion, commercial profits, and the expansion

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[133] Tang Tsou, *America's Failure in China 1941-50*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1963, pp. 186-188, 209-210.

[134] This was a view expressed by Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who wrote in the preface of the American "White Paper" on China (*United States Relations with China, With Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949*) that "The ominous result of the civil war in China was beyond the control of the government of the United States. Nothing that this country did or could have done, within the reasonable limits of its capabilities could have changed the result; nothing that was left undone by this country has contributed to it. It was the product of internal Chinese forces, forces which this country tried to influence but could not." Quoted in Meribeth E. Cameron, Thomas H.D. Mahoney, and George E. McReynolds, *China, Japan and the Powers: A History of the Modern Far East*, New York: Ronald Press, 1960, p. 602. Also, John Gittings, *The World and China, 1922-1972*, London: Eyre Methuen, 1974, p. 168.

[135] Fairbank, *China: The People's Middle Kingdom and the U.S.A.*, p. 98.

[136] Tsou, *America's Failure in China*, p. 205.

[137] Jack Belden, *China Shakes the World*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970, p. 34.

of the family of nations. At one level, I have argued in this chapter that such perceptions, based primarily on Western, particularly American, self-imagination and self-interests, served as the main regulative ideal and driving force for Western aggression and exploitation in China. At another level, I have also sought to illustrate that these discursive practices in turn were largely (though by no means solely) responsible for the rise of Chinese hostility, nationalism, power politics response, and Communist influence, the combined consequences of which eventually led to the 'loss of China.' Indeed, the loss of 'opportunity' in China for the West seemed to have begun as soon as the West saw it as 'opportunity' to be exploited and controlled. As Warren Cohen rightly points out, "Those with experience in China, the 'old China hands,' including missionaries, insisted on a policy of firmness, warning that the Chinese would mistake generosity for weakness…. They cherished not China, but the opportunities China gave them—opportunities to reform that 'benighted' country, to fulfill their Christian missions, or to make profits."[138] As a result, what was seen as 'opportunity' for the West almost invariably turned out to be crises, humiliations, and exploitations for the majority of the Chinese. In this process, many Chinese gradually realised from their encounters with the West that if the game was to be stopped, the best way they saw was, ironically, through learning from the West, particularly its military technology, nationalism, power politics ideas, and a dichotomous worldview of self and Other. In this way, China was transformed into an intimate enemy of the West, one of the West's own making.

From this, it should become clear that realpolitik thinking was not, as contemporary realists have assumed, an inherent cultural trait in Chinese foreign policy making, nor was it a consequence of a timeless anarchical international structure. Rather, it was primarily made 'real' and 'natural' by the fact that the Western powers had constantly *chosen* to behave in China that way. In this sense, to reiterate, the question of 'what China is' cannot be appropriately answered without also examining how China has been constructed by Western discourse and socio-political practice associated with it. To a large extent, this is also true with regard to Western conception of China as a 'Red Menace' in the Cold War, an issue with which I want now to engage in the following chapter.

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[138] Cohen, *America's Response to China*, p. 48.

4

The Imagined Enemies in the Cold War: Social (Re)Constructions of Sino-U.S. Relations 1949-1989

> *the best way to stimulate Chinese expansion is for us to mount an overfearful and overactive preparation against it. History suggests that China has her own continental realm, a big one; that Chinese power is still inveterately land-based and bureaucratic, not maritime and commercial; and that we are likely to see emerging from China roughly the amount of expansion that we provoke.*
>
> John K. Fairbank[1]

THE 'loss of China' to the Communists in 1949 put an end to the largely liberal optimism of China as 'opportunity' that had been held among the Western powers. In the previous chapter, I sought to illustrate the linkage between this image and gunboat diplomacy towards China on the one hand, and the rise of nationalism, realist power politics, and Communist influence in Chinese foreign relations on the other. With the Communist victory came the ostensibly more realistic notion of China (or in its official name, the People's Republic of China, or PRC) as the 'Red Menace' in the West. For more than half of the Cold War period, this notion served as a starting point for both China studies and American (and to a less extent, European and Australian) foreign policy on China and the region.[2] Indeed, in an attempt to confront the 'reality' of the 'Red Menace,' the United States was engaged in two major hot wars in Asia within a period of a little more than twenty years. Even today, as I will argue in the next chapter, the power of the 'Red Menace' image can still be felt, as some Western policy-makers

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[1] John K. Fairbank, *China Perceived: Images & Policies in Chinese-American Relations*, London: André Deutsch, 1976, p. 60

[2] In 1964, Australian Minister for External Affairs Paul Hasluck said that "The fear of China is the dominant element in much that happens in Asia, and the fear is well founded." Quoted in Gregory Clark, *In Fear of China*, Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1967, p. xi.

continue to call the country 'Red China,' a term still capable of stirring up fear and loathing in the Western public psyche,[3] while many others simply revamp it in terms of a 'China threat.'

In this chapter, based on a critical reading of the history of Sino-American interactions in the Cold War period,[4] I seek to continue to problematise the positivist approach to studying Chinese foreign policy in terms of 'the way it is' by first illustrating how the 'Red Menace' of China was not a pre-existing reality, but a discursive and social construct, made 'real' largely by a Western discourse of it, a discourse which, as mentioned in previous chapters, was a corollary of the particular way in which the West in general and the U.S. in particular constituted their selves. By constructing China as a 'real and present danger,' the discourse was constitutive of practice, more often than not in a self-fulfilling manner. On the one hand, it justified a hostile Western policy of isolation and containment as the only rational response to that 'danger.' On the other hand, at the receiving end of such a policy, China found itself with no alternative but to respond in kind, often with the same degree of hostility and belligerence (at least rhetorically), thereby 'confirming' the original conception of the 'Red Menace.' This kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, as will be noted in the discussion to follow, was characteristic of the Sino-American interactions during the first half of the Cold War.

Further, despite its self-fulfilling nature, I want then to argue that precisely because the 'Red Menace' was socially constructed or imagined, it could be re-constructed or re-imagined, both in theory and practice, as something different and/or less threatening. This had been the case in the second half of the Cold War, a period which saw a continued U.S.-China rapprochement following Richard Nixon's 1972 historic visit to Beijing until the 1989 crackdown on the Tiananmen demonstrations. This was a period of relative cooperation and mutual trust between the PRC and the U.S., even if there was no softening of ideological stances or on military matters on either side. Consequently, the 'Red Menace' discourse, however self-fulfilling in practice, also has its limitation and paradox. That is, it conjured up an 'Other' which,

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[3] One typical example is the recently retired U.S. Senator Jesse Helms, former Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

[4] After World War II, the United States replaced Britain as the predominant power in the West, and to a large extent, Sino-Western relations in the Cold War were dictated by Sino-American relations. Therefore, in the following analysis, I will focus mainly on U.S.-China relations.

however frightening, could not possibly be eradicated or totally defeated in the end, but had to be accommodated in one way or another.

The Construction of the 'Red Menace' and Its Policy Implications

The terms 'threat' in general and 'Red Menace' in particular are as much an expression of the subjective feeling of fear as they are an 'objective' description of something that is 'actually' threatening. Indeed, the distinction between subjective impression and objective reality is always blurred or even misleading, because the feeling of fear of something is often enough to project on it a seemingly independent meaning of danger, which may subsequently become 'real' in practice. This, I argue, was how the perception of China as the 'Red Menace' had functioned in Sino-Western relations in the first half of the Cold War.

To begin with, it must be acknowledged that the emergence of China as the 'Red Menace' in the West was not derived from sheer fantasy. After 1949, as the new Communist regime in China revoked almost all the privileges enjoyed by the Western powers for nearly a century, it seemed hardly surprising that the West felt at a loss or even threatened. And at the popular level, the 'Red Menace' image seemed to strike a chord with familiar stories of opium dens, the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, dark streets in Chinatown, and the treacherous film character of Dr. Fu Manchu.[5] For a long time, the country's populousness was another factor arousing fear in the West. As Raymond Dawson pointed out, "In our crowded Western European societies prolificness is often looked down on and associated with poverty and fecklessness."[6] Furthermore, the yellow-skinned Chinese could also become easily associated with fear because "being 'yellow' means being afraid," according to old European medical folklore about the disease of jaundice.[7]

Still, all this did not justify the belief that a 'Red Menace' of China existed in its own right. Take the seemingly tangible evidence of the Boxer Rebellion for example. As noted in the previous chapter, the rebellion was not in itself a pre-existing threat to

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[5] See Warren I. Cohen, "American Perceptions of China," in Michel Oksenberg and Robert B. Oxnam eds., *Dragon and Eagle: United States-China Relations: Past and Future*, New York: Basic Books, 1978, p. 77.

[6] Raymond Dawson, *The Chinese Chameleon: An Analysis of European Perceptions of Chinese Civilization*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 149-150.

[7] Harold Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India*, New York: J. Day, 1958, p. 97. See also Lachlan Strahan, *Australia's China: Changing Perceptions from the 1930s to the 1990s*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 77.

the West, but rather a threat prompted by outrageous Western (particularly missionary) behaviour in China. Nor did the fact that the West was no longer able to directly control China necessarily mean that the latter would now venture down a path of controlling and threatening the West. On the contrary, after the formal end of Western domination in China, the West and the United States in particular would still be able to exert enormous influence on China's future, a point not lost on its Communist leaders. In 1944, Mao Zedong told an American mission that the U.S. had nothing to fear from the Communists: "America does not need to fear we will not cooperate. We must cooperate and we must have American help…. We cannot risk crossing you—cannot risk conflict with you." As Michael Schaller notes, the Communists did not deny their commitment to a Chinese revolution, but they did constantly assert the belief that a communist China need not threaten American interests.[8] On 1 October 1949, the day the PRC was founded, Mao Zedong proclaimed that "the Chinese people have stood up!" With the euphoria of having finally achieved national independence, the new government sought to establish diplomatic and trade relations with all other countries on the basis of "equality, mutual benefit, and mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty."[9] These norms were adapted from the main principles of the Westphalian interstate system. Given the new government's eagerness to gain international recognition and legitimacy, it seemed unlikely that Communist China would risk taking on the West and disrupting the existing international order.

Perhaps for this reason, many in the West were not greatly alarmed, at least initially, by China's going red. For them, it was a pity that the China 'opportunity' was gone, but it seemed that the PRC showed little sign of becoming a major power in the foreseeable future, given its legacy of backwardness, a peasant-dominated society, and a myriad of problems as a result of a spate of recent devastating wars. Indeed, not long after the establishment of the PRC, George Kennan asserted that "China doesn't matter very much. It's not very important. It's never going to be powerful."[10] Even during the Korean War, General MacArthur expressed his disregard for China this way: "Never, in our day, will atomic weapons be turned out of China. They cannot turn out the ordinary

[8] Michael Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 99-100.
[9] See Han Nianlong et al. eds., *Diplomacy of Contemporary China*, Hong Kong: New Horizon Press, 1990, p. 10.
[10] Quoted in "Why China Matters," *Asiaweek*, October 15, 1999, p. 16.

weapons."[11] Thus, for a while, previous Western fondness for a weak and responsive China was replaced with an attitude of bitter distrust for a still weak but 'lost' China, but this fell short of an attitude of fear.

However, the question here is not about whether the 'Red Menace' was real, but why some key policy-makers in the United States started to believe it real. This, as argued in Chapter 2, was consistent with the Western, particularly American, construction of the Soviet Other in order to solve their inherent paradox or dilemma in reality. Therefore, the threat of China was based similarly on America's missionary impulse and its sense of omnipotence and universality, and served to provide a rationale for explaining the difficulty America faced in projecting its ideal on a truly global scale. Consequently, such an understanding of China, according to Michael Schaller, "had relatively little to do with China itself. [It] reflected our own fear of people who challenged American values."[12] For example, even before the creation of the PRC, a key document drawn up by the U.S. National Security Council had already speculated that "The extension of communist authority in China represents a grievous political defeat for us… If South-east Asia is also swept by communism, we shall have suffered a major political rout the repercussions of which will be felt throughout the rest of the world."[13]

Indeed, it was in the same vein, as some have pointed out, that the Soviet threat had been constructed.[14] The Soviet threat provided a ready-made image which now served as a convenient prototypical framework for understanding China, based on their ideological commonality and the newly signed treaty between the two countries in 1950. Referring to China's involvement in the Korean War, Dean Rusk (later Secretary of State under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson) insisted that the Chinese were "driven by foreign masters." Seeing the Beijing regime as a possible "colonial Russian government—a Slavic Manchukuo on a larger scale," Rusk passed his judgment with the usual self-confidence associated with the modern knowing subject: "It is not the government of China. It will not pass the first test. It is not Chinese."[15]

Such was the construction of China, a construction conditioned largely on the particular discursive imagination of the American self. However, while the meaning

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[11] Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1971*, 2nd ed., New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1972, p. 121.
[12] Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, p. 123.
[13] Quoted in John Gittings, *The World and China, 1922-1972*, London: Eyre Methuen, 1974, p. 170.
[14] See for example, Simon Dalby, "Geopolitical Discourse: The Soviet Union as Other," *Alternatives* 13, no. 4 (1988), pp. 415-442; and Charles E. Nathanson, "The Social Construction of the Soviet Threat: A Study in the Politics of Representation," *Alternatives* 13, no. 4 (1988), pp. 443-483.
[15] Quoted in Cohen, "American Perceptions of China," p. 78.

given to China was primarily discursive in nature, its constituted naturalness was to have some profound practical implications for Sino-U.S. relations in the Cold War era, in terms such as the dramatic increase in mutual hostility between the two nations and even the domestic upheaval experienced by China. Its implications also went beyond bilateral relations as this Cold War hostility poisoned American relations with other nations in the region and shaped the contours of a geopolitical and strategic alignment that would still be recognisable today.

To begin with, the 'Red Menace' provided a specific frame of reference for how the eruption of the Korean War on 25 June 1950 was to be understood and responded to. With the war seen as nothing but a new frontier war between good and evil, or a recurrence of totalitarian aggression in Asia, the U.S. did not hesitate to intervene. And perceiving China as behind this evil force, President Truman deployed the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait to prevent possible PRC attacks on Taiwan. Meanwhile, within five months of the outbreak of the war, the intervening U.N. forces, led by General Douglas MacArthur, had pressed on towards the Yalu River, the boundary between Korea and China.

For China, meanwhile, U.S. military intervention in Korea and the Taiwan Strait posed an unmistakable threat to its national security and unification. On 13 October 1950, Mao Zedong wrote to Premier Zhou Enlai: "If we do not send troops, allowing the enemy to press to the Yalu border and the arrogance of reactionaries at home and abroad to grow, this will be disadvantageous to all sides."[16] Zhou Enlai relayed this message to the United States on many occasions, warning that China would not "stand idly by" if American forces crossed the 38th parallel and approached the Yalu.[17] These warnings, dismissed as mere bluff, fell on deaf ears. As the war raged on near its border, China proclaimed that it must check the Western aggression "with force and compel them to stop… there is no alternative."[18] As a consequence, it sent a million Chinese 'volunteers' across the Yalu in October 1950, joining forces with North Korean troops to drive the U.N. forces back to the 38th parallel.

China's military intervention in the Korean War, quickly branded by a U.N. resolution as 'aggression,' in turn was to be widely interpreted by the West as further

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[16] Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War*, New York: Macmillan, 1960, p. 155.
[17] Edgar Snow, *Red China Today*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970, p. 117.
[18] *People's Daily*, November 11, 1950, quoted in Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, p. 136.

proof of the country's menacing character so that America's action in the Korean War could be represented as a *response* to the Communist aggression. But, as Zhou Enlai later told Edgar Snow, China's intervention "*was not taken until four months after the United States stationed its forces in the Taiwan Straits and exercised military control over Taiwan*, and not until United States troops had crossed the Thirty-eighth Parallel and approached the Yalu River."[19] Nevertheless, the consequence was that, as J. H. Kalicki puts it, "the stage was set for a Korean crisis which the Chinese had not instigated and whose consequences neither they nor the Americans were to desire."[20] Over the next three years, the war caused 142,000 American and almost six times more Chinese casualties, and ended in an intractable stalemate. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar Bradley described the Korean War as "the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy."[21]

For some scholars, nevertheless, China's response was uncalled for. Shu Guang Zhang argues that it was an overreaction based on a Chinese misunderstanding of America's intention. China, he insists, should have recognised that America's intervention was for the purpose of "defending world peace, containing communism, and protecting non-communist countries." He goes on:

> Without understanding why the United States had emphasized a chain-of-islands defense and the security of sea lanes in the Pacific, the Beijing authorities mistook the rearming of Japan, the stationing of U.S. troops in the Philippines, and, later, U.S. military commitment to Korea, Taiwan, and French Indochina as indications of a plot against China first and the Soviet Union second.[22]

But I would suggest that China's understanding of the situation in question was less mistaken than the interpretation offered here by Zhang, whose argument rests explicitly on the familiar American self-imaginary. *Were it not for its experience of a century of humiliation at the hands of Western powers, including the United States, China might have interpreted those American moves differently, perhaps more favourably*. And given that the Communists were still at war with the Nationalist government on Taiwan, it seemed almost impossible for China not to see U.S. support for Taiwan as hostile, to

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[19] Snow, *Red China Today*, p. 117.
[20] J. H. Kalicki, *The Pattern of Sino-American Crises: Political-Military Interactions in the 1950s*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 38.
[21] Quoted in Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad since 1750*, 2nd ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1994, p. 529.
[22] Shu Guang Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949-1958*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992, pp. 273-274.

say nothing of the fact that American politicians had all along made no secret of their intention of containing China.

In fact, in the early stage of the Cold War, the word 'containment' was deemed not strong enough to effectively deal with the China 'menace.' In January 1953, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles condemned containment as a "policy which is bound to fail because a purely defensive policy never wins against an aggressive policy."[23] In a 1957 speech, Dulles insisted that the Chinese Communist regime was a "passing and not a perpetual phase," and from this assertion flowed the policy that "We owe it to ourselves, our allies and the Chinese people to do all that we can to contribute to that passing."[24] In a way, these statements, foreshadowing the current Bush Doctrine of 'pre-emptive war' and 'regime change,' demonstrate that the Bush Doctrine is not completely new but rather a 'logical' development of the dominant way in which America represents its Other.

According to other analysts, China's intervention in the Korean War reflected primarily its outrage at the challenge to its age-old leadership among the smaller states on its periphery.[25] In other words, its intervention was still unnecessary. Safeguarding its traditional leadership in East Asia might be one element behind China's decision to go to war, but there was more to this consideration. As MacArthur pursued a "rolling back communism" policy, talked about a full-scale war against China as the only way to win the Korean War, and even threatened to target Chinese cities with atomic bombs,[26] it seemed clear that China's very survival was at stake, not just its 'Middle Kingdom' prestige or ideological integrity. As Chinese historian He Di points out:

> Contrary to the prevailing interpretation that Mao Zedong's decision to help Korea resulted from his ideology—that is, to provide internationalist help to Korea to counterattack U.S. expansion in Asia—Mao actually gave priority to national security and the national interest in the face of war. Concern for the international communist movement and ideology did not constitute an important part in Mao's overall consideration.[27]

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[23] LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1971*, p. 151.
[24] Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967, p. 351.
[25] Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, 5th ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 662.
[26] James Chace and Caleb Carr, *America Invulnerable: The Quest for Absolute Security from 1812 to Star Wars*, New York: Summit Books, 1988, p. 251.
[27] He Di, "The Most Respected Enemy: Mao Zedong's Perception of the United States," in Michael H. Hunt and Niu Jun eds., *Toward a History of Chinese Communist Foreign Relations, 1920s-1960s*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Asia Program, 1992, p. 36.

Nevertheless, in the wake of the Korean conflict, the U.S. was convinced more than ever that the Communist threat from both the Soviet Union and China was real. Consequently, it embarked upon a program of building a counterbalance to Communist military power through strengthening its military bases, alliances and aid programs in Asia.[28] Not only was America now on China's doorstep, but it also completed a virtual military encirclement of Beijing. In the 1950s, America concluded a series of bilateral alliances with Japan, the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan as well as multilateral alliances such as the ANZUS Treaty with Australia and New Zealand and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), all signed with nations surrounding China's perimeter. In particular, with the signing of the Mutual Defence Treaty between Washington and Taipei in December 1954, Taiwan was formally incorporated into the East Asian containment ring. For some time, it has been a standard myth of Cold War historians that America's Mutual Defence Treaty with Taiwan was an American response to China's shelling of the Offshore Islands in the Taiwan Strait three months before. But as John Gittings suggests, "This is chronologically upside down. The Treaty had been discussed since early in 1954, and Chinese propaganda *before* the shelling began took it fully into account."[29]

In addition, America offered massive aid programs to countries adjacent to China. Since no 'friendly,' viable regime existed in the southern part of Vietnam, American planners resolved to create one before Vietnam's scheduled 1956 national elections.[30] Due to its growing concern over the 'China threat,' in 1957, the U.S. increased its Mutual Security Program funds by nearly 40 percent, and much of the increase went to Burma, Indonesia, and South Vietnam.[31] In his first State of Union message, President John F. Kennedy warned that "In Asia, the relentless pressures of the Chinese Communists menace the security of the entire area—from the borders of India and South Viet Nam to the jungles of Laos."[32] In the name of defending security, Kennedy decided that it was essential to control nationalisms in Southeast Asia in case they fell prey to Communism. "When viewed through the national security lens," as James K. Boyce puts it, "the struggles of peasants for land… and nationalists for self-determination appeared as the witting or unwitting manifestations" of an orchestrated

[28] A. Doak Barnett, *Communist China and Asia: Challenge to American Policy*, New York: Vantage Books, 1960, p. 122.
[29] Gittings, *The World and China*, p. 197n.
[30] Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 147-148.
[31] LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, p. 204.
[32] *Ibid*., p. 238.

Communist conspiracy originated from Moscow and Beijing.[33] This was exactly how Washington interpreted and later became involved in Vietnam's nationalist struggle for independence and unity, an involvement which eventually evolved into yet another prolonged and more disastrous war on China's periphery, the Vietnam War.

Cold War Containment and the Radicalisation of Chinese Foreign Relations

The U.S. heavy investment in containing the 'Red Menace,' more than anything else, had made the 'Red Menace' appear real to Western policy-makers, China specialists, and the general public. After all, didn't the Chinese fight a war against 'us' on the Korean Peninsula? In this way, the inherent connection between the discourse and the reality of the 'Red Menace' became obscured, and what the West and the United States had done to China was forgotten or was regarded as necessary 'responses' to the China threat.

Without denying the realness of some level of Chinese hostility, I nevertheless want to emphasise that China's 'aggressiveness' had much to do with its enormous anger, deep frustration, and insecurity as a result of Western containment, which was as much a provocation as it was a response. So what, some may argue, so long as it could successfully contain the threat? Indeed, in the aftermath of the Korean War, American containment policy was in some sense a 'success,' as China became virtually incapable of doing anything about its precarious international environment. Compared to a shaken but relatively unscathed America, China suffered more losses, not only in terms of human losses, but also in terms of its dashed hope to join the U.N. to gain international recognition. Although its disappointment was "turned into frustrated antagonism,"[34] both the enormous costs of the Korean War and America's subsequent omnipresence in Asia served as a painful reminder that from a position of weakness, China could ill afford to take on its more powerful Western enemies. In order to compensate for this, China had to strike the difficult balance between defending its national sovereignty and avoiding direct military confrontation with the U.S. In this context, so went the conventional Western wisdom: "even if [we] are wrong in [our] assessment of China as

[33] James K. Boyce, "Area Studies and the National Security State," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 29, no. 1 (1997), p. 27.
[34] Ishwer C. Ojha, *Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition: The Diplomacy of Cultural Despair*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1969, p. 67.

a threat, and even if China misinterprets containment as a threat to her security, little damage is done. [For] the Chinese can do little in their present state of military weakness to give vent to whatever frustrations they may have."[35]

Upon a closer look, however, the long-term serious consequences of the containment policy were hard to ignore. The Western hardline policy, precisely because of its success, intensified China's heartfelt sense of powerlessness and resentment, and consequently helped drive China, among other things, to align itself with the Soviet Union, develop its own nuclear weapons, and adopt a Third World foreign policy. Firstly, in order to confront its predicament, China sought to form an alliance with the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union, less because of its ideological commitment than because of the lack of alternative options. As J. Richard Walsh argues,

> The [Chinese] leadership did not consist of ideologues who by virtue of their beliefs compelled the PRC to lean to the side of the Soviet Union. During the early cold war period, the Chinese were reacting to the reality of Soviet aid (however suspicious of Soviet intent) and U.S. rejection of the CCP's offer for diplomatic relations and U.S. support for the Nationalists in the Chinese Civil War.[36]

In this sense, from the start, the Sino-Soviet marriage was not as fixed as it had seemed, nor was the 'Red Menace,' which took on a more dreadful twist as a result of such an alliance. For China, the alliance was designed to serve its national interest more than the interest of international Communist movement. Because of this, when the Soviet Union renounced an earlier agreement to help China develop its own nuclear weapons, the alliance began to collapse, and a Sino-Soviet split became inevitable.

Thus understood, even with its 'leaning to one side' policy, China seemed to harbour no inherent ambition to export the Communist revolution or threaten Western values. On the contrary, for a brief period in the mid-1950s, Beijing made a series of overtures to Washington in an effort to reduce U.S. hostility and increase bilateral trade and cultural exchanges, only to be snubbed by the U.S.[37] As a result, by the end of the 1950s, the Chinese "experienced the worst of both worlds: political domination by their

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[35] Clark, *In Fear of China*, pp. 207-208.
[36] J. Richard Walsh, *Change, Continuity and Commitment: China's Adaptive Foreign Policy*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988, p. 81. See also Zhang Baijia, "The Changing International Scene and Chinese Policy toward the United States, 1954-1970," in Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin eds., *Re-examining the Cold War: U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001, p. 47.
[37] Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980, p. 78.

far more powerful and developed ally and isolation and encirclement imposed by the world's leading military power."[38]

As their security environment deteriorated under the co-domination of the two nuclear superpowers, the Chinese were once again reminded of the lesson learned earlier from Western imperialist power politics. That is, now as then, Western containment of China was not because China was strong, but because it was weak. Thus, they became convinced that developing their own nuclear capacity was the only way to break the bipolar hegemony and have their voice heard on the international stage. As Mao Zedong complained, "We are a big country with 600 million people. But Dulles does not take us seriously."[39] Echoing China's earlier quest for wealth and power, Mao concluded that only a strong China, one that could produce the goods of an industrialised economy—such as steel—or had advanced, nuclear weapons, would be taken seriously by Western nations.[40]

In this context, and despite strong opposition from the two superpowers, China went ahead with its nuclear program and, in 1964, detonated its first nuclear bomb. In doing so, China joined the ranks of the 'rational' international actors which relied on the deterrence policy of the 'balance of terror' in the struggle for survival. The Western role in influencing China with this kind of 'rational' thinking was tellingly described by C. P. FitzGerald as follows:

> *The Chinese have come to believe, through their experiences in the past century, that, in international relations, respect is only gained by inspiring fear. A dangerous doctrine, but one which the West was at great pains to teach to China throughout the last 150 years* [emphasis added].[41]

Apart from seeking the Sino-Soviet alliance and acquiring nuclear bombs, in the 1950s and 1960s, China also began formulating a so-called Third World foreign policy (or revolutionary diplomacy), particularly following its failed bid to gain a seat in the U.N. This Third World policy is viewed by many analysts as representing Communist China's inherent ideological ambition and/or traditional Sino-centric mentality, and

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[38] Jonathan D. Pollack, "China and the Global Strategic Balance," in Harry Harding ed., *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 150.
[39] See He Di, "The Most Respected Enemy," p. 55.
[40] Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power: US Relations with China since 1949*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 11.
[41] C.P. FitzGerald, *The Chinese View of Their Place in the World*, London: Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 74.

hence a testimony of its threatening nature.[42] Certainly, it cannot be denied that some Chinese leaders might indeed have harboured such ambition. My view, however, is that, instead of pursuing some utopian ideals, Beijing's Third World policy was designed principally to step out of the diplomatic wilderness, seek foreign recognition of its national identity, and serve its national security interests.[43] In 1968, Mao criticised the slogan of "Beijing as the center of the world revolution" and insisted that "Chinese should not say such things. It is the erroneous idea of the so-called 'making ourselves the core.'"[44] Except for some morale-boosting rhetoric aimed mainly at domestic consumption, Beijing played little direct role in Third World revolution. As Peter Van Ness notes,

> In theory, Peking has committed itself to support for all revolutions against imperialism and other kinds of oppression throughout the underdeveloped world, but practice is something else….when faced with making such a commitment themselves, however, the Chinese have been surprisingly selective in their official endorsements of specific revolutions and revolutionary movements. As we will see, during 1965, Peking endorsed revolutionary armed struggles in only 23 of a possible total of some 120 independent and nonindependent countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.[45]

Undoubtedly, China's alignment with the Soviet Union, its detonation of nuclear bombs, and its Third World foreign policy did carry with them a certain element of antagonism. All this lent some credibility to the claim of the 'Red Menace,' and partly contributed to the gradual hardening of American public opinion of China at that time. Gallup Polls showed that, in 1961, 32 percent nominated China as a greater threat to world peace than the Soviet Union; by 1963 this figure had risen to 47 percent and the

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[42] Michael H. Hunt, *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 213. This view is shared by Samuel S. Kim and Lowell Dittmer, who argue that "In its relationship to the Third World, China assumed the role of trailblazer of a new road to rapid transformation from underdevelopment to industrialized socialism via an initial violent breakthrough followed by permanent revolution. By popularizing the Chinese model in the Third World, the People's Republic was able to assume an international leadership role its limited strategic and economic resources would otherwise have scarcely permitted, thereby also usefully dramatizing its new national identity." Samuel S. Kim and Lowell Dittmer, "Whither China's Quest for National Identity?" in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim eds., *China's Quest for National Identity*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 286.

[43] See Harry Harding, "China's Changing Roles in the Contemporary World," in Harry Harding ed., *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 184; Peter Van Ness, *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy: Peking's Support for Wars of National Liberation*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1970, pp. 250-251; and Yongjin Zhang, "China's Security Problematique: Critical Reflections," in Yongjin Zhang and Greg Austin eds., *Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy*, Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, 2001, p. 257.

[44] Quoted in Gong Li, "Chinese Decision Making and the Thawing of U.S.-China Relations," in Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin eds., *Re-examining the Cold War: U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001, p. 323.

[45] Van Ness, *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy*, p. 82.

next year to 56 percent.[46] American Senator J. William Fulbright regarded the danger of war between the U.S. and China as 'real' and blamed it on China's "abnormal and agitated state of mind," or its inability to reason.[47] Indeed, by now, the 'Red Menace' theory was more well-founded than at the beginning of the PRC. And clearly, that 'well-foundedness' provided further rationale for the U.S. to take renewed actions to contain the 'threat.' This logic was evident, for example, in Kennedy's fresh fear of a nuclear 'Red Menace' and his bold plan to take pre-emptive military actions against China's nuclear program. In the early 1960s, Kennedy worried that a China armed with nuclear weapons:

> was the great menace in the future to humanity, the free world, and freedom on earth…. Relations with the Soviet Union could be contained within the framework of mutual awareness of the impossibility of achieving any gains through war. But in the case of China, this restraint would not be effective because the Chinese would be perfectly prepared, because of the lower value they attach to human life, to sacrifice hundreds of millions of their own lives, if this were necessary in order to carry out their militant and aggressive policies.[48]

Consequently, the Kennedy administration believed that China should not just be isolated, but also militarily disciplined.[49] According to newly declassified U.S. documents, Kennedy, together with his national security assistant McGeorge Bundy and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), seriously explored the possibility of paramilitary action and direct air attack to cripple China's nuclear facilities.[50] Only with the assassination of Kennedy and the upcoming U.S. Presidential election was that dangerous plan abandoned.

However, my point, to reiterate, is that the 'Red Menace,' if it was real, was often made as such by Western discourse. With this particular instance of 'threat' theory as containment practice, the U.S.-led Western alliance created a self-fulfilling prophecy by exacerbating China's sense of insecurity and launching it on a potentially or actually dangerous policy path. At this point, it is safe to say that no matter how 'successful' Western containment policy might have been in counterbalancing China, it must at the same time be seen as a failure, because it in effect achieved exactly the opposite and

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[46] Quoted in Colin Mackerras, *Western Images of China*, Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 178-179.
[47] See Franz Schurmann and Orville Schell eds., *Communist China: Revolutionary Reconstruction and International Confrontation 1949 to the Present*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967, p. 586.
[48] LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1971*, p. 238.
[49] *Ibid*., p. 241.
[50] See William Burr and Jeffrey T. Richelson, "Whether to 'Strangle the Baby in the Cradle': The United States and the Chinese Nuclear Program, 1960-64," *International Security* 25, no. 3 (2000/01), pp. 54-99.

defeated its own purpose. This would happen again in the mid-1960s when the U.S. stepped up its containment policy by escalating Vietnam's local conflict into a full-scale war against the alleged expansion of Communist threat.

The Cold War Impact on Chinese Domestic Policies

Having discussed the connection between the U.S. containment and the radicalisation of Chinese foreign policy in the first half of the Cold War, I want to turn now to its impact on China's 'domestic' scene. The reason again concerns the positivist notion of China as a pregiven object of study. Very often, in an attempt to solve the puzzle of foreign policy making, scholars look at a range of domestic factors for clues, such as political culture, ideology, political system, organisational structure, decision-making process, leadership, political factions, and interest groups. From this perspective, domestic factors are treated as pre-given, independent variables from which the dependent variable, China's foreign behaviour, is said to be derived. With its obvious analytical clarity, this approach is a convenient and sometimes useful tool in the understanding of the dynamics of Chinese foreign policy making. By doing so, however, those scholars tend to neglect the point that many 'domestic' factors are often themselves the constitutive result of historically specific international interactions. That is, 'domestic' factors are never truly domestic in nature. With regard to China's domestic policies during the Cold War, I suggest that they, and for that matter, Chinese foreign relations, cannot be properly understood if the influence of their international environments in general and that of Western discourse and practice on China in particular are not taken into account.

As well as contributing to the radicalisation of Chinese foreign relations, the 'success' of the U.S. containment policy forced the Chinese "to turn further inward on themselves with a continuation of the past kaleidoscope of campaigns and movements each designed to provide an answer to China's problems."[51] China's 'inward-looking' policy in the 1960s and early 1970s took different forms. At the economic level, it was 'self-reliance' (*zili gengsheng*). At the ideological level, it was embodied, for example, in the radical program of 'thought reform' (*sixiang gaizao*). And at the political level, 'class struggle' (*jieji douzheng*) emerged as the order of the day. In spite of these inward-looking policies, it would be misleading to assume that China's 'isolation' was

[51] Clark, *In Fear of China*, p. 208.

entirely home-grown or 'self-imposed,' as is commonly believed, or to suggest that having cut off contact with the West, China should only have itself to blame for its ensuing domestic misfortunes. Rather, as Yongjin Zhang's study has shown, "it is… not the isolation but the alienation of China from international society that characterises the anomalous position of China in that society in the 1950s and 1960s."[52]

In this sense, the 'self-reliance' development strategy cannot be isolated from Western Cold War practice. According to a draft report by the National Security Council on U.S. China policy (NSC 41 of 18 February 1949), on the eve of the Communist victory in China, the Truman administration had already considered a policy of isolating China completely from the non-Communist world.[53] After the establishment of the PRC, the United States followed through this policy. Together with Britain, it denied China's possession of the major part of its civil aviation fleet which had been flown to Hong Kong, blocked steel exports from Western Germany to China, and froze Bank of China accounts in the United States. In 1950, the Co-ordinating Committee for Export Control, established in Paris in November 1949 to systematically carry out embargo policy towards the Soviet Union and its East European allies, wasted no time in adding China to the list of the countries of 'controlled destinations.' The trade embargo, Washington hoped, would weaken China's economic and military structure so as to hasten the collapse of the nascent Communist regime.[54] Thus, a *People's Daily* editorial in 1955 argued that "in the current international situation, in order to strengthen our national defense, liberate Taiwan, strike down the aggression of imperialism, and maintain the independence of sovereignty and territorial integrity, we ought to develop industry [on our own]."[55]

However, due partly to the Western-imposed isolation, China's rehabilitation of its national economy proved no easy task. With virtually no outside help under the Western blockades, it turned increasingly desperate. Heavy industry, seen as the key to its economic autonomy, was given a higher priority at the expense of agriculture and lighter consumer industry as well as people's livelihood. So was the goal of strengthening China as a great power in world politics. By the end of the 1950s, China's economic development had almost completely fallen victim to the impatient goal of

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[52] Yongjin Zhang, *China in International Society since 1949: Alienation and Beyond*, Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998, p. 17.
[53] See *Ibid*., p. 21.
[54] Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, p. 140.
[55] Quoted in Kuang-sheng Liao, *Antiforeignism and Modernization in China: 1860-1980*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1986, p. 115.

building a Communist society superior to the United States and Britain. To make matters worse, with the ideal that "in one sudden burst of revolutionary energy, [China] could turn their poor backward country into a prosperous industrialised society,"[56] came the 'Great Leap Forward' in 1958-1960, which preceded a massive famine in the following three years. Western scholars often cite this mistreatment of its own people as evidence of China's perhaps greater willingness to threaten the outside world. However, given the far-reaching impact of its China policy, it seems that the West could not disassociate itself entirely from some of China's worst domestic blunders.

Associated with the 'Great Leap Forward' program was the equally radical 'thought reform' program aimed at building an ideologically homogeneous Chinese self against the perceived threat of the Western Other. Again, this paranoia was not entirely of China's own making, but was reinforced, for instance, by American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's plan of achieving a 'peaceful evolution' in China. Mao Zedong took Dulles's words seriously. Indeed, he believed that economic development alone was not enough for China to become a communist society. Mao's concern was reflected in a *People's Daily* editorial, which argued that:

> [As the] imperial power still surrounds us, we must prepare to cope with any sudden incident…. This requires every Communist to give up individual interests and rely upon the knowledge and strength of the masses and the knowledge and the strength of the Party to overcome any difficulty, and struggle for the great victory of the socialist undertaking.[57]

To the extent that it was believed that "imperialism still exists… domestic reaction still exists… [and] class still exists,"[58] and that America would strive to subvert China with 'sugar-coated bullets' (*tangyi paodan*),[59] Mao launched massive campaigns (e.g., a rectification among the party cadres and a mass socialist education campaign in the countryside in 1963-64), in an attempt to counter possible Western spiritual subversion, avoid the emerging elitism and city bureaucratism, and prevent a 'change of colour' in the third or fourth generation Chinese, as Dulles had hoped.

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[56] June Grasso, Jay Corrin, and Michael Kort, *Modernization and Revolution in China*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991, p. 175.
[57] Quoted in Liao, Antiforeignism and Modernization in China, pp. 115-116.
[58] Mao Zedong, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship," see Stuart R. Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, rev. ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969, p. 300.
[59] *Tangyi paodan* literally means 'sugar-coated bombs,' but in this context, 'sugar-coated bullets' seems to better capture the implied meaning of the phrase in Chinese, and is more in conformity with English usage.

As we now know, this quest for a pure Chinese self soon went to extremes, representing an ironic move towards 'self colonisation' on the part of the Chinese leadership, which, as Xiaomei Chen notes, employed "the discourse of the colonialist Other for its own political agenda within its own cultural milieu."[60] In the face of possible sabotage of 'free middle roaders,' Mao put off the implementation of a New Democratic model of Chinese political system envisioned by himself in the 1940s. Meanwhile, he insisted that the new Chinese self be built around an essentialist, Leninist understanding of class. Thus, CCP party membership was limited by class origin. To illustrate this overemphasis on 'redness' (ideology) over expertise in technology, half of the forty million who joined the party during the Cultural Revolution lacked adequate training and even basic literacy.[61]

Moreover, this quest for a pure self was carried out through an attempt to destroy Otherness within Chinese society. As Mao Zedong explained in his folksy style:

> A human being has arteries and veins through which the heart makes the blood circulate, and he breathes with his lungs, exhaling carbon dioxide and inhaling fresh oxygen, that is, getting rid of the stale and taking in the fresh. A proletarian party must also get rid of the stale and take in the fresh, for only thus can it be full of vitality. Without eliminating waste matter and absorbing fresh blood the Party has no vigour.[62]

Thus emerged a "principle of wiping out the control of the imperialists in China completely." In the early 1950s, the so-called 'Three Anti' (*sanfan*) and 'Five Anti' (*wufan*) movements were in full swing to fight against corruption, waste, and bureaucracy and to eradicate the 'Five Poisons' of bribery, tax-evasion, fraud, and theft of government property and state secrets. In addition, the government brought foreign trade under unified control, drove out most foreigners and missionaries and closed their 'propaganda institutions' on the mainland.[63] In short, according to Mao Zedong, China's aim was "to exterminate capitalism, obliterate it from the face of the earth and make it a thing of the past."[64]

Against this backdrop, Confucianism, with its emphasis on harmony and order rather than on struggle and revolution, came also under attack. As Mao said in 1965,

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[60] Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 17.
[61] John K. Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution: 1800-1985*, New York: Harper & Row, 1986, pp. 331, 344.
[62] Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung, p. 326.
[63] *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. 4, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1961, pp. 370-371; and He Di, "The Most Respected Enemy," p. 31.
[64] *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. 5, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1977, p. 214.

"Thought, culture, customs, must be born of struggle, and the struggle must continue for as long as there is still a danger of a return to the past… our customs must become as different from the traditional customs."[65] In this regard, Ishwer C. Ojha aptly observes that the Chinese Communists were much more similar to fundamentalist Americans than either side realised—just as the American fundamentalists based their decisions on who was "soft on Communism," so the Chinese worldview was determined by who was "soft on imperialism."[66] China, in this way, came to resemble an 'intimate enemy' of America.

But instead of bringing about a purified, unitary national identity, these extreme measures wreaked havoc on China's economic development and its democratic reform, as well as creating enormous social chaos and sowing the seeds of division and personal power struggle within the CCP hierarchy. For Mao Zedong, however, all this served to further vindicate his theory of class struggle, which was in effect also a self-fulfilling prophecy. Whereas Chinese President Liu Shaoqi stressed the importance of economic development, Mao regarded the "cultural ideal of the selfless New Man" as more fundamental to the construction of a New China.[67] Faced with resistance to his proletarian cultural revolution within the party, Mao took a risky step in 1966 in mobilising the masses, particularly the working class and young students, whom he considered "a clean sheet of paper" on which the "newest and most beautiful pictures" could be painted.[68] Mao's populist democracy captured the imagination of millions of disgruntled ordinary Chinese people, and marked the beginning of the so-called Cultural Revolution, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, a period now well-known for its xenophobia, nativism, violent destruction, and ill-fated experimentation with radical democracy.

Mao Zedong in particular should undoubtedly bear some blame for the havoc in these years.[69] At the same time, however, instead of being seen as a uniquely Chinese phenomenon, the Cultural Revolution must also be put in the context of Western impact in general and the Cold War containment of China in particular. As Fairbank has

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[65] Quoted in E. Ted Gladue, Jr., *China's Perception of Global Politics*, Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982, p. 6.
[66] Ojha, *Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition*, p. 90.
[67] Van Ness, *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy*, pp. 248-249.
[68] Grasso et al., *Modernization and Revolution in China*, p. 205.
[69] Some suggest that Mao's personality, including his "megalomania and paranoia" informed much of China's foreign policy making before 1976. See, for example, Thomas Robinson, "Chinese Foreign Policy from the 1940s to the 1990s," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, p. 557; and Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, Vol. 1, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974.

argued, Mao's fanatical faith in the power of the human will to transform the social scene, as exemplified in the Cultural Revolution, can hardly be ascribed to China's own past alone. Rather, his "faith in science and progress, looking forward to a future utopia, seems to be a *Western contribution* to China's transformation [emphasis added]."[70] Similarly, Ojha argued that "If the slogans of the Cultural Revolution seem to be non-Western, the goals are not…. Transforming traditional attitudes to fit the glove of modernization is not a new idea."[71] From this perspective, it is clear that China's authoritarianism, the lack of democracy, and all sorts of apparently 'abnormal' behaviour are as much a result of Sino-Western *interactions* as they are reflections of 'Chinese political culture.'[72]

By the early 1970s, the Cultural Revolution had run into great trouble. Its catastrophic effects were now evident in virtually every aspect of Chinese life, ranging from economic development and social morale to education and personal safety (including the safety of many Communist leaders), with the notable exception of China's nuclear program. So apparent was the failure that Mao Zedong himself came to realise that the movement he initially engineered had spun out of control and gone seriously wrong. What followed was a deep soul-searching in China, which constituted an important factor in the coming *rapprochement* between China and the United States in 1972.[73]

The U.S.-China Rapprochement: Un-imagining the Hostile Relationship

At the same time, the United States was experiencing vast difficulties as well, as it became gradually bogged down in the quagmire of the Vietnam War. Initially designed to contain the 'Red Menace,' the increasingly unpopular war turned out to be itself a

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[70] John K. Fairbank, *China: The People's Middle Kingdom and the U.S.A.*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1967, p. 113.
[71] Ojha, *Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition*, pp. 86, 224.
[72] Here it is necessary to note that while the Maoist discourse of the Cultural Revolution was to some extent a Western construct, it at the same time also played a constitutive role in shaping the view of some Western intellectuals and students that China was a "revolutionary redeemer." See Richard Madsen, *China and the American Dream*: *A Moral Inquiry*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, p. 29.
[73] Some scholars believe that the rise of the Soviet threat to China and the United States as well as the shifting balance of power was also an important factor to the Sino-American *rapprochement*. See, for example, David Shambaugh, "Patterns of Interaction in Sino-American Relationships," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, pp. 197-206.

threat to American security. In addition, the Sino-Soviet border clashes in 1969 finally dispelled the long-held suspicion of Beijing as a Soviet puppet among U.S. planners and strategists. As a consequence, some sober American observers began to recognise a crucial point that America was at least partly responsible for the state of Chinese frustration and hostility.

Among them was the famed China specialist John K. Fairbank. In his testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in 1966, he cast some doubt on both the essentialist view of China as a 'Red Menace' and its attendant U.S. policy of isolation, arguing that "my reading of history is that Peking's rulers now shout aggressively out of manifold frustrations, that isolation intensifies their ailment and makes it self-perpetuating, and that international contact with China on many fronts can open a less warlike chapter in its foreign relations."[74]

More significantly, in 1967, Richard Nixon, preparing to run for President, also implicitly admitted that the U.S. policy of containment and isolation contributed in some ways to both China's xenophobia and America's predicament in Asia. In an article published in *Foreign Affairs*, Nixon argued that "we simply cannot afford to leave China forever outside the family of nations, there to nurture its fantasies, cherish its hates and threaten its neighbors. There is no place on this small planet for a billion of its potentially most able people to live in angry isolation."[75] The U.S. would oppose any Chinese attempt to dominate Asia, but it could no longer, said Nixon, "impose on China an international position that denies its legitimate national interest."[76]

Just as America's hostile policy was always capable of sparking equally hostile responses from China, so the sign of a possible softening of U.S. stance did not fail to draw China's positive reciprocity. After falling out with the Soviet Union, and in the face of enormous domestic difficulties, the Chinese leadership also wanted to ease its hostility towards the United States. Therefore, Nixon's article did not escape Chinese leaders' attention. Having read the article himself, Mao Zedong asked Zhou Enlai to analyse its implications, and after Nixon took office in 1969, positive interactions between the United States and China gained further momentum. In late 1970, Mao told American journalist Edgar Snow that he believed that the two countries "will have to

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[74] Fairbank, China: The People's Middle Kingdom and the U.S.A., p. 102.
[75] Richard M. Nixon, "Asia After Viet Nam," *Foreign Affairs* 46, no. 1 (1967), p. 121.
[76] Quoted in Michael Schaller, "Détente and Strategic Triangle: or, 'Drinking Your Mao Tai and Having Your Vodka, Too,'" in Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin eds., *Re-examining the Cold War: U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001, p. 372.

establish diplomatic relations sooner or later."[77] The breakthrough finally came with Nixon's visit to China and the resulting issuance of the Shanghai Communiqué in February 1972. A few months prior to the Nixon visit, in the absence of America's opposition for the first time, the PRC gained its seat in the U.N. at the expense of Taiwan, marking a symbolic end to its agonising international isolation. In 1971-1972, China established full diplomatic relations with a dozen Western countries.

At the height of the Cold War, the conventional wisdom assumed that without Western containment, the Chinese 'Other' would inevitably come out to threaten the 'free world.' Yet it seemed that now the opposite was true. Just as "the most confrontational period of the PRC's international relations was also the period when the PRC was most vulnerable,"[78] so with the relaxation of containment in the late 1970s, a less vulnerable Chinese did not run amok. China did contribute to some security headaches, such as its shelling of the KMT-controlled offshore islands along the mainland coast in the 1950s. On the whole, however, the 'China threat' was never monolithic nor absolute. With the targets carefully chosen to avoid provoking America's invocation of its 'Mutual Defense Treaty' with Taiwan, this shelling was more symbolic than substantive.[79] Indeed, even during the most fanatical periods of the Cultural Revolution, Beijing managed not only to avoid fresh head-on clashes with the United States, but also to maintain cautious contact with it.[80] This was in sharp contrast to American policy on China in the same period, a point not lost on Fairbank, who observed that "The Chinese, while verbally bellicose and threatening the world with revolutionary takeover… kept almost all their troops at home, while the generous Americans, seeking international stability… sent large forces to fight close to China in Vietnam."[81] Thus, as soon as the U.S. containment began to relax, China was able to reciprocate with a retreat from their high-pitched rhetoric.

Certainly, the presence of a common Soviet 'enemy' played a key role in the development of this rapprochement. And yet, as far as Sino-American relations were concerned, both China and the United States were compelled to come to terms with the impracticability, or the self-defeating nature of the quest for pure self and absolute

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[77] Gong Li, "Chinese Decision Making and the Thawing of U.S.-China Relations," pp. 332-340.
[78] Zhang, "China's Security Problematique: Critical Reflections," p. 255.
[79] John K. Fairbank, *The United States and China*, 4th enl. ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983, pp. 456-457; Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 142-144; and He Di, "The Most Respected Enemy," p. 38.
[80] Ojha, *Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition*, p. 221.
[81] Fairbank, *China: The People's Middle Kingdom and the U.S.A.*, p. 92.

security through a relentless destruction of 'Other,' a quest that was based on the false dichotomies of self and Other as embodied in the 'Red Menace' discourse. However different from America, China cannot be seen as an absolute Other, if only in the sense that America could not succeed in destroying it without at the same time seriously jeopardising its own security. The same could also be said of China's hardline view of the West as a paramount threat. In this context, both countries had no other choice but to find the courage to break the vicious circle of their own making. As a consequence, China began to implement the so-called 'four modernisations' program in the areas of industry, agriculture, national defence, and science and technology.[82] Thus, to the extent that social construction of international relations is not an irreversible process, it can also be reconstructed. In both processes, discourse is crucial.

At this point, we may consider the role of modernisation theory as discursive practice in influencing China's modernisation program. Indeed, this theory, gaining currency in the 1960s and 1970s among area specialists and IR theorists, was to a large extent behind the change of U.S. foreign policy in general and China policy in particular. Informed by this 'new' paradigm, pundits and policymakers began to see China not as a fixed geopolitical threat, but as a 'troubled modernizer' which would eventually abandon its revolutionary path. They believed that "If China were not excessively forced on the defensive by outside pressure, this moderate, pragmatic element would come to the fore. Chinese society would then become more orderly, predictable, and humane than it was at present."[83] Thus began anew the liberal discourse of China as a country grappling with the difficult task of becoming modernised or, in other words, like 'us.' As argued in the previous chapter, such a discursive construction of China has had enormous problems and paradoxes. Along this line of argument, in Chapter 6 and part of Chapter 7, I will critically engage with the more contemporary form of liberal discourse on China. For now, my point is that this representation did do more justice to a China that was neither homogenous nor changeless. For this reason, it produced some, however limited, positive implications for Sino-American relations than the 'Red Menace' theory and practice could allow.

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[82] Chenchen Zhang points out that "The Chinese government has used an explicit modernization theory as a decisionmaking basis." Chenchen Zhang, "Transnational Higher Education in China: Why Has the State Encouraged Its Development?" Monograph, School of Education, Stanford University, August 2003, p. 49, <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/SUSE/ICE/monographs/Zhang.pdf>. China's pragmatic Premier Zhou Enlai first proposed this "Four Modernisations" program in December 1964. But with the Western isolation in full swing and the onset of the decade-long Cultural Revolution in 1966, this program was not fully implemented until 1977.

[83] Madsen, *China and the American Dream*, p. 41.

In 1976, along with the death of Mao Zedong, the Cultural Revolution came to an end. In June 1977, with the quiet disbandment of the moribund SEATO alliance, the formal encirclement of China ended. And on 1 January 1979, normal diplomatic relations were finally established between China and the United States. All this, it seemed, provided the necessary context in which the Chinese could not only adopt a more moderate foreign policy, but also rekindle their long interrupted modernist dream of building a strong, prosperous nation among the family of nations, a dream which had so far been continually thwarted by the Western powers motivated by a fear of Red China.

From the late 1970s to the 1980s, under Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic leadership, modernisation reforms deepened and accelerated in China. In the agricultural sector, the People's Commune (*renmin gongshe*) system created during the Great Leap Forward was abandoned, to be replaced by the 'responsibility system' in which individual peasant households served as the basic unit of the rural economy. This reform proved to be a huge success in the first decade of its inception, bringing about dramatic increases in yield and productivity. At the same time, because of the existence of a less hostile international environment in the 1980s, international interdependence was able to emerge as a catchword in China,[84] and 'peace and development' superseded the slogans of 'war and revolution' in the official discourse. Deng Xiaoping concluded that "With the further growth of the forces in defence of peace the world over, it is possible for a fairly long period of time to prevent the outbreak of a large-scale world war, and the preservation of world peace is hopeful."[85] With such discursive construction of a fundamental benign international environment, Deng was able to justify the expansion of his reform programs to the areas of industry, foreign trade, science and technology, and education.

In order to stimulate economic development and attract investments, advanced technology and management skills, China implemented a policy of opening up to the outside world, particularly to the West. It established four special economic zones in 1979, which served as the experiments for integrating China into the world economy. Meanwhile, education, science, and technology were put back on track, and an increasing number of students began to study overseas. In addition, an apparently more secure, confident China was able to reduce its military expenditure from over six

[84] Weiqun Gu, "Security in the Asia-Pacific Region," in Yufan Hao and Guocang Huan eds., *The Chinese View of the World*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1989, p. 17.
[85] Han Nianlong et al., *Diplomacy of Contemporary China*, p. 412.

percent of GNP to less than three percent and downsize its military forces by one million.[86]

The most profound change, however, occurred in people's beliefs and their perceptions of self, the nation, and the world. The architect of China's reform Deng Xiaoping often claimed that "It doesn't matter whether a cat's colour is white or black, so long as it catches mice." With regard to learning from the West, Deng Xiaoping declared in 1978 that:

> Science and technology are a kind of wealth created in common by all mankind. Any nation or country must learn from the strong points of other nations and countries, from their advanced science and technology. It is not just today, when we are scientifically and technically backward, that we need to learn from other countries; after we catch up with the advanced world levels in science and technology, we will still have to learn from the strong points of others.[87]

In 1984, while visiting Belgium, Premier Zhao Ziyang announced that "China's door is open now, will be opened wider, and will never be closed again."[88]

In this context, many Chinese, mainly intellectuals, re-embraced Western notions such as reason, science, modernity, humanism, democracy, emancipation, and individuality, igniting a new 'Culture Fever' (*wenhua re*) throughout the 1980s.[89] According to a nationwide survey in 1987, 75 percent of Chinese were now tolerant of the inflow of Western ideas, and 80 percent of Chinese Communist Party members showed a similar attitude.[90] One letter sent by a Chinese reader to the *New York Times* in February 1979 vividly illustrated this 'open,' optimistic view towards the West in general and the U.S. in particular:

> Everything in my country is far, far behind you…. [But] with the help of advanced technology and capital from your country, I am sure we can realize our aim [of modernization]…. Dear great and glorious American people, please come to my country for tours, visits or [to give] instructions. We will never forget you; we feel respectful whenever we think of you.[91]

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[86] Harlan W. Jencks, "The Chinese People's Liberation Army 1949-89," in David S. G. Goodman and Gerald Segal eds., *China at Forty: Mid-Life Crisis?* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 101.
[87] Tony K.S. Liao, "Anti-Imperialism and the Four Modernizations in China: An Ideological Dilemma," in Steve S.K. Chin ed., *Modernization in China: Selected Seminar Papers on Contemporary China, III*. Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, 1979, p. 235.
[88] Quoted in Grasso et al., *Modernization and Revolution in China*, p. 243.
[89] See, for example, Perry Link, *Evening Chats in Beijing: Probing China's Predicament*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1993; and Zi Zhongyun, "The Relationship of Chinese Traditional Culture to the Modernization of China," *Asian Survey* 27, no. 4 (1987), 442-458.
[90] Yongnian Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China: Modernization, Identity, and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 50.
[91] Quoted in Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: The United States and China since 1972*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1992, p. 104.

In the summer 1988, China's national soul-searching and the zeal of learning from the West reached a zenith during the repeated broadcast of a hugely popular six-part television series called *The Deathsong of the River* (*Heshang*) on the national television network.[92] As the 'River' in the title signified the Yellow River, "the most brutal and unrestrained river in the world," the series called upon China to emerge from the backward "Yellow River civilization" and head out into the open "azure ocean civilization," a euphemism for Western civilisation.[93] In a passionate, mission-laden tone, it was argued that:

> What the Yellow River could give us has already been given to our ancestors. The Yellow River cannot bring forth again the civilization that our ancestors once created. What we need to create is a brand-new civilization. It cannot emerge from the Yellow River again. The dregs of the old civilization are like the sand and mud accumulated in the Yellow River; they have built up in the blood vessels of our people. We need a great tidal wave to flush them away. This great tidal wave has already arrived. It is industrial civilization. It is summoning us![94]

In this more dynamic yet volatile environment, with newly gained individualist spirit and critical perspectives, many intellectuals began demanding more political reforms. On 15 April 1989, Hu Yaobang, the popular but disgraced Secretary General of the CCP during the 1986-1987 student demonstrations, unexpectedly died. This death sparked a massive student movement in Beijing, and soon in other cities as well. "Give us democracy or give us death," thousands of banners screamed, paraphrasing the American Revolutionary orator Patrick Henry.[95] Sharing students' dissatisfaction at the government were hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life, who by now had become increasingly concerned with many downside effects of Deng's neoliberal-oriented economic reforms, such as corruption, economic inequality and lack of social justice.

However, up to this point, it had seemed to many Western observers that China had embarked on an irreversible course which rapidly moved away from Communism

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[92] Su Xiaokang and Wang Luxiang, *Deathsong of the River: A Reader's Guide to the Chinese TV Series Heshang* (trans. and eds. Richard W. Bodman and Pin P. Wan), Ithaca: Cornell East Asia Series, 1991. Sometimes the title of this TV series is also translated as *River Elegy*.

[93] See Madsen, *China and the American Dream*, p. 196; Merle Goldman, Perry Link, and Su Wei, "China's Intellectuals in the Deng Era: Loss of Identity with the State," in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim eds., *China's Quest for National Identity*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 145.

[94] Quoted in Madsen, *China and the American Dream*, p. 196.

[95] John G. Stoessinger, *Nations at Dawn: China, Russia, and America*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994, p. 114.

and orthodox Marxism, confirming former U.S. President Ronald Reagan's upbeat assessment that "Countries across the globe are turning to free markets and free speech."[96] It was mainly in this context that the contemporary liberal optimism about China as 'opportunity' gained further momentum (see Chapter 6). Yet, late in the night of 3 June and early in the morning of 4 June 1989, the two-month long demonstrations in Beijing were brought to a tragic end by the Chinese military. This unexpected turn, often known as the Tiananmen massacre, shocked the world, and many Western commentators saw it as a tragic end of China's decade-long love affair with democracy inspired by the West. For some, it also shattered a longstanding American liberal myth "about how American ideals of economic, intellectual, and political freedom would triumph over the world."[97] With the political scene and foreign posture of China ostensibly becoming significantly muddled after the incident, the familiar perceptions of 'opportunity' and 'threat' both came into play in contemporary Western studies of Chinese foreign policy, vying for the prize of solving the new China 'puzzle' in a post-Tiananmen setting.

In the two preceding chapters, I have analysed how Western discursive strategies, until the Tiananmen incident, had contributed to both the making of Western policy on China and the social construction of China and its foreign relations. In particular, I have argued in this chapter that the 'Red China' discourse was not an objective account of China's 'inherent threat' during the Cold War, but a discursive strategy designed to construct and contain China as an 'enemy.' In this way, it contributed to the transformation of the 'Red Menace' into social reality. Thus, Western containment policy, now as then, is not the appropriate solution to the problems of Sino-Western relations, and alternative ways of formulating discursive practice on China are called for. In the three chapters that follow, I will continue this line of discourse analysis by seeking to examine how, in the contemporary period, the revamped discourses of 'threat' and 'opportunity' continue to legitimate new Western policy on China in similarly dangerous, paradoxical ways, and in doing so, shape China's worldview and its relationship with the West.

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[96] Quoted in LaFeber, *The American Age*, p. 745.
[97] Madsen, *China and the American Dream*, p. xvii.

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(Neo)Realist Framings of Contemporary China in the Western Self-Imagination

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> *... this view of China was less a rational appraisal of an objective threat than an artifact of a profoundly interpretive exercise that was powerfully conditioned by a geopolitical imaginary that had already framed China as an aggressive, militaristic, and expansionist near-rogue state.*
>
> Andrew A. Latham[1]

IN Chapters 3 and 4, I sought to explain how earlier Western discourses of China set the important discursive and practical context wherein the West legitimated particular ways of dealing with China. Also, I illustrated how China, in this context of grappling with the pressing issues such as power, wealth, sovereignty, nationalism, independence, and modernisation, had for more than a century strived to remake itself, consciously or not, in the image of the West in general and America in particular. Although hesitating and even resentful in the face of the unprecedented challenge thrust upon it by the Western powers, China slowly but gradually moved to join the family of nations in the quest for wealth, power, and national identity. More often than not, however, its effort was thwarted. Constantly being bitterly disappointed, the Chinese found an alternative in the Communist revolution at the beginning of the Cold War. As such, in response to Western containment and isolation, for much of the Cold War period, they were compelled, as it were, to play power politics from a position of weakness by pursuing a nationalistic, isolationist, and hostile foreign policy. This historical narrative, however sketchy, provides us with an important context through which to proceed with a look at

[1] Andrew A. Latham, "China in the Contemporary American Geopolitical Imagination," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 28, no. 3 (2001), p. 145.

some of the practical implications of contemporary Western discourse on Chinese foreign relations. As noted before, for all its modern, social scientific trappings, this discourse is in many ways very similar to the ways in which China was perceived by the West in the past. In this chapter, therefore, I want to probe into the largely realist and neorealist discourse of China in this manner, while deferring to the next chapter the treatment of the (neo)liberal literature.

More specifically, in the first section, I will conduct a brief survey of the (neo)realist literature, particularly its 'China threat' argument. In the second and third sections, I seek to provide a critical analysis of this literature from the discourse perspective.[2] I argue that this literature, in both its neorealist and classical realist guises, is derived from some dominant ways of Western, particularly American, self-imagination, for example, as the 'indispensable' leader of the world.[3] Consequently, if anything, it serves primarily to justify and reinforce that kind of self-imagination in an era when, with the disappearance of the Soviet enemy, such justification is hard to come by. I argue in this context that the mainstream 'China threat' literature amounts to a particular discursive construction of Otherness, in which the meaning of Chinese foreign relations is preconstructed and lacks nuanced understanding.

With this argument in mind, in the final section, I go on to suggest that this construction of the Chinese Other is not necessarily a result of bad scholarship on the part of 'China threat' theorists per se. Rather, that their arguments are often so entrenched in positivist assumptions about certain knowledge that they provide an unquestioned foundation for certain Western and U.S. strategies towards China, most

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[2] While there are now many critiques of the "China threat" argument from mainstream empiricist scholars, very few are from a discourse approach. The following list is only a small but representative fraction of mainstream critical works: Avery Goldstein, "Great Expectations: Interpreting China's Arrival," *International Security* 22, no. 3 (1997/98), pp. 36-73; Michael G. Gallapher, "China's Illusory Threat to the South China Sea," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994), pp. 169-194; Stuart Harris, "The People's Republic of China's Quest for Great Power Status: A Long and Winding Road," in Hung-mao Tien and Yun-han Chu eds., *China under Jiang Zemin*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000, pp. 165-182; Robert S. Ross, "Beijing as a Conservative Power," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 2 (1997), pp. 33-44; Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997; David Corn, "Cracks in China Report," *The Nation*, June, 21, 1999, pp. 4-5; Ming Zhang, "What Threat?" *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 55, no. 5 (1999), pp. 52-57; John O'Sullivan, "A Yellow Peril? No: The Excesses of the New Anti-China Lobby," *National Review*, May 1, 2000, pp. 28-29; William E. Odom, Henry S. Rowen, Michael Swaine et al., "Facing China: Aaron L. Friedberg and Critics," *Commentary* 111, no. 2 (2001), pp. 16-22; Lanxin Xiang, "Washington's Misguided China Policy," *Survival* 43, no. 3 (2001), pp. 7-23; Avery Goldstein, "The Diplomatic Face of China's Grand Strategy: A Rising Power's Emerging Choice," *The China Quarterly*, no. 168 (2001), pp. 835-864; Yongjin Zhang and Greg Austin eds., *Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy*, Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, 2001; and most chapters in Herbert Yee and Ian Storey eds., *The China Threat: Perceptions, Myths and Reality*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002.

[3] See Chengxin Pan, "The 'China Threat' in American Self-Imagination: The Discursive Construction of Other as Power Politics," *Alternatives* 29, no. 3 (2004), pp. 305-331.

notably, the new policy of containment. At the same time, however, this positivist faith in objective, value-free knowledge obscures the dire practical consequences inherent in this knowledge process. To illustrate this point, I will use the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait missile crisis and the 2001 Spy Plane incident as specific examples of 'hidden' ontological assumptions creating dangerous analytical understanding and behavioural outcomes.

The 'Threat' Argument in (Neo)Realist Studies of China

When I speak of the 'China threat' literature in the following discussion, I mean primarily (though not exclusively) its 'soft' version that exists in the mainstream foreign policy analytical community in the West (or more precisely, in the Anglo-American context), rather than a 'hard' version that is often willing to hype anything bad about China to create quick publicity.[4] First and foremost, much of today's alarm about the 'rise of China' revolves around the phenomenal development of the Chinese economy in the past 25 years, which has seen its overall size in terms of GDP more than quadruple since 1978. Faced with this unprecedented economic rise, politicians and pundits from almost every political persuasion in the West have been to some extent taken aback. For example, China expert Nicholas Lardy of the Brookings Institution argues that "The pace of China's industrial development and trade expansion is unparalleled in modern economic history." He goes on: "While this has led to unprecedented improvements in Chinese incomes and living standards, it also poses challenges for other countries."[5] While scholars like Lardy do not seem to draw a 'China threat' conclusion from these challenges, many others, mainly from a realist or neorealist school of thought, are doing just that.

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[4] This is not because the latter type of literature is trivial; it matters tremendously because of its huge impact on public opinion and indirect influence on the process of China policy making. Rather, it is because the hard version more often than not depends on the more scholarly strand of literature to claim its commonsense or truth status. Therefore, to pick a fight against the latter without probing its intellectual origin in the former, I argue, is likely to render one's critique ultimately ineffectual. To have a taste of the hard version of the "China threat" argument, see, for example, Bill Gertz, *The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America*, Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2000; Steven Mosher, *Hegemon: China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2000; Edward Timperlake, et al., *Red Dragon Rising: Communist China's Military Threat to America*, Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1999; and Gordon Thomas, *Seeds of Fire: China and the Story Behind the Attack on America*, Tempe, AZ: Dandelion Books, 2001.

[5] Quoted in Evelyn Iritani and Marla Dickerson, "People's Republic of Products," *Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 2002, <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-china1oct20.story>.

From this perspective, China constitutes a rising threat to world peace and U.S. security particularly. One element of this threat is thought to be job losses in the industrialised world. In February 2004, a bipartisan group of U.S. senators argued that China's undervalued currency *Renminbi* has contributed to the loss of 2.6 million U.S. manufacturing jobs.[6] Another element is the likely environmental and ecological costs of China's economic boom. Former Beijing Bureau Chief for the *New York Times* Nicholas Kristof suggests that as it industrialises, China will require a dramatically larger share of world resources, place a huge new strain on global energy supplies, and contribute significantly to pollution and global warming.[7] In this context, some fear that China's rapid industrialisation may lead to the intensification of regional conflict over resources and energy (e.g., in the South China Sea).[8] Still another worrying area is thought to be China's growing trade surplus with the United States, which, according to *Time* magazine journalists Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro, increased nearly tenfold from $3.5 billion in 1988 to roughly $33.8 billion in 1995. This trade imbalance, as they put it, is "a function of a Chinese strategy to target certain industries and to undersell American competition via a system of subsidies and high tariffs. And that is why the deficit is harmful to the American economy and likely to become an area of ever greater conflict in bilateral relations in the future."[9] Cheap Chinese labour and products, in this context, have even stirred up the old memory of the 'Yellow Perils' of the Chinese coolies in nineteenth-century America and of the influx of Japanese exports in the 1980s.[10]

On top of this, a so-called 'Greater China' (a vast economic zone consisting of mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan) also appears to loom large. As Nicholas Kristof noted, in terms of global trade, market size, and sheer economic bulk, 'Greater China' was becoming a fourth pole in the international system alongside the United

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[6] Eduardo Porter, "Looking for a Villain, and Finding One in China," *The New York Times*, April 18, 2004, p. 4.3.
[7] Nicholas D. Kristof, "The Rise of China," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 5 (1993), pp. 63-65.
[8] See, for example, Vaclav Smil, *China's Environmental Crisis*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1993; Lester R. Brown, *Who Will Feed China? Wake-Up Call for a Small Planet*, New York: W. W. Norton/World Watch Institute, 1995; Mark Hertsgaard, "Our Real China Problem," *The Atlantic Monthly* 280, no. 5 (1997), pp. 96-114; Brook Larmer and Alexandra A. Seno, "A Reckless Harvest: China Is Protecting Its Own Trees, But Has Begun Instead to Devour Asia's Forests," *Newsweek* (international ed.), January 27, 2003, pp. 20-22.
[9] Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997, pp. 132-135. By a most recent account, U.S. trade deficit with China reached $124 billion in 2003. Porter, "Looking for a Villain, and Finding One in China," p. 4.3.
[10] This re-invocation of the "Yellow Peril" image in the West has been noted by Jagdish Bhagwati, "Why China Is a Paper Tiger: The Emergence of the People's Republic Should Spell Opportunity—Not Doom—for Asian Economies," *Newsweek*, February 18, 2002, p. 23.

States, Japan, and the European Union. Using comparable international prices, 'Greater China' in the year 2002 was projected to have a gross domestic product of $9.8 trillion, compared to $9.7 trillion for the United States. "If those forecasts hold," argued Kristof, "Greater China would not just be another economic pole; it would be the biggest of them all."[11] This gigantic Chinese economic network, according to Denny Roy, "gives China a significant long-term edge in the competition to establish an economic empire in East Asia."[12] Indeed, as Harry Harding points out, "Although [Greater China] was originally intended in [a] benign economic sense… in some quarters it evokes much more aggressive analogies, such as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere or Greater Germany."[13]

Therefore, even on pure economic ground, China's rise seems alarming enough. This is because, as leading neorealist scholar John J. Mearsheimer notes, this new round of power redistribution may lead to "a future China threat so worrisome that it might be far more powerful and dangerous than any of the potential hegemons that the United States confronted during the twentieth century."[14] In this respect, Mearsheimer's finding is indeed astonishing, at least for his meticulous calculating skill:

> China's potential wealth and power can be illustrated in the following way. Right now, Japan has a population one-tenth the size of China's and a per capita GNP ($32,350) that is 40 times greater. If China modernizes to the point where it has about the same per capita GNP as South Korea does today ($8,600), it will have an economy 2.5 times the size of Japan's current one and 1.3 times the size of the U.S. economy. And if China achieves a per capita GNP equal to about half that of Japan, its economy will be 5 times larger than Japan's and 2.5 times larger than that of the United States. For most of the Cold War, it should be remembered, the Soviet economy was only about half the size of the American economy.[15]

In case one still misses the point, Mearsheimer goes on to make clear the underlying logic that China's huge economic wealth will more than likely be converted to a decisive military advantage that could be used to threaten others. In the same breath, Denny Roy argues that:

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[11] Kristof, "The Rise of China," pp. 61-62.
[12] Denny Roy, "Hegemon on the Horizon? China's Threat to East Asian Security," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994), p. 154. See also, David Shambaugh ed., *Greater China: The Next Superpower?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
[13] Harry Harding, "The Concept of 'Greater China': Themes, Variations and Reservations," in David Shambaugh ed., *Greater China: The Next Superpower?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 31.
[14] John J. Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 5 (2001), p. 57.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 55.

> A stronger, wealthier China would have greater wherewithal to increase its arsenal of nuclear-armed ICBMs and to increase their lethality through improvements in range, accuracy, and survivability. If China continues its rate of economic expansion, absolute growth in Chinese nuclear capabilities should be expected to increase.[16]

For many, this military build-up is already developing at an alarming pace. U.S. Congressman Bob Schaffer claimed that "In March 2002 China increased its official defense budget by 17.6 percent. This follows a 17.7 percent increase in 2001. These increases follow its five-year plan increasing its stated defense budget 15-20 percent annually. China's actual defense budget has been estimated at three to five times the size of its official budget." And he concluded with the rather familiar punch line: "These increases are aimed at the United States."[17] For some, moreover, what is still more disturbing is that much of China's formidable military improvement has been aided by systematic Chinese espionage in the U.S., as the Cox Committee report has alleged.[18] All this, together with China's effort to build a leaner, more specialised army, with its recent purchases of sophisticated weaponry from Russia and some former Soviet republics, seems to add up to the realistic scenario of a growing military menace in East Asia.

This fear of China's economic and military capabilities is based largely on the neorealist assumption that the international system is an anarchical, self-help structure in which states necessarily seek to maximise power (especially material capabilities) in order to survive. For neorealists, therefore, the distribution of power becomes the most important factor in understanding war and peace. With the balance of power in East Asia in serious doubt after the Cold War,[19] China is regarded as the most likely candidate to fill that power vacuum, a process which may well be violent and disruptive.[20] As Kenneth Lieberthal explains, China's rise poses the perennial question

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[16] Denny Roy, "Rising China and U.S. Interests: Inevitable vs. Contingent Hazards," *Orbis* 47, no. 1 (2003), p. 130; see also Denny Roy, "Consequences of China's Economic Growth for Asia-Pacific Security," *Security Dialogue* 24, no. 2 (1993), pp. 181-191.

[17] Bob Schaffer, "Remarks on China," Congressional Record: March 14, 2002. <http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2002_cr/h031402.html>.

[18] Select Committee of United States House of Representatives, *U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China*, 1999, <http://www.house.gov/coxreport/>. See also, Johanna McGeary, "The Next Cold War?" *Time*, June 7, 1999, pp. 27-33; and Aaron L. Friedberg, "Arming China Against Ourselves," *Commentary* 108, no. 1 (July/August 1999), pp. 27-33.

[19] Paul Dibb, "The Cold War May Be Over but Friction Remains in Asia." *The Australian*, June 6, 1995, p. 17. See also Paul Dibb, *Towards a New Balance of Power in Asia*, Adelphi Papers no. 295, London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, 1995.

[20] William T. Tow, "China and the International Strategic System," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, p. 154.

of "how the international community can accommodate the ambitions of newly powerful states, which have always forced realignment of the international system and have more often than not led to war."[21] Indeed, this logic has been stretched to the extent that the rise of China is likened to Wilhelmine/Nazi Germany and militarist Japan. For example, Richard K. Betts and Thomas J. Christensen argue that:

> Like Germany a century ago, China is a late-blooming great power emerging into a world already ordered strategically by earlier arrivals; a continental power surrounded by other powers who are collectively stronger but individually weaker (with the exception of the United States and, perhaps, Japan); a bustling country with great expectations, dissatisfied with its place in the international pecking order, if only with regard to international prestige and respect. The quest for a rightful "place in the sun" will, it is argued, inevitably foster growing friction with Japan, Russia, India or the United States.[22]

Apart from this structuralist explanation, some realist scholars point to some 'second-image' dimensions to the 'China threat' problem, namely China as "a rising power with high expectations, unresolved grievances and an undemocratic government."[23] Some, indeed, still refer to China as the 'Middle Kingdom.' Warren I. Cohen, for one, argues that "Probably the most ethnocentric people in the world, the Chinese considered their realm the center of the universe, the Middle Kingdom, and regarded all cultural differences as signs of inferiority."[24] Given this 'Middle Kingdom' mentality, the outside world is said to have good reason to be concerned that "China will seek to reestablish in some form the political and cultural hegemony that it enjoyed in Asia during the Ming and early Qing dynasties."[25]

Similarly, China's current political system is believed to augur ill for international stability. Lucian Pye, an authoritative figure in China studies, repeatedly warns that

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[21] Kenneth Lieberthal, "A New China Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 6 (1995), p. 36; and Kristof, "The Rise of China," p. 74.

[22] Richard K. Betts and Thomas J. Christensen, "China: Getting the Questions Right," *The National Interest*, no. 62 (2000/2001), p. 23. For the Germany analogy, see Arthur Waldron, "Statement of Dr Arthur Waldron," House Armed Services Committee, June 21, 2000, <http://armedservices.house.gov/ testimony/ 106thcongress/00-06-21waldron.html>; Edward Friedman, "The Challenge of a Rising China: Another Germany?" in Robert J. Lieber ed., *Eagle Adrift: American Foreign Policy at the End of the Century*, New York: Longman, 1997, pp. 215-245, and Paul Wolfowitz, "Bridging Centuries—Fin de Siècle All Over Again," *The National Interest*, no. 47 (1997), pp. 3-8.

[23] Betts and Christensen, "China: Getting the Questions Right," p. 17.

[24] Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*, 3rd ed., New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 3.

[25] Harry Harding, *China's Second Revolution: Reform After Mao*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987, pp. 257-258. See also Bernstein and Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, p. 53; Steve Chan, "Some Propositions on U.S. Credos About Sino-American Relations," in James C. Hsiung ed., *Beyond China's Independent Foreign Policy: Challenge for the U.S. and Its Asian Allies*, New York: Praeger, 1985, p. 153; and Stephen FitzGerald, *China and the World*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1977. On the "Sinocentric" world order, see John K. Fairbank ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968.

China is an "erratic state," and not "your typical superpower."[26] He has long argued that Chinese political culture embodies an intolerance of pluralism and a yearning for authority, and is therefore inhospitable to democracy.[27] By perceiving China as a ruthless dictatorship to which the liberal 'democratic peace' theory does not apply,[28] realist analysts can therefore conclude that it is predisposed to behave irresponsibly. As Bernstein and Munro put it:

> if the history of the last two hundred years is any guide, the more democratic countries become, the less likely they are to fight wars against each other. The more dictatorial they are, the more war prone they become. Indeed, if the current Beijing regime continues to engage in military adventurism—as it did in the Taiwan Strait in 1996—there will be a real chance of at least limited naval or air clashes with the United States.[29]

Subscribing to the same logic, Denny Roy pessimistically predicts that the "establishment of a liberal democracy in China is extremely unlikely in the foreseeable future…. Without democratization within, there is no basis for expecting more pacific behavior without."[30]

For other analysts, however, even if China does become democratised, the threat still remains. For instance, postulating what he calls the "democratic paradox" phenomenon, Samuel Huntington suggests that democratisation is as likely to encourage nationalist conflict as it is to promote peace.[31] Indeed, some China watchers believe that an increase in market freedom has been partly responsible for an upsurge in Chinese nationalism, a key factor in the 'China threat' equation. The immense popularity of the book *Zhongguo Keyi Shuo Bu* (*China Can Say No*) and scenes of angry Chinese hurling rocks at the U.S. embassy in Beijing after the 1999 U.S. bombing of their embassy in Belgrade, seem to have underscored this widespread nationalist frenzy. This sometimes racialised nationalism, in combination with memories of its past humiliation and thwarted grandeur, is said to make China an increasingly dissatisfied power, interested less in preserving the international status quo and more in resorting to military means in

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[26] Lucian W. Pye, "China: Erratic State, Frustrated Society," *Foreign Affairs* 69, no. 4 (1990), pp. 56-74; and Lucian W. Pye, "China: Not Your Typical Superpower," *Problems of Post-Communism* 43, no. 4 (1996), pp. 3-15.
[27] Lucian W. Pye, *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*, Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn and Hain, 1981; and Lucian W. Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968.
[28] See Edward Friedman and Barrett L. McCormick eds., *What If China Doesn't Democratize: Implications for War and Peace*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000.
[29] Bernstein and Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, p. 18.
[30] Roy, "Hegemon on the Horizon?" p. 157.
[31] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, London: Touchstone Books, 1996, p. 94.

conducting foreign relations, particularly in settling its territorial disputes with neighbouring countries.[32]

Explaining this propensity in broader terms, some point out that coupled with China's threatening nationalism is an entrenched *realpolitik* strategic culture. For example, Harvard China expert Alastair Iain Johnston argues that although a Confucian-Mencian tradition favours accommodationist rather than offensive strategies in dealing with other cultures or countries, Chinese strategic culture in the Maoist and post-Maoist periods is distinctively characterised by what is known in the West as the *parabellum* (prepare for war) paradigm. Believing that warfare is a relatively constant feature in international relations, that stakes in conflicts with an adversary are zero-sum in nature, and that the use of force is the most efficacious means of dealing with threat, this strategic culture has been viewed as an enduring source of China's conflict behaviour.[33]

Aside from the above-mentioned conventional views of the China threat, there are a small number of realist scholars who see China's impending collapse or a kind of identity or legitimation crisis as a danger or at least a problem to the world, as opposed to its rapid economic growth and military build-up. Their reasoning rests on the assumption that domestic instability and/or insecurity could prompt Beijing to conjure up enemies abroad and inflame nationalist sentiment to 'fill the void' left by the demise of communist ideology.[34] Or even worse, they suggest, China might venture directly into a more aggressive foreign policy terrain to avert public attention from its dire domestic problems or legitimation crisis.[35] For instance, given that "China today faces a series of pressures stemming from population growth and the declining ability of agriculture and state-owned industries to expand employment," Jack Goldstone predicted some eight years ago that we could expect a terminal crisis in China within the next ten to fifteen years, with serious implications for international stability.[36] More

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[32] Frank Dikötter, "Culture, 'Race' and Nation: The Formation of National Identity in Twentieth Century China," *Journal of International Affairs* 49, no. 2 (1996), pp. 590-605; Barry Sautman, "Racial Nationalism and China's External Behavior," *World Affairs* 160, no. 2 (1997), pp. 78-95; Barry Buzan and Gerald Segal, "Rethinking East Asian Security," *Survival* 36, no. 2 (1994), p. 6; Bernstein and Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, p. 4; and Samuel S. Kim, "China," in Edward A. Kolodziej and Roger E. Kanet eds., *Coping with Conflict After the Cold War*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, p. 128.

[33] Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995; and Kim, "China," p. 120.

[34] Lucian W. Pye, "How China's Nationalism Was Shanghaied," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 29 (1993), pp. 107-133.

[35] For example, David Shambaugh argues that an internally insecure post-Deng leadership "will cause a more assertive posture externally." Quoted in Greg Austin, "The Strategic Implications of China's Public Order Crisis," *Survival* 37, no. 2 (1995), p. 20n.

[36] Jack A. Goldstone, "The Coming Chinese Collapse," *Foreign Policy*, no. 99 (1995), pp. 35-52.

recently, Gordon Chang, a Chinese American lawyer and occasional journalist, trod the same line, arguing that China's unique experiment of market reforms under its one-party dictatorship has failed. As a consequence, he suggests, China has not only caused more problems than opportunities for foreign investors, but its collapse could further threaten stability both within China and without.[37]

Finally, it is worth stressing that the rise of neoconservatism in the U.S. has given the 'China threat' theme a new twist. Embracing at once offensive realism, a sense of moral superiority, and a messianic instinct,[38] neoconservatives see the China threat coming not only from geopolitical challenge but also from irreconcilable ideological difference. In this context, there has emerged a so-called 'Blue Team' in the United States, whose view is that the "United States and China are not on a collision course. They have already collided."[39] Closely related to the influential neoconservative think tank, the Project for the New American Century, the Blue Team, "a loose alliance of members of Congress, congressional staff, think tank fellows, Republican political operatives, conservative journalists, lobbyists for Taiwan, former intelligence officers and a handful of academics," has relied on the *Weekly Standard* and the *Washington Times* as a primary outlet for its alarming view on China.[40] But as the U.S.-led war on terrorism has consumed much of neoconservatives' attention, this particular strand of the 'China threat' argument has yet to gain wide currency in the field of Chinese foreign relations studies.

The above survey is just a quick snapshot of a large, complex, and ever-growing body of literature. Nevertheless, it is safe to draw the conclusion that while the exact basis of the China threat has been open to debate within the literature, its 'objective' quality has been commonly taken for granted. Referring to the 'China threat' thesis, Tom Donnelly writes that "what was once controversial has now become almost conventional."[41] In the words of Walter McDougall, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and strategic thinker, the idea of the China threat is simply "commonsense geopolitics."[42] For Samuel Huntington, the challenge of 'Greater China' to the West is

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[37] Gordon G. Chang, *The Coming Collapse of China*, New York: Random House, 2001; see also, Richard Hornik, "Bursting China's Bubble," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 3 (1994), pp. 28-42.
[38] A representative work of "offensive realism" is John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2001.
[39] Jacob Heilbrunn, "The Next Cold War," *The New Republic*, November 20, 1995, p. 27.
[40] Robert G. Kaiser and Steven Mufson, "'Blue Team' Draws a Hard Line on Beijing: Action on Hill Reflects Informal Group's Clout," *The Washington Post*, February 22, 2000, p. A1.
[41] Tom Donnelly, "China Without Illusions," *The Weekly Standard*, July 29, 2002, p. 19.
[42] See Bernstein and Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, p. 216.

nothing but a cultural, economic, and political reality.[43] And when they claim that "China can pose a grave problem," Betts and Christensen are similarly convinced that they are merely referring to "the truth."[44]

I want, however, to question this 'truth,' and question, more generally, the objective, self-evidentiary attitudes which underpin it. In my view, and consistent with my arguments in earlier chapters, the 'threat' literature is best understood as a particular kind of discursive practice that casts China as Other. In this sense, the 'truism' that China presents a growing threat is not so much an objective reflection of contemporary global reality per se, as it is a discursive construction of Otherness which is simultaneously derived from, and acts to bolster, the hegemonic role of America (and the West in general) in the post-Cold War world. In the two sections that follow, I shall examine how this is the case first with a neorealist or structural realist representation of the 'China threat,' and then with the domestic linkage or 'second-image' approach to China.[45]

Representing a Threatening Other in Structural Realism

With the passing of the Soviet enemy in the early 1990s, the old structural and intellectual certainty of Cold War bipolar rivalry has allegedly given way to the new reality of the 'End of History.' Yet, as noted in Chapter 2, despite the enormous ideological appeal of this rhetoric, for many in the Western and particularly U.S. political establishment, this freshly minted 'certainty' of Hegelian triumphalism offered little comfort as far as their imagery of U.S. geopolitical domination was concerned. This is not unexpected from a country that has for a long time institutionalised itself as a national security state. A whole range of U.S. government departments and agencies, notably the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency, literally acquired their primary identity from the task of fighting its Cold War Communist 'Other.' If the

[43] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, p. 169.
[44] Betts and Christensen, "China: Getting the Questions Right," p. 18.
[45] To adopt this line of reasoning is not to ignore the implications of China's rise, nor to deny its potential for strategic misbehaviour, much less to claim the essential peacefulness of Chinese society/culture. Indeed, not all of the 'threat' themes outlined above are entirely misplaced. In Chapter 7, I will discuss some extreme forms of contemporary Chinese nationalism and worldview, whose *potential* for economic, environmental, and even military challenge should be taken seriously. In doing so, I differ with those scholars who stress the "inherent peacefulness" of Chinese culture to counter the "threat" argument. See, for example, Chen Jian, "Will China's Development Threaten Asia-Pacific Security?" *Security Dialogue* 24, no. 2 (1993), pp. 193-196; and Li Shaojun, "The Peaceful Orientation of Chinese Civilization: From Tradition to Reality: A Response to Those Who See China as a Menace," unpublished paper, Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1998, pp. 1-9.

'Communist threat' no longer exists, how could the U.S., and the Pentagon in particular, continue to maintain its identity as the beacon of the free world? And indeed how could America continue to justify itself as the 'indispensable nation'?

These are some of the questions in the minds of Western/American strategic analysts, who are wondering how to maintain U.S. preponderance in a world of anarchy and uncertainty. The conservative realist Samuel Huntington asks: "If being an American means being committed to the principles of liberty, democracy, individualism, and private property, and if there is no evil empire out there threatening those principles, what indeed does it mean to be an American, and what becomes of American national interests?"[46] Obsessed with this self-imagery, many scholars and policy planners have been keen to reinvoke the timeless, structural certainty of geopolitical rivalry, and to embrace the 'back to the future' scenario, maintaining that despite the dawn of the post-Cold War period little has changed—the world remains a dangerous, volatile place.[47]

With such searching eyes for an enemy, it would be surprising if China failed to come into view. Indeed, China makes a perfect candidate, in that "China remains the major source of uncertainty in the Asia-Pacific."[48] That is, not only do the implications of its economic transformation and military ambition remain unclear, but the resilience of the Communist government even after its roundly condemned Tiananmen suppression seems also to fly in the face of the 'End of History' triumphalism. Consequently, (and before September 11), the only major certainty coming out of the post-Cold War era seems to be an unpredictable and dangerous China.

From the beginning, this 'China threat,' I suggest, is not a result of its actual challenge to the West or the United States per se, but primarily a discursive dimension of the neorealist construction of the American self in terms of global supremacy and indispensable leadership. As Huntington makes it clear, "Chinese hegemony will reduce American and Western influence [in Asia] and compel the United States to accept what it has historically attempted to prevent: domination of a key region of the world by

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[46] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Erosion of American National Interests," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (1997), pp. 29-30.

[47] See, for example, John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1991), pp. 5-56; Adam Roberts, "A New Age in International Relations?" *International Affairs* 67, no. 3 (1991), pp. 509-525; and Thomas H. Henriksen, "The Coming Great Powers Competition," *World Affairs* 158, no. 2 (1995), pp. 63-69.

[48] Samuel S. Kim, "Chinese Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice," in Samuel S. Kim ed., *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998, p. 4.

another power."[49] In the absence of such self-fashioning, most of China's neighbours, which might arguably be more vulnerable to a China threat if there is one, have traditionally adopted a much less alarmist view on the 'Middle Kingdom.'[50] Thus, China's real challenge for America, as Yu Bin notes, "is perhaps more psychological and conceptual—that is, how to deal with a major power whose rise is not necessarily guided by Washington, unlike the post-World War II rise of Japan and Germany."[51]

Also, it can be argued that the existence of an 'enemy' is indispensable to the continued imagination of the 'indispensable nation.' In Charles Frazier's novel *Cold Mountain*, Inman, a soldier returning home from battle during the American Civil War, pondered the question: "What is the cost of not having an enemy?"[52] Such a cost, then, seems very high indeed, for at stake here is what is seen as the 'fundamental' modern Western/American self-identity as a (global) rational being and indispensable leader. Heroic leadership would not be so needed if there was little left to fight for. Clearly mindful of this, Georgi Arbatov, Director of Moscow's Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada, told a U.S. audience the year before the collapse of the Berlin Wall: "We are going to do something terrible to you—we are going to deprive you of an enemy."[53] While he correctly noted that for the U.S. to live without an identity-defining enemy is terrible indeed, Arbatov was only half right, for the 'enemy' itself often has no control over its status as an enemy. Rather, as noted before, it is primarily a ready-made discursive category built into the American self-imagination. With this discursive category as the analytical framework for understanding other actors on the world stage, Western and particularly American scholars did not simply 'discover' a China threat out there; it was cognitively constructed beforehand.

For neorealists, the most important question concerns of course China's (military) capabilities. For example, for Gerald Segal, understanding China's international relations necessitates a focus on its power status (in relation to the Western self). His foundation question thus: "[Is] China a rising power, and if so, how fast and in what

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[49] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, p. 237.
[50] See most chapters in Yee and Storey eds., *The China Threat*.
[51] Yu Bin, *East Asia: Geopolitique into the Twenty-first Century—A Chinese View*, Stanford, CA: Asia Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, June 1997, p. 9.
[52] Quoted in Robert A. Pastor, "China and the United States: Who Threatens Whom?" *Journal of International Affairs* 54, no. 2 (2001), p. 443.
[53] Quoted in Charles E. Nathanson, "The Social Construction of the Soviet Threat: A Study in the Politics of Representation," *Alternatives* 13, no. 4 (1988), p. 443.

direction [is it headed]?"[54] Led by Segal's widely shared concerns, most attention in the China debate has been drawn to China's military capabilities. As Thomas J. Christensen notes, "Although many have focused on intentions as well as capabilities, the most prevalent component of the [China threat] debate is the assessment of China's overall future military power compared with that of the United States and other East Asian regional powers." [55] Once the analytical gaze is fixed on military capabilities, a discursive practice of overestimation is likely to follow. For instance, dissatisfied with the U.S. General Accounting Office's estimation that China's actual defence spending is two or three times the announced result, Bernstein and Munro offer their own remarkable calculation:

> the multiple is much higher… it is between ten and twenty times the official figure…. The International Institute of Strategic Studies in London in 1995 concluded that China's actual defense spending is at least four times greater than the official figure. If the People's Armed Police is added in, the IISS estimate would go up to a multiple of five. With a conservative calculation for purchasing power parity, we would double that again, arriving at a multiple of ten.[56]

As John Fairbank argued, "as we phrase questions, so we get answers."[57] Thus, these China scholars' questions are already framed in a way that the 'fact' of a China threat, is almost a guaranteed or predetermined part of the answer. Consider the following example. In June 2001, the National Intelligence Council (NIC), a group that reports directly to CIA chief George Tenet, fired RAND from a classified project ordered by Congress to assess China's future military capabilities. The reason was simply that RAND's findings depicted China as a growing military power, but as no match for the United States in the near future. This fell short of a China threat, the result the NIC had wanted. One analyst familiar with the project later complained that people at the NIC, themselves under the pressure from Republican Hawks in Congress, "want China to be 10 feet tall."[58]

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[54] Gerald Segal, "Understanding East Asian International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 23, no. 4 (1997), p. 504.
[55] Thomas J. Christensen, "Posing Problems without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for U.S. Security Policy," *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001), p. 5.
[56] Bernstein and Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, pp. 70, 72.
[57] John K. Fairbank, *China Perceived: Images & Policies in Chinese-American Relations*, London: André Deutsch, 1976, p. 85.
[58] See Richard J. Newman and Kevin Whitelaw, "China: How Big a Threat? Inside the Bitter Fight Over Assessing China's Intentions," *U.S. News and World Report*, July 23, 2001, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/news/2001/07/usn072301.html>.

Thus, the problem is less about the lack of transparency in Chinese official statistics, but more about the pre-constituted image of the China threat which dictates how China and its capabilities/intentions should be interpreted in the first instance.[59] And at the root of this problem is in turn the positivist-cum-realist commitment to the search for an assumed single, essential reality which effectively rules out ambiguity, contingency and indeterminacy. In this case, neorealist observers rest on an either/or certainty: *either* China *guarantees* absolute peace, *or* it represents a threat—there is no half-way house. Since no such guarantee has been forthcoming from China (and I doubt it can be found anywhere), it must be seen as a threat.

As noted before, this logic has been clearly at work in the construction of the Iraq threat in the lead up to the current invasion. It is no less evident in the view of Richard Betts and Thomas Christensen, who speculate that:

> If the PLA [People's Liberation Army] remains second-rate, should the world breathe a sigh of relief? *Not entirely*…. Drawing China into the web of global interdependence may do more to encourage peace than war, but it *cannot guarantee* that the pursuit of heartfelt political interests will be blocked by a fear of economic consequences…. [And] U.S. efforts to create a stable balance across the Taiwan Strait might deter the use of force under certain circumstances, but *certainly not all* [emphases added].[60]

Consequently, the only certain conclusion is a China threat:

> The truth is that China can pose a grave problem even if it does not become a military power on the American model, does not intend to commit aggression, integrates into a global economy, and liberalizes politically. Similarly, the United States could face a dangerous conflict over Taiwan even if it turns out that Beijing lacks the capacity to conquer the island…. This is true because of geography; because of America's reliance on alliances to project power; and because of China's capacity to harm U.S. forces, U.S. regional allies, and the American homeland, even while losing a war in the technical, military sense.[61]

In consequence, in this relentless quest for structural certainty, neither China's capabilities nor intentions really matter, since China is already framed according to a ready-made image of a strategic threat. Given the *a priori* belief that "All other states

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[59] This judgment and the obsession with capabilities, I suggest, have much to do with the dominant international theory of neorealism. Insofar as the orthodox study of international relations is essentially a study of self and Other at the international level, it becomes logical or even imperative to take only the capabilities of other states seriously. In this sense, small wonder that the scholarly imagination of China in Western IR community is often stretched as far as necessary to make it appear threatening but at the same time is so limited that the study of China in international relations is effectively reduced to a kind of "bean count."

[60] Betts and Christensen, "China: Getting the Questions Right," pp. 19, 22.

[61] *Ibid*., pp. 18, 28.

are potential threats,"[62] the China threat is not understood contingently or context-specifically; rather, it is a meaning projected on to China simply because of its mere geographical existence as a state. Therefore, in the end, it is often ironic that some 'China threat' theorists sell their policy of containment on the grounds that China is not strong enough. For example, Mearsheimer argues that "China is still far away from having enough latent power to make a run at regional hegemony, so it is not too late for the United States to reverse the course and do what it can to slow China's rise."[63] In this sense, it becomes obvious that China can hardly escape from this powerful discursive framework (by, as Georgi Arbatov suggested, simply choosing not to be an enemy of the West). Pertinent to this point is, for example, a perception of China as a trouble-maker among some U.S. business analysts. As one report notes, when the U.S. economy suffered deflation a couple of years ago, China was blamed for 'exporting' its own deflation through cheap products; and now, when inflation rears its head in America, China, thanks to its buying spree in world commodity markets, once again becomes part of the problem.[64]

In short, what is called 'China' in this neorealist strategic discourse seems to have little to do with what is going on in China, but is rather a preconstructed, symbolised 'national security concern' for the West, and the U.S. in particular.[65] "What is disconcerting, though," as Yongjin Zhang points out, "is the severe disproportion between the keen attention to China as a security concern and the intractable neglect of China's [own] security concerns in the current debate."[66] This, I would suggest, is probably not so surprising once we understand that in the 'China threat' literature, the rational Western/American knowing self, given its mission in guaranteeing world order and stability, is assumed to have a privileged right to security concerns, whereas the knowable object (China) is by definition bereft of its own subjectivity, whose security concerns, if any, should already be represented by that of the former. It is at this level that, I argue, the 'threat' argument as 'scientific knowledge' has shown its most hegemonic character. The following examples help us explain this point.

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[62] Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future," p. 12.
[63] Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier," p. 60.
[64] Porter, "Looking for a Villain, and Finding One in China."
[65] The treatment of China as a "national security concern" is of course not unique to U.S. nor Western strategic thinkers. Analysts in Japan, Taiwan, India, and elsewhere have made similar observations. It would be interesting to probe into the extent to which these non-Western views are "home-grown" and are influenced by the Western, particularly American construction of China.
[66] Yongjin Zhang, "China's Security Problematique: Critical Reflections," in Yongjin Zhang and Greg Austin eds., *Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy*, Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, 2001, p. 255.

Equipped with a 'first-person privilege' afforded by the American self-imagery, the authors of *The Coming Conflict with China* Bernstein and Munro have skimmed across such complex issues as "the Chinese tradition" and its "entire three-thousand-year history." They speak just as effortlessly of "the Chinese habit" as if they were talking about something as concrete, monolithic, and changeless as bricks and rocks.[67] In particular, they repeatedly speak of what China's 'real' goal is: "China is an unsatisfied and ambitious power whose goal is to dominate Asia…. China aims at achieving a kind of hegemony. Its goal is to ensure that no country in its region… will act without first taking China's interests into prime consideration."[68] When it comes to China's *professed* goals and objectives (e.g., "we will never seek hegemony") they are dismissed as slogans out of hand.[69] In short, they are confident that "China is so big and so naturally powerful that [we know] it will tend to dominate its region *even if it does not intend to do so as a matter of national policy* [emphasis added]."[70]

Similarly, from his observation (presumably via Western TV news bulletins) of the Chinese protest against American bombing of their embassy in Belgrade in May 1999, Robert Kagan is confident enough to speak on behalf of the whole Chinese people, claiming that he knows for a 'fact': "what [China] *really* thinks about the United States [emphasis added]." Here is his verdict: "they consider the United States an enemy—or, more precisely, the enemy…. How else can one interpret the Chinese government's response to the bombing?" he asks, rhetorically.[71] Given that Kagan, director of the U.S. Leadership Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has led the way to redefining the American self as the benevolent global hegemon, his unusual confidence in his ability to represent the Chinese 'Other' is perhaps not unexpected. For Kagan, because the Chinese "have no other information" than their government's propaganda, the Chinese protesters cannot rationally 'know' the whole event as 'we' can. Thus, their anger must have been orchestrated, unreal, and hence need not be taken seriously.

But as Owen Harries argued, if one did go to China after the incident, it would become immediately evident that Kagan's assertion was hardly the case. Harries wrote

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[67] Bernstein and Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, pp. 15, 36.
[68] *Ibid*., pp. 4, 11.
[69] For example, they argue that "China's peace offensive was a tactical move, one that might disguise but does not eliminate the basic disagreements between the two countries [China and the U.S.]." *Ibid.*, p. 8. For an alternative account of China's goals, see Jia Qingguo, "Economic Development, Political Stability, and International Respect," *Journal of International Affairs* 49, no. 2 (1996), pp. 572-589.
[70] Bernstein and Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, p. 53.
[71] Robert Kagan, "China's No. 1 Enemy," *The New York Times*, May 11, 1999, p. A23.

that when he passed through Hong Kong, he "did not meet a person there—either Chinese or *Western*—who accepted the accident thesis [emphasis added]." He was once asked "what the American reaction, popular and governmental, would have been had it been the other way around—had the Chinese destroyed a U.S. embassy and called it an accident."[72] The chance is that the U.S. would react strongly and violently, just as it had done after its two embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were attacked the year before. But because China was seen as an objective Other, effectively inferior to the 'self,' when it came to 'rational' analysis, its response to the embassy bombing could be seen as nothing but 'irrational' hostility.

This reassertion of the rationality/irrationality theme is clear enough in Lucian Pye's discussion of the inability of the Chinese to know where their best interests lie when it comes to international relations. As he puts it:

> from the time of Lord Palmerston's efforts to get the Chinese to accept the conventions of Western diplomacy, to President Bush's humiliating attempts to alter the behavior of Beijing's current rulers, China seems impelled to reject the helping hand and to act in ways that seem perversely self-damaging in the eyes of those who believe they have that country's interests at heart.[73]

What is astonishing about the above statements and attitudes is the shared mentality among these experts that *they know China better than the Chinese themselves do*.[74] This is a classic Orientalist trait. And like Orientalism, this Western construction of the Chinese 'Other' does not require that China acknowledges the validity of that construction. Indeed, as Edward Said points out, "It is enough for 'us' to set up these distinctions in our own minds; [and] 'they' become 'they' accordingly."[75] In this sense, the 'China threat' literature is part of what Andrew Latham calls contemporary "strategic orientalism," or "an interpretation of the politico-strategic objectives and purposes of Third World states that is shaped more by Western fears and prejudices than by the realities of politics in those states."[76]

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[72] Owen Harries, "A Year of Debating China," *The National Interest*, no. 58 (1999/2000), p. 145.
[73] Pye, "China: Erratic State, Frustrated Society," p. 56.
[74] Another example is from John Derbyshire, who is proud that he got his education as a China-watcher from the old China hands of Hong Kong. As he writes, "In fact, one of the more depressing things about China, if you are a person with a deep interest in the country and its history, is how little the Chinese themselves know. Any foreigner who makes an effort to do so can easily become better informed about recent Chinese history than the Chinese are." John Derbyshire, "China: A Reality Check," *National Review*, September 17, 2001, p. 42.
[75] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vantage Books, 1978, p. 54.
[76] Latham, "China in the Contemporary American Geopolitical Imagination," p. 142.

Not all realist scholars adopt such a neorealist turned Orientalist strategy. In an attempt to let the 'fact' of the China threat speak for 'itself,' some scholars have indeed employed the 'second-image' or 'inside-out' approach so as to scientifically uncover (as opposed to merely assert) China's real 'intentions' (instead of just 'capabilities'). In the next section, I want to examine this approach, and illustrate how it merely reformulates the self/Other dichotomy in other ways.

Constructing the Chinese 'Other' from the 'Inside Out'

While there exist many different analytical angles within this broad approach to understanding of the 'black-box' of China, the 'culture/identity' approach is most influential, and hence is the focus of my analysis here. This approach has been utilised, for example, by Samuel Huntington in his grand theory of the 'clash of civilisations.' Unlike neorealists' almost exclusive focus on military capabilities, he is willing to come to grips with the history, ideas, values, and customs of the 'Sinic civilisation,' and from which he is able to draw the 'China threat' conclusion based on its civilisational distinctiveness:

> The rise of China posed a more fundamental challenge to the United States. U.S. conflicts with China covered a much broader range of issues than those with Japan, including economic questions, human rights, Tibet, Taiwan, the South China Sea, and weapons proliferation. On almost no major policy issue did the United States and China share common objectives. The differences go across the board.[77]

On the surface, it seems that Huntington has overcome the neorealist neglect of China's non-capability attributes and placed his argument on a solid empirical ground. However, civilisations for Huntington, just like the state for orthodox neorealists, are essentially distinctive entities. Or as he puts it, "Civilizations are the biggest 'we' within which we feel culturally at home as distinguished from all the other 'thems' out there." Thus, to invoke this kind of cultural identity is clearly to define "the state's place in world politics, its friends, its enemies,"[78] and to draw the 'real fault line' between self and Other. At the core of Huntington's grand theory, consequently, remains the realist rendition of global politics, with an even more totalised construction of Otherness than the conventional state-centric angle usually imagines. In this case, not only China

[77] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, p. 228.
[78] *Ibid*., pp. 43, 125.

proper, but the so-called 'Sinic cultural area' of East Asia as a whole now emerges as a strategic threat (with the exclusion of Japan, which is conveniently categorised as a separate civilisation).

Thus, despite the fact that "This ambiguous, multivocal world makes it increasingly hard to conceive of human diversity as inscribed in bounded, independent cultures,"[79] Huntington seems determined to see cultural differences between the West and China in essentialist, foundationalist, and mutually exclusive terms, rather than as contingent, relative, and historical. For example, by quoting Edward Friedman's statement that "what is authentically Chinese" is "patriarchal, nativistic, and authoritarian," he introduces a stark contrast with what is "authentically" Western, which is said to be characterised by a unique combination of "universal" values such as the rule of law, social pluralism, and individualism.[80] In this sense, cultural differences between China (and Asia generally) and the United States only make the former a threat to the latter, but not vice versa, and world order can be based only on Asian economic underdevelopment, since East Asia's economic development can only act to disrupt international politics.

This leads us to another cultural approach to the China threat thesis, namely, the national identity approach. While Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' theory argues that different civilisations naturally come to conflict with each other, it is said that the national identity approach "does not presuppose specific behavioral choices, modalities, or outcomes of the nation-state identity dynamic."[81] With this alleged departure from a static representation of Chinese culture, some scholars in the national identity camp claim they "have taken a 'great leap' forward (or at least a considerable one) in analyzing a hitherto neglected dimension of China's nation-building experience."[82]

First introduced in the course of the so-called 'behavioral revolution,'[83] the 'national identity' approach aims predominantly at capturing some fundamental meaning of the state, be it national role, character, or essence in a positivist fashion. This approach defines national identity as essential, unitary, and autonomous, with clear

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[79] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988, p. 23.
[80] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, pp. 106, 68-72.
[81] Kim, "Chinese Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice," p. 13.
[82] Samuel S. Kim and Lowell Dittmer, "Whither China's Quest for National Identity?" in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim eds., *China's Quest for National Identity*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 290.
[83] Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, "In Search of a Theory of National Identity," in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim eds., *China's Quest for National Identity*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 1.

boundaries demarcated by "such objective criteria as common language, ethnic or racial origin, and political culture."[84] By defining national identity in this way, it is clear that these identity theorists are interested none the less in identifying self and Other. In other words, to perceive identity as a matter of belonging, inclusion, or 'who we are,' their national identity approach is simultaneously concerned with exclusion, Otherness, or 'who we are not.' In doing so, consciously or subconsciously, they help dramatise the difference between the West and China in absolute terms, and demarcate a fixed boundary of self and Other. For example, while Frank Dikötter does not believe that "racialized senses of belonging were the only significant forms of national identity available to China,"[85] he nevertheless essentialises Chinese nationalism in terms of racism and xenophobia. As he paints with a broad stroke of the brush:

> Physical attacks and demonstrations against African students on the university campuses of the People's Republic of China throughout the 1980s have been the most widely publicized feature of these racialized practices. Far from being a manifestation of a vestigial form of xenophobia, these events are an intrinsic part of racial nationalism which have been diversely used in China since the end of the nineteenth century.[86]

While no doubt xenophobia exists in China, Dikötter's analysis, without a necessary account of its immediate social settings, depicts a society in which xenophobia is an *intrinsic*, widespread and lasting feature of Chinese national identity. From this, it is only a short step to the conclusion that a China impregnated with racial nationalism will necessarily see the West as enemy. In Dikötter's view:

> Whether a "white peril" leading to permanent enslavement in the 1890s, an imperialist plot to carve the country up like a melon in the 1910s, a bourgeois capitalist attempt at "spiritual pollution" in the 1980s or a sinister ploy towards "peaceful evolution" in the 1990s, "the West" has been constructed as the main enemy which the nation-race should resolutely combat…. A vision of national superiority was thus asserted against an imagined enemy called "the West." Through a process of polarization, "the West" has constantly been forced into an artificial relationship of opposites with another construct called "China."[87]

This argument, it seems, lacks a basic understanding of the modern history of Sino-Western relations. As I argued in the two previous chapters, it is not that the West was forced to become China's enemy as a result of Chinese nationalism, but that Chinese nationalism was stimulated by systematic Western colonial domination in

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[84] *Ibid*., p. 6.
[85] Dikötter, "Culture, 'Race' and Nation," pp. 592-3.
[86] *Ibid*., p. 598.
[87] *Ibid*., p. 603.

China. In this case, the notion of the West as China's enemy is rather discursively imposed upon China by an essentialist identity approach, which in the end is not dissimilar with the neorealist assumption of a China threat. As he suggests:

> Racial nationalism arising in a potentially unstable empire with an embattled Communist party could have grave consequences for regional stability in that vital part of the world, as it reinforces the portrayal of outer China, from Taiwan to Tibet, as 'organic' parts of the sacred territory of the descendants of the Yellow Emperor that should be defended by military power if necessary.[88]

Unlike Dikötter's 'discovery' of some rigid, singular, essentialised Chinese national identity, other scholars have encountered multiple, ambiguous, or even conflicting Chinese identities, which seem unable to fit into their preconstituted conceptions of what Chinese national identity should look like.[89] Consequently, they perceive the Chinese national identity as problematic or in crisis, and hence a cause for worry.[90] This has, for example, prompted Samuel Kim to ask "How does China fit into the post-Cold War challenge of establishing a more peaceful, equitable, democratic, and ecological world order?"[91] In this way, a dichotomy is again evoked, with 'us' as the mainstay of a 'peaceful,' 'democratic' world order and 'them' primarily as an unsettled 'problem,' unable to find a "comfortable niche as a nation-state in the modern international system."[92] Hence the 'China threat' remains, a conclusion which emerges less from a careful reading of Chinese society than from the self/Other dichotomy built into the national identity perspective, a perspective committed to the positivist search for "a central reference point" in the study of Chinese foreign policy.[93]

Much the same can be said of another kind of explanation of the 'China threat,' an explanation that rests on Chinese strategic culture. In this regard, the best example is perhaps Iain Johnston's influential book *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand*

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[88] *Ibid*, p. 604.
[89] See, for example, Merle Goldman, Perry Link, and Su Wei, "China's Intellectuals in the Deng Era: Loss of Identity with the State," in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim eds., *China's Quest for National Identity*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 125-153; Lynn White and Li Cheng, "China Coast Identities: Regional, National, and Global," in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim eds., *China's Quest for National Identity*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 154-193; Robert A. Scalapino, "China's Multiple Identities in East Asia: China as a Regional Force," in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim eds., *China's Quest for National Identity*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 215-236; and Edward Friedman, *National Identity and Democratic Projects in Socialist China*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995.
[90] See Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim eds., *China's Quest for National Identity*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.
[91] Kim, "China," pp. 119, 111.
[92] Dittmer and Kim eds., *China's Quest for National Identity*, p. xi.
[93] *Ibid*., p. xii.

Strategy in Chinese History. Johnston is dissatisfied that the dominant neorealist school in international relations theory relies too much on structural factors in the international system to explain Chinese behaviour, while paying little attention to the question of how Chinese strategic culture may exert influence as well. To fill in this gap, he seeks to "understand and demystify Chinese strategic thinking" by vowing to delve deeply into "the classic texts in Chinese strategic thought."[94]

In many ways, his effort is commendable.[95] Yet, in his study, Johnston is convinced in advance that there *is* a single Chinese strategic culture, even though he ends up 'discovering' two major strategic cultures, namely, the Confucian-Mencian paradigm and the *parabellum* paradigm. Johnston, nevertheless, views the former as essentially an ideal type of strategic culture, which plays a largely symbolic role in justifying strategy options.[96] Consequently, he suggests, there remains essentially *one* single Chinese strategic culture, the *parabellum* paradigm, which becomes *the* strategic culture of China.

The reductionism and essentialism in Johnston's work is made possible by a positivist approach to analysis. In order to develop an "empirically testable" notion of strategic culture, Johnston insists that it is necessary to positively "specify what the scope and content of strategic culture is and what it is not."[97] In doing so, he comes up with a conception of strategic culture defined by "questions about the role of war in human affairs, the nature of conflict with the enemy, and the efficacy of violence in dealing with the adversary."[98] Certainly, these questions are important to the study of strategic culture. But I argue that strategic culture cannot be reduced to these questions alone. By focusing one's attention on questions about *war*, *conflict*, and *violence* alone while brushing aside other kinds of questions (e.g., about peace, reconciliation, and benevolence) that may be equally integral to strategic culture, one does not simply engage in the objective study of strategic culture, but at the same time participates in a highly selective discursive practice. Accordingly, the 'appropriate' content and boundaries of Chinese strategic culture are predetermined and constructed by those

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[94] Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, p. xi.
[95] To date, apart from Johnston, few contemporary China experts have bothered to grapple with the formidable classic Chinese texts in the understanding of China. In this work, Johnston helps disperse a longstanding myth surrounding the essentialist claim that because of the influence of the Confucian-Mencian tradition, China is inherently peaceful and defensive in foreign behaviour. Furthermore, he points out that Chinese strategic culture is historically contingent. *Ibid*., p. 266.
[96] *Ibid*., p. 247.
[97] *Ibid*., p. 30.
[98] *Ibid*.

narrow questions, questions which, I argue, again have much to do with the particular security concern of the American self. Indeed, to the extent that the U.S. fashions itself in realist, self-interested terms, it is not surprising that Johnston becomes most concerned with a *particular* kind of China's strategic behaviour—the use of strategic force. With this concern, Johnston goes to some lengths to count China's use of force against Mongols raiding within Ming territory as a testimony of its realpolitik aggressiveness. [99] And given the Confucian-Mencian stress on benevolence, righteousness, and virtue as a basis of security, little wonder that Johnston declares its "irrelevance (to behavior)."[100] In this way, Johnston aims to fulfil his promise to "pry open the cognitive black box" of China, and to actually 'show' that "decision elites think in realist terms," a point which structural realism has claimed but failed to illustrate.[101]

Remarkably, given his belief that strategic culture is historically contingent and may be (un)learned, Johnston's interpretation of historical records in the Ming dynasty reveals no sign of contingency, but patterns of historical continuity. By freely extrapolating these 'empirical findings' in the classic texts to Mao Zedong's strategic thought, Johnston argues that "we find at the level of aggregate behavior some evidence of the continuing influence of *parabellum* strategic culture on [contemporary] Chinese security policy."[102] Consequently, no serious attempt is made to put Mao Zedong in his particular historical context, for example, of the Western 'imperialist' encroachment from which Mao might have *learned* the *parabellum* approach (see Chapters 3-4). We are left with the impression that realpolitik thinking is intrinsic to Chinese strategic culture. This is precisely how Johnston's work has impressed China specialist Warren Cohen, who argues that:

> If Johnston's analysis of China's strategic culture is correct—and I believe it is—generational change will not guarantee a kinder, gentler China. Nor will the ultimate disappearance of communism in Beijing. The powerful China we have every reason to expect in the twenty-first century is likely to be as aggressive and expansionist as China has been whenever it has been the dominant power in Asia.[103]

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[99] *Ibid*., p. 216n1.
[100] *Ibid*., p. 253.
[101] Johnston concludes that "there is a Chinese strategic culture, but its principal components are not self-evidently unique," and that "*parabellum* or realpolitik thought and behavior is not Eurocentric." *Ibid*., pp. xii, 259-260.
[102] *Ibid*., p. 256.
[103] Warren I. Cohen, "China's Strategic Culture," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 279, no. 3 (1997), p. 105.

Indeed, partly because of Johnston's insight, Cohen was able to take just "a few minutes" to lecture a visitor from Singapore (who did not view Chinese foreign policy as so "aggressive and expansionist") on the subject of "the history of the Chinese empire," and on "thousands of years of attacks on China's neighbors." To finish his lecture, he told his apparently not so well-informed visitor to read Johnston's *Cultural Realism*.[104] It seems quite possible that, had this visitor come from China, Cohen would have done the same.

At this point, it becomes clear that these culture-oriented Chinese foreign policy specialists, as with orthodox (neo)realists and the 'identity' theorists, do not base their 'China threat' analysis on an in-depth reflection of what the Chinese think and believe, but on how they assume the Chinese to think. Again, there is nothing surprising about this—it is after all the kind of discursive framing of China which I have spoken about throughout this chapter (and this thesis). The problem with this kind of discursive strategy, to reiterate, is that it denies the inherent fluidity of Chinese identity and subjectivity, and tries to fix 'China' and the 'Chinese' in terms of a kind of certainty that denotes nothing but Otherness and threat, meanings which, as I will argue in the following section, have profound practical implications for Western policy towards China.

The 'China Threat' Discourse and the New Containment Policy

Insofar as "saying is doing,"[105] I want to suggest that the construction of the 'China threat' comes with a built-in, politico-strategic question with 'real-world' consequences—'What should we do about it?'[106] In other words, it is always a clarion call for the practice of power politics, at the apex of which is to "maintain American supremacy in political and economic terms around the globe."[107] This, according to Benjamin Schwarz:

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[104] *Ibid*., p. 103.
[105] Nicholas G. Onuf, "Constructivism: A User's Manual," in Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas G. Onuf, and Paul Kowert, eds., *International Relations in a Constructed World*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998, p. 59.
[106] For example, an article in *Time* magazine begins with: "The Cox report hypes the China danger, but the rivalry is real and growing. What should America do about it?" Johanna McGeary, "The Next Cold War?" *Time* June 7, 1999, p. 27.
[107] Chalmers Johnson, "In Search of a New Cold War," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 55, no. 5 (1999), p. 50.

> means not only that the United States must dominate wealthy and technologically sophisticated states in Europe and East Asia—America's "allies"—but also that it must deal with such nuisances as Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic and Kim Jong Il, so that potential great powers need not acquire the means to deal with those problems themselves. And those powers that eschew American supervision—such as China—must be both engaged *and* contained. The upshot of "American leadership" is that the United States must spend nearly as much on national security as the rest of the world combined.[108]

At stake here are the vested interests of U.S. national security agencies and their industrial contractors, for a 'China threat' scenario would almost guarantee a surge of U.S. spending on weapons and increased enthusiasm for the national missile shield.[109]

In this context, therefore, it is necessary to focus again on how the creation of the Chinese Other in the 'China threat' argument plays an important role in shaping the power relations between the West (the United States in particular) and China, and how the containment policy cannot be put into practice without a prior sanction of the discursive imagery of China as a 'real' strategic threat.

In a short yet decisive article entitled "Why We Must Contain China," American columnist Charles Krauthammer takes "a rising and threatening China" as his starting point of analysis. In consequence, he argues that "any rational policy toward" it must "have exactly these two components": "containing China" and "undermining its ruthless dictatorship." Indeed, by seeing China as a bully and the mother of all other enemies (since "it is sending missile and nuclear technology to such places as Pakistan and Iran"), he urges that this containment policy "must begin early in its career," and be complemented by a policy aimed at "undermining its aggressively dictatorial regime." To further flesh out his containment strategy, Krauthammer offers such practical options as strengthening regional alliances (with Vietnam, India, Russia, as well as Japan) to box in China; standing by Chinese dissidents; denying Beijing the right to host the Olympics; and keeping China from joining the World Trade Organisation on the terms it desires.[110] Similar policy advice was also offered by an article published in *The Economist*, which anchors its argument in an image of China as "the real source of the current tension" in Asia.[111] The only important difference between the two articles is that the latter is more frank about the underlying aim of the containment strategy, which is to prolong U.S. military dominance in that region. It insists that "South-East Asian

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[108] Benjamin Schwarz, "Permanent Interests, Endless Threats: Cold War Continuities and NATO Enlargement," *World Policy Journal* 14, no. 3 (1997), p. 29.
[109] Newman and Whitelaw, "China: How Big a Threat?"
[110] Charles Krauthammer, "Why We Must Contain China," *Time*, July 31, 1995, p. 72.
[111] "Containing China," *The Economist*, July 29, 1995, pp. 11-12.

countries should stop averting their eyes from reality and instead make a more active effort to keep an American military presence in the region. It is unlikely that China would have challenged the Philippines over the rocky islet it claims in the South China Sea if the American navy had still had its Philippine base."[112] Commenting on these efforts to create and strengthen alliances to contain China, former National Security Adviser Samuel Berger wrote: "continued rapprochement with India and effervescent U.S.-Japan relations, both fully justified, now are pursued with more than a whiff of Chinese encirclement."[113]

Certainly, the strategy derived from the 'China threat' argument is not a monolithic whole of confrontational containment. More often than not, there exists a subtle, business-style policy of 'crisis management.' For example, central to the concerns of Gerald Segal and David S. G. Goodman in their edited volume *China Rising: Nationalism and Interdependence* is how to "constitute a policy framework for managing a rising China."[114] Bernstein and Munro also shy away from the word 'containment' and prefer to call their China policy 'management,' that is, "how can the conflict with China be managed?"[115]

Nonetheless, what remains unchanged here is a continued advocacy of *controlling* China. A perusal of Bernstein and Munro's texts reveals that what they mean by 'management' is almost identical to Krauthammer's explicit containment stance.[116] By framing U.S.-China relations as an issue of crisis management, they leave little doubt of who is the 'manager,' who is to be 'managed,' and where power and authority should lie. Indeed, for Betts and Christensen, coercion and war are part and parcel of their China management policy:

> In addressing the China challenge, the United States needs to think hard about three related questions: first, how to avoid crises and war through prudent, coercive diplomacy; second, how to manage crises and fight a war if the avoidance efforts fails; third, how to end crises and terminate war at costs acceptable to the United States and its allies.[117]

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[112] *Ibid*., p. 11.
[113] Samuel R. Berger, "Don't Antagonize China," *The Washington Post*, July 8, 2001, p. B7.
[114] Gerald Segal and David S. G. Goodman, "Introduction: Thinking Strategically about China," in David S. G. Goodman and Gerald Segal eds., *China Rising: Nationalism and Interdependence*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 5.
[115] Bernstein and Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, p. 203.
[116] The main components of Bernstein and Munro's management policy include: using most favoured nation status as a leverage to pressure China, supporting Chinese dissident groups, embarrassing China by lending sympathy to Taiwan and Tibetan exile leaders, maintaining the American military presence in Asia and keeping it vastly more powerful and effective than China's military, strengthening Japan and the U.S.-Japanese alliance and, last but not least, courting the younger, more modern generation in China. *Ibid*., pp. 205-221.
[117] Betts and Christensen, "China: Getting the Questions Right," p. 28.

Containment policy is as much about satisfying the Western goal of absolute security as it is about deterring China. Thus, as Gerald Segal makes clear, there is really no substitute for coercive containment, since no alternative to it can meet the need to seek an absolute security guarantee from China. No one, as he argues, can "count on China's short-term economic need *ensuring* a peaceful partner in the 21st century. Hence the question arises of the limit of the interdependence strategy to restrain China [emphasis added]."[118] In order to "*ensure* China's cooperation on matters of regional and international security [emphasis added]," Segal insists that aggressive containment must be the order of the day:

> If Hong Kong and southern China's economies have to be damaged in order to modify Chinese policies on arms sales or human rights, then so be it. If industries in Shanghai or some other regions have to be targeted in order to induce regional leaders to press Beijing on foreign policy disputes, then so be it. Foreigners will have an increasing stake in the conclusion that, if Beijing is to remain in the middle of its kingdom, it will have to be a looser kingdom.[119]

While seeing the need for containment,[120] Huntington signifies that there still exist other options to ease the threat, such as the democratisation of China. And to this end, Huntington virtually comes up with a strategy of Christianising Chinese leaders. He believes that China's Confucian heritage, an obstacle to democracy, can be overcome by Christianity, as in the case of Korea and Taiwan, where "the political leaders most active in pushing for democracy were Christians."[121] For all its contemporary 'political science' guise, this is reminiscent of a 19th-century missionary conviction that in order for China to be democratised, it must be Christianised first.

Of course, not all these strategies will be automatically translated into actual policy and practice. But more often than not they do make their way into bilateral relations. For example, alarmed by the 1999 Cox Report of China's nuclear espionage, the powerful U.S. Senator (now retired) Jesse Helms was determined to press Washington to do something about it. Among his key recommendations were to "shore up our own defenses, and those of our allies… bring Taiwan under a regional missile-

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[118] Gerald Segal, "China's Changing Shape," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 3 (1994), p. 55.
[119] *Ibid*., p. 58.
[120] For example, Huntington writes that "If the United States does want to stop Chinese domination of East Asia, it will need to redirect the Japanese alliance to that purpose, develop close military ties with other Asian nations, and enhance its military presence in Asia and the military power it can bring to bear in Asia." Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, p. 232.
[121] *Ibid*., p. 238.

defense umbrella," and "build a national missile defense," including scrapping the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.[122] As we now know, almost all these measures have become part of American foreign policy.

In this context, I argue that it is imperative to ask the question of "What are the implications of this kind of policy on China?" In a recent article critical of the containment policy, Joshua Cooper Ramo has specifically pointed out some of its dire implications for China. As he notes:

> If you do happen to fall into the camp of people who would like to contain or constrain China, you should be clear that the ultimate impact of that policy, if it succeeds, will be to condemn hundreds of millions of people and perhaps more, to lives of poverty and perhaps chaos. Effectively "isolating" China or treating it as "threat" as some offensive-realist policy makers suggest, would have huge human consequences. Choking off growth in the PRC could lead to instability and chaos. China's history is a fragile one and though growth in China at the moment is robust, a real effort to topple China into chaos would probably succeed. So policy makers who argue for containment, as Paul Wolfowitz did in 1997, should be direct about what they are really arguing for: the collapse of China.[123]

The ensuing questions are of course "Will China readily accept such an outcome?" and if not, "What are the implications for its relations with the countries which seek to contain it?" These are the questions that I will try to answer in the remaining parts of this chapter, which will centre specifically on two recent incidents in the course of the new U.S. pursuit of containing the 'China threat': firstly the Taiwan Missile Crisis of 1995-1996 and then the Spy Plane incident of 2001.

'Threat' Theory as Practice (I): China and the Taiwan Missile Crisis (1995-1996)

In the eyes of many Western foreign policy analysts, China's approach to Taiwan is nothing less than a microcosm of China's grand strategy to dominate Asia. The consensus is that should one continue to harbour any illusion about Beijing's threatening ambition, the sabre-rattling missile exercises near Taiwan's coast in 1995-1996 should be a wake-up call.[124]

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[122] Jesse Helms, "'Engagement' with China Does Not Work. Now What?" *The Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 1999, p. A18.
[123] Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus*, London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2004, p. 57.
[124] See for example, Bernstein and Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*; Ross Munro, "Taiwan: What China Really Wants," *National Review*, October 11, 1999, pp. 45-49; Denny Roy, "Tensions in the Taiwan Strait," *Survival* 42, no. 1 (2000), pp. 76-96; Evan A. Feigenbaum, "China's Challenge to *Pax Americana*," *The Washington Quarterly*, 24, no. 3 (2001), pp. 31-43; Allen S. Whiting, "China's Use of

While the 1995-1996 missile crisis has been a favourite 'starting point' to paint an image of the China threat and to justify a firm Western response to it, the question of how the situation reached its boiling point is often conveniently ignored. But it is precisely in this process that the mutually reinforcing relationship between the 'China threat' image and Western containment can be laid bare. As noted in the previous chapter, with the outbreak of the Korean War, the fear of a 'Red Menace' crossing the frontier prompted the U.S. to deploy its Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait in order to thwart what it saw as an orchestrated Communist offensive in Asia. This move cemented the separation between Taiwan and the mainland, and it was not until the establishment of full diplomatic relations between China and the U.S. in January 1979 that the military tension in the Taiwan Strait began to ease. Meanwhile, China's economic reform and opening up to the outside world encouraged a sustained increase in economic, cultural, and political contacts across the Taiwan Strait. Yet, despite these new developments, the conventional Western image of the 'China threat' lingered on, and was the rationale behind the passing of the Taiwan Relations Act by Congress shortly after the normalisation of Sino-U.S. relations.[125] To manage such a 'threat,' the Act emphasised (and continues to emphasise) renewed U.S. commitment to Taiwan's security even though their diplomatic ties were severed.

Since Taiwan's first direct presidential election in 1996, the 'China threat' argument, drawing explicitly on 'democratic peace' theory, has taken on a new dimension: an increasingly assertive China bullying a now democratised Taiwan. This highly charged, dichotomised interpretation of the Taiwan question bears significant strategic implications. "Do you believe a vibrant democracy of about 20 million people on large island off the coast of Asia is worth defending?" asked an Australian policy analyst. Expecting no other possible answer, he went on: "Good, then you accept that defence of Taiwan against Chinese aggression is a worthy cause…."[126] In a similar fashion, *The Economist* argues that "the best policy is gradually to expand ties with

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Force, 1950-96, Taiwan," *International Security* 26, no. 2 (2001), pp. 103-131; Robert S. Ross, "Navigating the Taiwan Strait: Deterrence, Escalation Dominance, and U.S.-China Relations," *International Security* 27, no. 2 (2002), pp. 48-85; Thomas J. Christensen, "The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict," *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2002), pp. 7-21.

[125] The Taiwan Relations Act considers "any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States." <http://www.taipei.org/tra/TRA-Law.htm>.

[126] Michael Warby, "China Doesn't Merit Appeasement by Us," *The Canberra Times*, March 13, 2000, p. 9.

Taiwan, as America is already doing."[127] In this context, despite a promise in a 1982 joint communiqué with China to reduce its arms sales to Taiwan, America's arms sales, whose accumulated value since 1992 has reached more than US$20 billion, has continued unabated.

Thus understood, Western realist research findings and policy postures are from the outset part of the 'China threat' problem. That is, they serve to theoretically legitimate continued arms sales to Taiwan, which in turn helps not only to bolster Taiwan's defence capabilities, but also to induce some of its leaders' independent ambitions. This is evident, for example, in both President Lee Teng-hui's high-profile visit to the U.S. in June 1995 and his inflammatory 'two-state' theory on cross-strait relations. As Chalmers Johnson argues, "Lee was almost surely responding to continuous signals he had been receiving from Republican leaders in Washington that they would welcome a confrontation with China and want to see Taiwan take this extremely provocative step."[128] Also, former U.S. defence official Chas Freeman remarked that "U.S. arms sales to Taiwan no longer work to boost Taipei's confidence that it can work out its differences with Beijing. Instead, they bolster the view that Taiwan can go its own way."[129] This, predictably, reinforces Beijing's suspicion of the U.S.'s ambition in the region, frustrated its reunification goal, and prompted it to prepare militarily for what it fears as a worst-case scenario.

This was the context of the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait missile crisis. In a bid to hamper Taiwan's independence move, in the summer of 1995 and again during Lee's re-election campaign in March 1996, Beijing launched military exercises, including missile tests, near the Taiwan Strait. For most Chinese, the carrying out of military exercises, well within their *own territory*, had little to do with attacking Taiwan, much less with challenging America's security interests in the Western Pacific. Rather, it was more about China's long-cherished dream of national unity, with its 'sabre-rattling' tactics serving as a display of determination to carry out its reunification policy. However, interpreting such exercises as China's muscle-flexing with direct security implications for the region, with "an almost 19th-century display of gunboat diplomacy,"[130] the United States dispatched two nuclear-powered aircraft-carrier battle

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[127] *The Economist*, "Containing China," p. 12.
[128] Johnson, "In Search of a New Cold War," p. 49.
[129] Quoted in Martin L. Lasater, *The Taiwan Conundrum in U.S. China Policy*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000, p. 15.
[130] Chalmers Johnson, "Containing China: U.S. and Japan Drift Toward Disaster," *Japan Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1996), p. 10.

groups to waters near the Taiwan Strait, its biggest military deployment in the region since the Vietnam War.

Without denying the enormous security repercussions of these missile tests, I suggest that the 'China threat' argument prevents the U.S. from recognising its own role in the lead up to this crisis. If the flashpoint of Taiwan does spill over into regional conflict, it may say as much about *the danger of the dominant Western perspective on the Taiwan question* as about the threat of China's display of force itself. If such a danger was still somehow obscured in the missile crisis, it was to be manifested in another standoff in Sino-U.S. relations, namely, the spy plane incident of 2001.

'Threat' Theory as Practice (II): The 'Spy Plane' Incident (2001)

For Western realist observers, the 1995-1996 missile crisis highlights the relevance of a geopolitical perspective on the question of Taiwan, a question which can only be understood and dealt with from the conventional balance of power, zero-sum game perspective. And from this has grown a booming cottage industry of assessing China's military capabilities (vis-à-vis Taiwan's). Predictably, the common conclusion is that the balance of power in cross-strait relations is 'disturbingly' in China's favour, as a result of which "Taiwan would face an enormous challenge in defending itself against a determined PRC attack."[131] For example, Bernstein and Munro believe that Taiwan's reunification with the mainland "will leave China in possession of yet another immense economic prize…. Complete Chinese reunification, in other words, would further upset the balance of power and vastly enhance China's economic and strategic strength."[132] Commenting on this dominant way of representing the Taiwan question, the Taiwan-based scholar Chih-yu Shih has this to say:

> The national security analysis may seem to be a more tangible approach to dissecting the rationale behind Beijing's "policy of coercion" and, because it appears sensible to us, can alleviate our need to pursue Beijing's motivations more deeply. Not only can we thus camouflage our embarrassment at not really knowing China, but also Beijing's discomforting behavioural patterns become comfortably familiar.[133]

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[131] James Lilley and Carl Ford, "China's Military: A Second Opinion," *The National Interest*, no. 57 (1999), p. 76. This is precisely the view of the Pentagon, whose 2002 *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China* perceives a looming China threat from military imbalances of missiles, naval forces, air campaign forces, and ground forces in the Taiwan Strait. <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/ Jul2002/d20020712china.pdf>, pp. 51-52.

[132] Bernstein and Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, p. 6.

[133] Chih-yu Shih, "National Security Is a Western Concern," *The China Journal*, no. 36 (1996), pp. 106-107.

Once China's behavioural patterns fit the familiar image of 'threat,' Western policy options become clear enough. In James Lilley (former U.S. ambassador to China) and Carl Ford's words, "The name of the game for Taiwan, then, is deterrence," which means that Taiwan's military hardware must maintain "a qualitative edge over the PRC." And for this purpose the U.S. needs to provide Taiwan with high-technology weapons systems, including a theatre missile defence (TMD) system.[134] The 2002 *Report to Congress of the U.S.-China Security Review Commission* reached similar conclusions, recommending, among other things, "deterring China attacking Taiwan" and "supporting Taiwan's ability to defend itself without outside assistance." In the conclusion of the report, the Commission, made up of prominent China experts as well as key policy-makers, vows to continue monitoring China in every aspect relating to "our national security concerns."[135]

It is in this context that U.S. reconnaissance missions along Chinese borders can be understood. As the TV documentary *Dangerous Straits* explains, "The Chinese say they have the right to use force to reclaim Taiwan because it belongs to them, and they regularly practice for an invasion. *This threat of force is why on April 1st [2001], the U.S. Navy's EP-3 surveillance plane was in the area to monitor China's military preparations* [emphasis added]."[136] It turned out that the spy plane collided with a Chinese navy fighter jet which was tailing it over the South China Sea, some 50 miles from the coast of China's Hainan Island. The Chinese jet crashed into the waters below, while the crippled spy plane managed to land safely on the Chinese island, entering a sovereign country without prior permission. America demanded the immediate return of its crew and plane, while China insisted that America bear the responsibility for the midair collision and apologise for the incident.

Understood in this context, the incident did not start with the Chinese pilot's reckless manoeuvre, as many in the West have claimed, but with the 'China threat' theory as policy practice. Yet, with little reflection on how U.S. containment policy (and monitoring activity in particular) might have contributed to this incident in the first

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[134] Lilley and Ford, "China's Military," pp. 76-77.
[135] U.S.-China Security Review Commission, *Report to Congress: The National Security Implications of the Economic Relationship Between the United States and China*, Washington, DC, July 15, 2002, <http://www.uscc.gov/anrp02.htm>. This report Tom Donnelly believes "represents a summary of respectable opinion." Donnelly, "China Without Illusions," p. 19.
[136] Richard Lindley and Chris Oxley, *Dangerous Straits*, October 18, 2001, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/china/etc/script.html>.

place, the collision was once again treated as another concrete example of the long suspected China threat. As Allen S. Whiting puts it, the collision "focused attention anew on Beijing's willingness to risk the use of force in pursuit of political objectives."[137] Indeed, for many Western observers, this incident had little to do with American spying, an act which, because of its alleged response to a China threat, was seen as "routine" and "normal." Instead, it was Chinese, or "the new kids on the block," who were said to be "playing a dangerous game," without regard to the old spy etiquette formulated during the Cold War rivalry.[138] From this perspective, by challenging the 'normal' and 'benevolent' practice of U.S. reconnaissance flights along its borders, China only further revealed its sinister intention to challenge the established regional order. Remember Johnston's definition of China's aggressiveness in the Ming period?

Moreover, for some commentators, China's threatening Otherness did not stop here. It was embodied also in its demand for an American apology, which was seen in contrast to the 'normal' behaviour of the decision-makers in Washington, who went to some lengths to avoid ascribing blame, but focused their attention instead on the damaged plane and the crew members.[139] This 'contrast' even led quite a few U.S. China experts to trace its roots in Chinese tradition and national psyche. The CCP's stress on apology has grown out of both the old Confucian tradition of conformity and the Soviet show trials of the 1930s, argued Robert J. Lifton, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Similarly, Merle Goldman, a China historian at Boston University, said that the origins of the Chinese emphasis on apologies lay in the Confucian value system, which stressed the need for conformity in a hierarchical society. "This kind of internalized consensus was the way China was ruled for thousands of years," she added.[140] According to this explanation, China's request for an apology was preordained by a fixed tradition and had nothing whatsoever to do with the specific context of this incident, in which China was spied on, its sovereignty violated, and one of its pilots lost.

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[137] Whiting, "China's Use of Force," p. 103.
[138] Michael R. Gordon, "A Dangerous Game," *The New York Times*, April 3, 2001, p. A1. Some more liberal-minded commentators, however, have argued that U.S. surveillance activity itself should bear some responsibility. For example, George Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham point out that "American surveillance close to Chinese borders had been conducted at a Cold War level of intensity for a year before the incident occurred." George Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham, "China's Coming Transformation," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 4 (2001), p. 38.
[139] Gordon, "A Dangerous Game," p. A1.
[140] Fox Butterfield, "China's Demand for Apology Is Rooted in Tradition," *The New York Times*, April 7, 2001, p. A6.

In this context, therefore, even in the event of such a potentially explosive episode, neither the constitutive nature of the 'China threat' discourse nor its legitimating, self-fulfilling role in Sino-U.S. strategic interactions has been acknowledged, much less questioned. Instead, the image of China as an uncivilised, irredentist, irresponsible, childishly nationalistic, dangerous, and militaristic Other is reinforced.[141] After this standoff, for example, neoconservative columnists Robert Kagan and William Kristol wrote that "Not only is the sale of Aegis [to Taiwan]… *the only appropriate response* to Chinese behavior; We have been calling for the active containment of China for the past six years precisely because we think it is *the only way* to keep the peace [emphases added]."[142] Although he deferred the sale of the state-of-the-art Aegis destroyers, President George W. Bush approved an arms package for Taiwan which includes four Kidd class destroyers, eight diesel submarines, twelve P-3C submarine hunting aircrafts, as well as mine-sweeping helicopters, torpedoes and amphibious assault vehicles that are set to vastly enhance Taiwan's Navy. Applauding this arms sale, David Shambaugh said that "Given the tangible threats that the Chinese military can present to Taiwan—particularly a naval blockade or quarantine and missile threats— this is a sensible and timely package."[143]

Given the danger and high stakes involved, some may wonder why China did not simply cooperate with the U.S. so that there would be no need for this upgraded 'containment.' To some extent it has. For example, on the Taiwan issue, China has gradually dropped many of its previous demands (such as Taiwan recognising the People's Republic as the sole legitimate government of China) to accommodate Taiwan's concerns. As for the disputes in the South China Sea, China has participated in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to seek a negotiated solution to the Spratly Islands dispute and also agreed to join the Philippines as co-chairs of the working group on confidence-building measures.[144] During the spy plane incident, Beijing was at pains to explain to a disgruntled Chinese public that the U.S. 'sorry' letter issued before the release of the American crew was a genuine 'apology,' though the United States openly denied that interpretation. In January 2002, Beijing chose to play down an incident that a presidential jet outfitted in the U.S. was crammed with sophisticated satellite-operated

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[141] See Latham, "China in the Contemporary American Geopolitical Imagination," pp. 144-145.
[142] Robert Kagan and William Kristol, "A National Humiliation," *The Weekly Standard*, April 16-23, 2001, p. 11.
[143] Michael R. Gordon, "Breathing Room for Taiwan: U.S. Weapons Can Stave Off Threat," *The New York Times*, April 25, 2001, p. A8.
[144] Johnson, "Containing China," p. 15.

bugs, a decision which, as the *New York Times* puts it, "illustrates the depth of China's current commitment to cultivating better relations with the United States."[145] Also, the Chinese government has ratified a number of key non-proliferation treaties, and in November 2000 it pledged not to assist countries in developing missiles with ranges that exceed the limits established under the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). In the war on terrorism, China has collaborated with the United States by issuing new regulations to restrict the export of missile technology to countries usually accused by the U.S. of aiding terrorists. More recently, Beijing played a key role in inducing North Korea to participate in multilateral talks on its nuclear programs. Indeed, as many (largely Australia- and New Zealand-based) authors in the book *Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy* argue, by any reasonable measure China is now more responsible in international affairs than at any time since 1949.[146]

And yet, the real problem is that so long as the U.S. continues to stake its self-identity on the realization of *absolute* security, the construction of the 'China threat' will continue. Indeed, the conventional wisdom remains that "we should not overestimate the U.S. ability to deter and defeat China in all circumstances,"[147] nor mistake China's conciliatory moves for opportunities, which are better seen as merely expedient or as a sign of the effectiveness of 'our' containment policy.[148] For example, James Lilley and Carl Ford warn that:

> Beijing would be no match for the United States in the Persian Gulf or off the beaches of Waikiki, but a battle fought in Sichuan province would be a very different matter. The same applies to the Taiwan Strait. Anyone who believes that such a confrontation would be a walk-over for American forces misunderstands the challenges the PLA would pose to U.S. operations near China's shores….[149]

According to this logic, in order *not* to be viewed as a threat, China must become so weak militarily that it is incapable of even defending its own territory, or being, in the

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[145] Elisabeth Rosenthal, "Espionage? By the U.S.? China Prefers To Stay Quiet," *The New York Times,* January 23, 2002, p. A5.
[146] Zhang and Austin eds., *Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy*.
[147] Betts and Christensen, "China: Getting the Questions Right," p. 28.
[148] For instance, Johnston views the constructive development of China's arms control policy as a kind of "realpolitik adaptation," rather than "genuine learning." Alastair Iain Johnston, "Learning versus Adaptation: Explaining Change in China's Arms Control Policy in the 1980s and 1990s," *The China Journal*, no. 35 (1996), pp. 27-61. See also, Michael D. Swaine and Alastair Iain Johnston, "China and Arms Control Institutions," in Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenberg eds., *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999, pp. 90-135. Still others believe that the relative peace in China and Asia generally should be attributed primarily to U.S. military containment. See Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier"; and William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 4 (1996), pp. 18-32.
[149] Lilley and Ford, "China's Military," p. 72.

words of Lilley and Ford, "a formidable opponent on its own turf," presumably like in the 'good' old days of the nineteenth century when it was undoubtedly brought to its knees under Western gun-boat diplomacy. But since this attractive scenario is no longer considered realistic, China must by all means be treated as a threatening Other, which the United States cannot live with, but must strive to control.

To sum up, in this chapter, I have argued that the (neo)realist 'China threat' literature is primarily a discursive construction of Otherness. A construction predicated on a particular narcissistic understanding of the American self, with a positivist-cum-realist obsession with absolute certainty, security, and power. Within this self/Other framework, it is imperative that China be treated as an absolute threat so that U.S. preponderance in the post-Cold War world in general and in Asia in particular can continue to be legitimated and maintained.

Thus, not only does this reductionist representation come at the expense of nuanced understanding of China as a dynamic, multifaceted country, but it is also responsible for the creation of the policy of containment which, even in the guise of 'crisis management,' can have a highly dramatic impact on U.S.-China relations, as the 1995-1996 missile crisis and the 2001 spy plane incident have vividly attested. Like in the past, the 'threat/containment' theory as practice is not only confrontational in itself, but also tends to have a self-fulfilling effect in terms of hardening Chinese worldview and foreign behaviour (a theme I will take up in Chapter 7). For instance, should the U.S. press ahead with a missile defence shield to both contain China and 'guarantee' its own invulnerability, it would be almost certain to intensify China's sense of vulnerability and compel it to expand its current small nuclear arsenal to maintain the credibility of its limited deterrence. As a result, it is far from unthinkable that the two countries, and possibly the whole region, might be dragged into an escalating arms race that would ultimately make war more likely. In this respect, Chalmers Johnson is right when he suggests that "A policy of containment toward China implies the possibility of war, just as it did during the Cold War vis-à-vis the former Soviet Union. The balance of terror prevented war between the United States and the Soviet Union, but this may not work in the case of China."[150]

Apparently, neither the U.S. nor the PRC wants open war with the other. Neoconservative writers Robert Kagan and William Kristol maintain that "we do not

[150] Johnson, "Containing China," p. 12.

seek war with China."[151] But the point is that the 'China threat' theorists, for all their alleged desire for peace and stability, tend to make war preparedness the most 'realistic' option for both sides. In this instance, therefore, intention, while important, may not be enough, just as all the 'good, friendly' intention on the part of the U.S. had not been able to avoid the 'loss of China' half a century ago. On this point, and to conclude this chapter, I want to draw attention to an interesting comment made by Charlie Neuhauser, a leading CIA China specialist, on the Vietnam War. He says, "Nobody wants it. We don't want it, Ho Chi Minh doesn't want it; it's simply a question of annoying the other side."[152] Yet, as we now know, goaded by the fear of a rather illusive Communist threat in Southeast Asia, this 'unwanted war' in the end not only materialised, but it also claimed the lives of some 58,000 young Americans, as well as the lives of 2 million Vietnamese men, women, and children, and achieved virtually nothing else. Three decades on, the lesson, it seems, remains to be fully learned by 'China threat' theorists.

As noted throughout this thesis thus far, the (neo)realist discourse of China as a threat is just one of the two dominant perspectives in the study of Chinese foreign relations. The other perspective, a (neo)liberal discourse, looks at China primarily in terms of 'opportunity.' It is this literature that I now want to turn my attention to in the chapter to follow, and explore the questions of both how this knowledge, its more 'positive' representation notwithstanding, remains a discursive practice of constructing Otherness, and what its implications are for contemporary Sino-Western relations.

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[151] Kagan and Kristol, "A National Humiliation," p. 16.
[152] Quoted in Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, p. 356.

6

(Neo)Liberal Constructions of Contemporary China in the Western Self-Imagination

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> *Like all the stories we use to understand our national identity and purpose, the central American story about China did more than simply reflect empirically verifiable facts—it also imposed a socially constructed vision upon the ambiguities of historical experience. It was as much about America as about China; it constructed American relations with China in terms of common understandings of the core values of American society.*
>
> Richard Madsen[1]

As a powerful discursive framing of self and Other, the realist discourse of China (its 'China threat' thesis in particular) lies behind the new security policy of containment. Yet, despite its clear strategic rationale for containing China, this discourse has not been able to dismiss altogether another major China policy option, namely, engagement. Indeed, this has been the very goal of some hardliners in the Western foreign policy elite, who have vowed to devise "an overall strategy for containing, influencing, and ultimately seeking to change the regime in Beijing."[2] While it is important to note that the 'China threat' theorists often see the merit in engagement of some sort in addition to containment, the engagement strategy itself is more than just a corollary of containment. Rather, as noted in the Introduction, it has its own discursive foundation, which views China primarily as an opportunity for convergence, instead of threat. This discourse does not rule out the possibility of a China threat, but unlike the mainly realist 'threat' interpretation, it is based largely, though not exclusively, on liberal IR theory which, as

[1] Richard Madsen, *China and the American Dream*: *A Moral Inquiry*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, p. 28.
[2] William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 4 (1996), p. 23.

mentioned before, believes that states as rational actors are subject to modern, democratic development, and that in doing so, they are essentially able to overcome the Hobbesian fear of anarchy by forming a democratic and hence peaceful international community.

From this perspective, consequently, it is necessary to be concerned not only with the rise of China's power, but also with possible change of its 'soul.'[3] Referring to realists' failure to predict major international changes (e.g., the demise of communism in the Soviet Union) in the past, Edward Friedman, for example, argues that "It is important, if one is not to be surprised yet again, to open up the prospects for rupture in China today. Continuity is not the only realistic possibility."[4] According to George Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham, it is already evident that "Change is the main event in China, and America should welcome it."[5] From this point of view, moreover, given the growing impact of globalisation and its freshly minted WTO membership, China may well open up many exciting opportunities by unleashing its market potential, slowly but surely evolving into a democratic peaceful power and, eventually, becoming a responsible member of the international community. After the prolonged dominance of the Cold War geo-strategic thinking, for many observers, this 'opportunity' perspective seems immensely refreshing and attractive. Indeed, while the 'China threat' thesis has been roundly rejected among most Chinese, this liberal vision of a gradual convergence between China and the West has found many receptive ears in China (see Chapter 7).

As a result, it is important to understand what this 'refreshing' literature means for China and Sino-Western relations, an understanding which is the main aim of this chapter. I begin with a short review of how an 'opportunity for convergence' theme stands out in the (neo)liberal discourse on China and its international relations. I then turn to a critical analysis of this theme by arguing that for all its claims to 'scientific objectivity,' the dominant (neo)liberal perspective speaks also to a self/Other dichotomy between the West and China, though in terms less of geopolitical struggle and more of a temporal difference. Finally, I will touch upon some of its practical implications for China and Sino-Western relations (and Sino-American relations in particular) by looking at two important Western policies on China, namely, the human

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[3] Robert B. Zoellick, "China: What Engagement Should Mean," *The National Interest*, no. 46 (1996/1997), p. 14.
[4] Edward Friedman, *National Identity and Democratic Prospects in Socialist China*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995, p. 5.
[5] George Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham, "China's Coming Transformation," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 4 (2001), p. 39.

rights/democracy policy and the economic engagement policy, both of which, I argue, are largely dependent on this (neo)liberal construction and aim at perpetuating Western dominance of China in the (neo)liberal world order.

The 'Opportunity' Argument: The Theme of Convergence in Western (Neo)Liberal Discourse

In this section, I want to outline how contemporary Western liberal scholars perceive various opportunities for convergence in China. Needless to say, not all liberal scholars see exactly the same degree of opportunity. Some regard the opportunity more as a distant potential than as a *fait accompli*, and most are well aware that its materialisation will not always be smooth or straightforward. Even so, I argue, the 'opportunity' sentiment does capture the generally optimistic mood permeating most Western liberal accounts of contemporary China and its international relations, a mood which has been particularly evident in the light of enhanced cooperation between China and the U.S. after 'September 11.'

As noted before, perceptions of China as 'opportunity' have a long history in the West (see Chapter 3). In the mid-twentieth century, with the shocking 'loss of China' to the Communists and the onset of the Cold War, the 'positive' liberal image of a country pregnant with all sorts of opportunities was substituted by a largely negative one, in which China was viewed as a "troubled modernizer" or a "pathological example of abortive development" in the modernisation process.[6] Not until Richard Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972 did favourable images of China start to re-emerge. Thanks to this historic visit, as Steven Mosher notes, "A renewed enchantment with China burst forth on all fronts,"[7] thereby rekindling the age-old theme about the prospect of China's becoming more like 'us.'

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[6] Bruce Cumings, "Boundary Displacement: Area Studies and International Studies during and after the Cold War," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 29, no. 1 (1997), p. 8; Elizabeth J. Perry, "Introduction: Chinese Political Culture Revisited," in Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry eds., *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China*, 2nd ed., Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994, pp. 1-14. Works that fall into this category of China studies include, for example, Lucian W. Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968; Richard Solomon, *Mao's Revolution and Chinese Political Culture*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971; Lucian W. Pye, *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*, Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn and Hain, 1981; and Lucian W. Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1988.

[7] Steven W. Mosher, *China Misperceived: American Illusions and Chinese Reality*, New York: BasicBooks, 1990, p. 2.

Of course, just as there is no single body of thought called 'liberalism,' so there is no such thing as a homogeneous liberal perspective on contemporary Chinese foreign relations. Therefore, I will focus here on three liberal perspectives, namely, liberal internationalism (the democratic peace theory), modernisation theory (neoliberalism), and neoliberal institutionalism, and examine what they make of the theme of 'China as opportunity' (e.g., China's political change, economic development, and international integration) from their different yet interrelated angles.

The Opportunity Dividend in China's Political Change

Given the long-standing image of China as a Communist, authoritarian state in Western liberal literature, there has always been a keen interest in its political change (e.g., its democratisation). During the 1980s, when China started reforming its economy and opening up to the outside world, many Western observers believed that they were witnessing an unprecedented change in political reality as well. For example, William Safire wrote in the *New York Times* that the "big event of 1984" was the "rejection of Marxism and embrace of capitalism by the Government of a billion Chinese."[8] In an article aptly entitled "China's Quiet Revolution," Donald S. Zagoria suggested that China had been undergoing sweeping changes in economic, legal, political, ideological, cultural, and foreign policy areas. "The overall result," he observed, "has been a virtual dismantling of many Maoist institutions and practices and the beginning of a movement toward a more open society… the changes that have occurred are significant and the direction of change, if it is sustained, is very encouraging, both for the welfare of China and for its external relations."[9] Until the tragic end of the Tiananmen demonstrations in June 1989, many Western liberals had been convinced that, in contrast to the then apparently stagnant Soviet and Eastern European Communist states, China had led the way to rapid political liberalisation, whose momentum seemed too great to be stopped.[10]

The Tiananmen crackdown cast a huge shadow over that high expectation.[11] As a consequence, some analysts fell back on the more conventional assessment of China in

[8] Quoted in Andrew J. Nathan, *China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 71.
[9] Donald S. Zagoria, "China's Quiet Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* 62, no. 4 (1984), p. 880.
[10] See, for example, Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989, pp. 174, 250.
[11] Nicholas D. Kristof, "Which China Is for Real?" *The New York Times*, June 19, 1989, p. A1.

terms of a fundamentally unchangeable threat (see Chapter 5).[12] But for those who have not been so keen to draw a fixed cultural boundary between China and the West, it was believed that China is not a monolithic whole, but rather an uneasy mixture of a nascent pro-democracy civil society and a ruling authoritarian regime, which itself may be further divided into a small pro-democracy faction and a dominant anti-democracy faction.[13] For instance, Barrett L. McCormick et al. propose that "The 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement is best understood as the expression of a fundamental conflict between a state with totalitarian intention and an emerging civil society."[14] With the tension between the 'two Chinas' apparently exposed by the Tiananmen incident, the issue of human rights abuses has also come to the fore, adding further complexity to the predicament of China's democratisation.

Although the recognition of conflicting Chinese identities, as noted in the previous chapter, has prompted some scholars to fear their unsettling implications for international politics, most liberal scholars believe that the Tiananmen tragedy has not spelt the end of China's attempts at democratisation per se. Therefore, they continue to see room for at least cautious optimism in the post-Tiananmen era. In part, underlying this confidence is the belief that democracy and human rights are universal values transcending national and cultural boundaries. Chinese culture, for all its unique traits, is believed to be essentially suited for democracy. James Seymour maintains that "Right on China's doorstep, South Korea and Taiwan stand as glaring evidence that there is nothing un-Asian or un-Chinese about democracy."[15] To rebuke those who suggest that China is either unprepared for or unsuited to democracy, Andrew Nathan suggests that history gives Chinese democrats plenty of reasons for courage. As he puts it:

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[12] For example, rather than seeing a gradual convergence of views over the issues of democracy and human rights between China and the West, Samuel Huntington believes that their ideological and cultural differences will remain and increasingly become a source of friction. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, p. 301.

[13] James D. Seymour, "Human Rights in Chinese Foreign Relations," in Samuel S. Kim ed., *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998, p. 224; and Merle Goldman, Perry Link, and Su Wei, "China's Intellectuals in the Deng Era: Loss of Identity with the State," in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim eds., *China's Quest for National Identity*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, p.153. Some perceive this division along a geographical line. For example, according to Edward Friedman, China is divided between a dynamic, liberal-minded, and entrepreneurial South and a backward, nationalist-minded, peasant-dominated North. See Friedman, *National Identity and Democratic Prospects for Socialist China*, Chapter 1.

[14] Barrett L. McCormick, Su Shaozhi, and Xiao Xiaoming, "The 1989 Democracy Movement: A Review of the Prospects for Civil Society in China," *Pacific Affairs* 65, no. 2 (1992), p. 182.

[15] Seymour, "Human Rights in Chinese Foreign Relations," p. 235.

> In the past few Chinese really wanted democracy. Today many of them do. In earlier years, authoritarianism seemed more likely to solve China's pressing problems—weakness and division. Today, democracy seems more likely to solve the pressing problems—dictatorship and political stagnation. In the past, political institutions lacked authority and administrative capability. Today the Chinese bureaucracy is large and strong. The regime's legitimacy is compromised, but many of its institutional procedures seem well-accepted. The situation, then, is different, and more favorable to democracy. History does not promise that democracy will work if tried, but neither does it warrant the conclusion that past failures prove China to be unsuited for democracy.[16]

Thus, perhaps paradoxically, the Tiananmen incident seems to have underscored renewed hope for political change in China. For example, Barrett McCormick finds that a civil society, however weak, is emerging and the number of dedicated Chinese democrats multiplying. Consequently, he argues, "There is every reason to expect that, given the opportunity, all of these processes would promptly accelerate."[17] On the same basis, Larry Diamond of the Hoover Institution proposes that "If China can negotiate these treacherous steps of political liberalization in the next decade, it will be poised for a peaceful transition to democracy a decade or two later.…"[18]

Even on the issue of human rights, despite the loud complaint that China "comes across as one of the world's worst offenders,"[19] a significant number of liberal analysts maintain that China's overall human rights record has improved remarkably for the past two decades, in terms of Chinese living standards and their freedom to work, travel, and study abroad.[20] For this reason, Andrew Nathan disagrees with those who hold that it is futile to try to 'change China.' As he argues, "Although economic development will not do our political work for us, there are forces in the intelligentsia, professions, and the administrative bureaucracy working for human rights and a Chinese form of democracy."[21] As if to vindicate this Western optimism, in March 2004, China's Parliament, the National People's Congress, approved two landmark constitutional

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[16] Andrew J. Nathan (with contributions by Tianjian Shi and Helena V.S. Ho), *China's Transition*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, pp. 75-76. See also Andrew J. Nathan and Tianjian Shi, "Cultural Requisites for Democracy in China," *Daedalus* 122, no. 2 (1993), pp. 95-123; and Thomas A. Metzger, "Will China Democratize? Sources of Resistance," *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 1 (1998), p. 19.
[17] Barrett L. McCormick, "Democracy or Dictatorship?: A Response to Gordon White," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 31 (1994), p. 109.
[18] Larry Diamond, "Forward," in Suisheng Zhao ed., *China and Democracy: The Prospect for a Democratic China*, New York: Routledge, 2000, p. xiv.
[19] Seymour, "Human Rights in Chinese Foreign Relations," p. 235.
[20] Harry Harding, "Breaking the Impasse over Human Rights," in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China: U.S./China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997, p. 169; Henry S. Rowen, "The Short March: China's Road to Democracy," *The National Interest*, no. 45 (1996), pp. 61-70; David M. Lampton, "A Growing China in a Shrinking World: Beijing and the Global Order," in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China: U.S./China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997, pp. 120-140.
[21] Nathan, *China's Transition*, p. 13.

amendments which for the first time enshrined into law human rights protection and the right to private property ownership.[22]

For Western liberal observers in general and advocates of 'democratic peace' theory in particular, the prospects for Chinese democratisation and human rights will have significant implications for international relations, for a democratic China is more likely to settle international conflict through peaceful means. In the words of Larry Diamond, "a China governed by the more comprehensive architecture of democracy… would be a more responsible regional neighbor and global actor."[23] While full democratisation may not be in sight yet, Chas Freeman suggests that Beijing has increasingly recognised the need for the rule of law, which is "essential not only to protect the rights of individual Chinese but also to provide the dispute-resolution mechanisms and predictable business climate essential to trade and investment decisions in a market economy."[24] Thus, as the argument goes, 'we' will have little to fear if China can gradually become like 'us.'

The Opportunity Dividend in China's Economic Development

According to some China commentators, even if its transformation to democracy is debatable, its transformation into a capitalist, free market economy is beyond doubt. For example, in 2003, in a follow-up visit to a Chinese village called 'Shun Shui' in Guangdong province after 15 years, journalist Nicholas Kristof was struck by its paved road and now common household items such as colour televisions, motorcycles, and phones, none of which had existed at the early stage of Chinese economic reforms. "Multiply Shun Shui's transformation by the 700,000 villages of China, and you begin to appreciate the implications of China's industrial revolution," Kristof wrote.[25] With such a prospect in mind, it is believed that enormous commercial opportunities abound in China's huge consumer markets. For example, Julia Chang Bloch, a China expert and the first Asian American Ambassador, has recently revitalised a familiar optimistic sentiment when she argued that U.S. trade with Asia is now over 50 percent larger than its trade with Europe and that among the ever expanding markets of developing

[22] Chris Buckley, "China Approves Amendments on Property and Human Rights," *The New York Times*, March 15, 2004, p. A6.
[23] Diamond, "Forward," pp. ix-x.
[24] Chas W. Freeman, Jr., "Sino-American Relations: Back to Basics," *Foreign Policy*, no. 104 (1996), p. 10.
[25] Nicholas Kristof, "Attack of the Killer Bras," *The New York Times*, December 10, 2003, p. A31.

countries China stands as "the fastest growing market of all."[26] Indeed, following a record-setting A$25 billion liquid natural gas deal with China, the Australian government predicted in 2002 that China would overtake Japan as its biggest export market in 2030.[27]

Because of these commercial opportunities, many neoliberals are optimistic about the prospect for stable relations with China based on common economic interests. Harry Harding points out that China's emphasis on economic development indicates its "acceptance of the legitimacy of the current international economic and political system."[28] Although political differences still place a strain on U.S.-China relations, Bloch argues that economics is where the two countries' interests intersect. As she explains:

> There is more common ground between the two countries here than in many other areas. Beijing's leaders are desperate for economic growth, because China's stability and survival depend on it. The United States, at the same time, is desperate to take advantage of the greatest commercial opportunity of the next century. China's enormous need for investment and technology to fuel its growth *coincides perfectly* with America's hunger for exports and new markets to create profits and jobs.[29]

As a result, Bloch suggests, Beijing's focus on economic development "provides an opportunity for America to find the convergence in the two nations' commercial and national interests to stabilize a critical bilateral relationship."[30] Meanwhile, Ezra F. Vogel goes one step further, claiming that "if the Chinese economy continues to grow, this will promote regional stability and provide a positive stimulus for every trading country."[31] On a more specific note, Henry Rowen suggests that with the Chinese becoming as dependent on the flow of Persian Gulf oil as Americans and Europeans

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[26] Julia Chang Bloch, "Commercial Diplomacy," in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China: U.S./China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997, p. 208. See also, Vincent Cable and Peter Ferdinand, "China As an Economic Giant: Threat or Opportunity?" *International Affairs* 70, no. 2 (1994), pp. 243-261; and David Wall, "China as a Trade Partner: Threat or Opportunity for the OECD?" *International Affairs* 72, no. 2 (1996), pp. 329-344.

[27] See Economic Analytical Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *China Embraces the World Market*, Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Commonwealth of Australia, 2002.

[28] Harry Harding, *China's Second Revolution: Reform After Mao*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987, p. 243.

[29] Bloch, "Commercial Diplomacy," p. 211. See also William H. Overholt, *The Rise of China: How Economic Reform is Creating a New Superpower*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1993.

[30] Julia Chang Bloch, "Commercial Diplomacy," pp. 195-6.

[31] Ezra F. Vogel, "Introduction: How Can the United States and China Pursue Common Interests and Manage Differences?" in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China: U.S./China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997, pp. 30-31. See also Samuel R. Berger, "Don't Antagonize China," *The Washington Post*, July 8, 2001, p. B7.

have, a common interest in open sea lanes will arise, thereby increasing the opportunity of cooperation and peace.[32]

More importantly, many neoliberal analysts point out that China's continued economic growth not only offers exciting commercial and cooperation opportunities, but holds the best chance for its eventual democratisation as well. For example, Henry Rowen proposes that "the wealth-democracy connection is not a European artifact… [and China] is like others in that the wealthier a country, the more (Western style) freedoms its people enjoy."[33] Although China's long-term economic growth may be eventually doubtful in the absence of democratic governance, many believe that democracy is more of a result of economic development than a precondition for it.[34] With the last two decades witnessing China's sustained economic growth and market reforms, it is widely expected that the Chinese political system will sooner or later transform to meet the demands for greater transparency, fairness, rule of law, and democracy by a vibrant market economy, a burgeoning middle class, and a more autonomous civil society.[35]

In 2001, for example, China's private business sector had become so powerful that the ruling Communist Party amended its constitution for the first time to allow private business people to join. More recently, perceiving a real opportunity for fundamental change, Charles Wolf, Jr., an analyst of the RAND corporation, proposes that:

> The defining event in China in the first year of the 21st century is probably not the aircraft collision near Hainan and its aftermath, or the trial and release of Chinese-American scholars, or the repression of the Falun Gong, or the award of the 2008 Olympics to Beijing. The defining event is the decision of the Chinese leadership to admit capitalists as members of the Communist Party. This decision raises the possibility of Communists co-opting capitalists—or of capitalists co-opting the party.[36]

Certainly, few in the West expect a straight-line development. Most predict setbacks and uncertainties along the way, and some suggest that in the short to medium term China's transition is more likely to resemble the model of East Asian late

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[32] Henry S. Rowen, "Off-Center on the Middle Kingdom," *The National Interest*, no. 48 (1997), p. 104.
[33] Rowen, "The Short March," p. 68.
[34] Harding, "Breaking the Impasse over Human Rights," p. 175.
[35] Bloch, "Commercial Diplomacy," p. 194; Gilboy and Heginbotham, "China's Coming Transformation," pp. 26-39.
[36] Charles Wolf Jr., "China's Capitalists Join the Party," *The New York Times*, August 13, 2001, p. A17.

capitalism,[37] a sort of half-way house between dictatorship and liberal democracy. In addition, most liberal observers are aware that political liberalisation is not the motive behind the Chinese regime's push for economic modernisation. Nevertheless, they argue that as the current economic reform continues, however unintended, authoritarian rule will erode and democratisation will gather momentum. As former U.S. Ambassador to China Winston Lord puts it, "Chinese leaders are gambling that open economics and closed politics will preserve their system of control," but this is "a gamble that sooner or later will be lost."[38] Similarly, U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice once argued that "The Chinese Communists are living on borrowed time; economic liberalization is going to create pressure for political freedom."[39] Consequently, it is believed that out of China's current economic development a whole range of opportunities may emerge.

The Opportunity Dividend in China's International Integration

For many liberal observers, contemporary China is marked not only by its dramatic economic growth and profound domestic changes, but also by its enthusiastic embrace of the outside world. China's share of world trade has increased significantly in the past two decades.[40] Meanwhile, it has accepted and participated in many important multilateral institutions and international regimes with regard to the United Nations, international trade and investment, security and arms control, environmental protection, energy, telecommunications, and even human rights.[41] In short, as Michel Oksenberg

[37] David Goodman and Gerald Segal, for example, argue that "From the perspective of East Asian late capitalism it seems possible that the PRC's political future might involve a slow and gradual transformation in a similar fashion to the development of politics in Taiwan and South Korea." David S. G. Goodman and Gerald Segal, *China without Deng*, Sydney: Editions Tom Thompson, 1995, pp. 58-59.
[38] Quoted in Martin L. Lasater, *The Taiwan Conundrum in U.S. China Policy*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000, p. 158.
[39] Jacob Heilbrunn, "Team W.," *The New Republic*, September 27, 1999, p. 24. See also Brzezinski, *The Grand Failure*, p. 250; and Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York: Free Press, 1992, pp. 33-34.
[40] Nicholas Lardy notes that emerging from an autarky to a major trading partner, China's foreign trade exploded from about $20 billion in the late 1970s to $475 billion in 2000, becoming the world's seventh largest trading country. By 2000 its share of total world trade had sextupled compared with its share in 1977. Nicholas R. Lardy, *Integrating China into the Global Economy*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002, p. 4.
[41] See, for example, Harold K. Jacobson and Michel Oksenberg, *China's Participation in the IMF, the World Bank, and GATT*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1990; William R. Feeney, "China's Relations with Multilateral Economic Institutions," in The Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States ed., *China's Economic Dilemmas in the 1990s: The Problems of Reforms, Modernization, and Interdependence*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1992, pp. 795-816; Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994; Yoichi Funabashi, Michel Oksenberg, and Heinrich Weiss, *An Emerging China in a World*

and Elizabeth Economy put it, "China has rejoined the world."[42]

Neoliberal institutionalism assumes that, in the context of growing interdependence and global integration, states can develop cognitive learning of international norms and redefine their national interests and identities. For many, this is exactly the case with regard to China. For example, Thomas W. Robinson documents how Chinese attitudes towards the notion of interdependence have evolved as a result of its integration. He notes that from early 1991 to late 1992, Chinese statements became increasingly favourable to this notion, and from 1993 to 1997, "further evolution" occurred concerning interdependence. Thus, with the continuation of its reforms, China could be eventually converted to "full interdependence."[43] Likewise, Alastair Iain Johnston observes that China's involvement in multilateral security frameworks such as ASEAN Regional Form (ARF) has helped Chinese decision-makers borrow and learn neoliberal concepts (e.g., integration theory, interdependence theory, democratic peace theory) from their Western counterparts.[44] In short, China, as Stuart Harris points out:

> has moved towards a greater perception of common interests and acceptance of the rules and norms of the international institutions. Under influences that include, critically, those of globalisation, it shows many signs of becoming a participant not just in the international system but in international society.[45]

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of Interdependence, New York: The Trilateral Commission, 1994; Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenberg eds., *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999; Ezra F. Vogel ed., *Living with China: U.S./China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997; Ann Kent, "China, International Organizations and Regimes: The ILO as a Case Study in Organizational Learning," *Pacific Affairs* 70, no. 4 (1997/1998), pp. 517-532; Ann Kent, *China, the United Nations, and Human Rights: The Limits of Compliance*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999; Rosemary Foot, *Rights beyond Borders: The Global Community and the Struggle over Human Rights in China*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000; David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001, esp. Chapter 4; Ann Kent, "China's Participation in International Organizations," in Yongjin Zhang and Greg Austin eds., *Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy*, Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, 2001, pp. 132-166; and Gary Klintworth, "China and Arms Control: A Learning Process," in Yongjin Zhang and Greg Austin eds., *Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy*, Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, 2001, pp. 219-249.

[42] Michel Oksenberg and Elizabeth Economy, "Introduction: China Joins the World," in Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenberg eds., *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999, p. 5.

[43] Thomas W. Robinson, "[In][ter]dependence in China's Post-Cold War Foreign Relations," in Samuel S. Kim ed., *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Facing the New Millennium*, Boulder, CO: Westview, pp. 202-203.

[44] Alastair Iain Johnston, "Socialization in International Institutions: The ASEAN Way and International Relations Theory," in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno eds., *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, pp. 130-131.

[45] Stuart Harris, "Globalisation and China's Diplomacy: Structure and Process," Department of International Relations Working Paper No. 2002/9, Canberra: Australian National University, December 2002, p. 24.

It is assumed that this creates opportunities for international cooperation and has important implications for regional stability and world peace. For David Lampton, "China's early and full involvement in the principal institutions and global norms of world governance" holds the key to "the avoidance of a second Cold War, the maintenance of regional stability, and the maximization of benefits from economic and other cooperation."[46] According to Ann Kent, China's growing participation in international organisations is clearly "a measure of its increased global commitments and responsibility,"[47] which have been demonstrated, for example, by its recent cooperation with the United States on the war on terrorism and on the North Korea nuclear crisis.

To be sure, some recognise that China's stubborn adherence to the old-fashioned concept of sovereignty and its traditional suspicion of multilateral institutions will not go away easily, nor will its integration process be even or trouble-free. Indeed, some are wary that China may opt to manipulate or even control some international regimes to its advantage once it has joined them. Despite this, most believe that the long-term trends from China are encouraging. As Douglas H. Paal puts it, "while the challenges posed by China's potential are great, the opportunity to shape that potential is at least equally great."[48] It is argued that China, once tied into international arrangements, is more likely to play by existing rules and develop stakes in maintaining those arrangements than to disrupt them.[49] For example, regarding its role in the U.N., Samuel Kim observes that China's orientation is distinctively *system-maintaining* as it has progressively become interested in what the U.N. system could do for its modernization than in what China could do to reform the U.N.[50] Thus, unlike realist analysts, most liberal scholars seem to agree that "China's rise cannot be compared with the rise of earlier major powers; it is occurring in a totally different international context," and that "unprecedented

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[46] Lampton, "A Growing China in a Shrinking World," p. 121.
[47] Ann Kent, "China's Participation in International Organizations," p. 132.
[48] Douglas H. Paal, "China and the East Asian Security Environment: Complementarity and Competition," in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China: U.S./China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997, p. 99; Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, pp. 160-162.
[49] Lampton, "A Growing China in a Shrinking World: Beijing and the Global Order," pp. 131-134; see also Dwight H. Perkins, "How China's Economic Transformation Shapes Its Future," in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China: U.S./China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997, p. 163; William R. Feeney, "China and the Multilateral Economic Institutions," in Samuel S. Kim ed., *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998, p. 260.
[50] Samuel S. Kim, "China and the United Nations," in Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenberg eds., *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999, p. 46.

opportunities exist to integrate China into various international arrangements that will constrain its future latitude."[51]

In sum, for liberal IR scholars, to fully understand China's international relations it is necessary to acknowledge its economic and political transformation in the domestic context and its cognitive learning and integration at the international level. From these standpoints, while its transformation and integration has not, and will not be easy and smooth,[52] the end result seems to be one of convergence: "Overall foreign policy moderation appeared to supply proof that China's reentry into the family of nations would be reasonably gentle and that China would end up with the same domestic structure (market economy) and foreign policy (peace and internationalism) as other developed nations."[53] In the remainder of this chapter, I want to turn to a discussion on this liberal optimism. In particular, I want to confront its self/Other construction, and to examine how this dichotomy, like that constructed in the (neo)realist literature, serves the Western dominance over China in global politics.

(Neo)Liberal Constructions of Self and the Chinese 'Other'

Before proceeding further, I want to make it clear that, in evaluating Western (neo)liberal accounts of China, I do not for a moment deny that China in many significant ways is changing, and has *to some degree* become similar to the West. I have no doubt, for example, that China's economic development and market reforms have significantly altered its socio-economic landscape and opened up numerous opportunities for international business, nor do I doubt that China has participated in many important multilateral institutions and international regimes and, on a number of issues, has played a cooperative, responsible role (e.g., regarding the Asian financial crisis in 1997-1998 and North Korea's nuclear and missile programs). Indeed, it can be said that many of the 'facts' supplied by liberal observers in support of their claims are valid.

The existence of many of these 'facts,' therefore, is not controversial. What is problematic, however, is that liberal scholars allow only one particular meaning to be

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[51] Oksenberg and Economy, "Introduction: China Joins the World," p. 11.
[52] See for example, Carol Lee Hamrin, "Élite Politics and the Development of China's Foreign Relations," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, pp. 70-109; and Kent, "China's Participation in International Organisations," pp 132-166.
[53] Robinson, "[In][ter]dependence in China's Post-Cold War Foreign Relations," p. 193.

given to those 'facts.' As indicated above, these scholars do not just claim the obvious, that China is changing. Rather, in their view, its change has a *unilinear* direction, pointing unequivocally in the direction of liberal democracy, the free market, and international integration, all of which have been explicitly or implicitly equated to the West and Western values. In this way, I argue that the seemingly objective descriptions of China become powerful discourses of self and Other, a discourse which always expects China, rather than the West or both, to change. Thus, with the implicit conception of the West as the necessary path and inevitable destiny of this *one-way* transformation or convergence process, this discourse is also an *autobiographical*, *self-congratulatory, and legitimating* discourse about the Western/American self.

The (Neo)liberal Discourse as the Construction of Other

On the surface, most liberal scholars find China not as threatening as realists do; they consider it largely promising and inherently receptive to modern ideas and international norms. By and large, they see it as essentially part of 'us,' rather than fundamentally different. Consequently, unlike realists, most liberals see little reason or benefit to exclude or contain China, but instead believe that the appropriate policy is to draw it close to 'us' and integrate it into the world community. This is a position taken by Edward Friedman who sees his work representing a break with "a long-discredited Eurocentric 'othering' that distinguishes the good West from all the bad rest."[54]

It is my contention, nevertheless, that the construction of Otherness remains central to the liberal discourse on China. Indeed, this liberal construction of the Other, I argue, is enabled precisely by its notion of convergence or global integration. By viewing human history as essentially a linear, universal process of social evolution, liberalism merely shifts the self/Other dichotomy to a temporal one, such as between tradition and modernity. As anthropologist Johannes Fabian notes, within the evolutionary framework of a universal history, "all living societies were irrevocably placed on a temporal slope, a stream of Time—some upstream, others down-stream."[55]

In the study of China's foreign relations, this self/Other dichotomy is often typically embodied in what Yongjin Zhang identifies as the "China *vis-à-vis* the world" theme, a theme characteristic of the existing Western literature on modern China's

[54] Friedman, *National Identity and Democratic Prospects in Socialist China*, p. x.
[55] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 17.

foreign relations published in the last 50 years.[56] Here, whether China is perceived as a late-comer in the modernisation process, an outsider to the family of nations, or still in the process of 'joining the world,' what is conveyed is the same image of Otherness, somehow not fully incorporated into the 'Western self' (now often disguised as 'the international community' or simply 'the world'). This is exactly what Michel Oksenberg and Elizabeth Economy mean in one of their recent studies. Before it "joined the world," they argue, China in the 1970s was so different that, to Americans, "it seemed as if the then 800 million Chinese lived on another planet."[57] This is a metaphor, to be sure, but its usage does betray the authors' profound feeling of China's Otherness.

Andrew Nathan and Tianjian Shi's seemingly more favourable account of Chinese culture in relation to democracy comes to similar conclusions. After analysing the results of the "first scientifically valid national sample survey" on Chinese political behaviour and attitudes, they conclude that:

> Nothing in our data supports the theory that Chinese political culture is an absolute bar to democracy. When compared to residents of some of the most stable, long-established democracies in the world, the Chinese population scored lower on the variables we looked at, but not so low as to justify the conclusion that democracy is out of reach. In general, as theory predicts, the more urban and educated sectors showed more democratic attitudes, supporting expectations derived from modernization theory that China's culture will move closer to the patterns characteristic of democratic countries as the economy grows.[58]

Given that they seem to treat Chinese culture on an equal footing with Western culture (namely, "the most stable, long-established democracies"), one may suggest that my charge of Othering does not apply here. Yet, by declaring that 'the Chinese population' as a whole 'scored lower' in a 'scientifically valid' survey than the long established Western democracies and that China will eventually be able to move 'closer' to 'us,' Nathan and Shi leave little doubt that the Chinese remain somehow inferior in the knowledge of political development and therefore are *not yet* part of 'us.'

The logic is that while China could be brought out of political wilderness, its past or even present seems to represent a pre-given, enduring problem to be overcome. So much so that Edward Friedman quotes, quite approvingly, some Chinese youngsters as saying that "China has a long history and thousands of years of culture…. This long

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[56] Yongjin Zhang, *China in International Society since 1949: Alienation and Beyond*, Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1998, pp. 2-3.
[57] Oksenberg and Economy, "Introduction: China Joins the World," p. 5.
[58] Nathan and Shi, "Cultural Requisites for Democracy in China," p. 116.

feudal history has made us ignorant" and that "Most kids today are only concerned with the future."[59] The exact meaning of China Friedman wants to convey to his reader here does not require much clarification, for it is framed effectively within a dichotomy of 'the past' versus 'the future,' in which 'the past' (China) is represented simply as a negative mirror image of 'the future' (the West). To some extent, this meaning is similar to what Michael Mandelbaum calls "unruly adolescents," who need to become "mature adults" by ways of childhood socialisation and learning.[60] In this context, central to this seemingly positive assessment of China, I suggest, is an assumption that China and the West are *already* separated by a pre-existing temporal boundary, and therefore belong to different stages of human development. The current presence of 'opportunity' of China's transformation bespeaks its past absence. Without this pre-constituted meaning of traditional China as an Other, I doubt whether the liberal 'opportunity' theme would still be possible or meaningful.

Many other liberal attitudes on China can be seen in the same light. At one level, there is an attitude of indifference. Because the Chinese 'Other' is seen as largely a product of its past, sometimes it tends to be viewed as a transient problem, which need not be taken seriously. As Tu Wei-ming points out, "To the industrialized societies, China's failure to become an inexhaustible market might have been a disappointment, but, as far as their forms of life are concerned, China was totally irrelevant, at most a sleeping lion or, to use an indigenous Chinese expression, a 'hidden dragon.'"[61]

At another level, China's 'Otherness,' particularly its 'stagnation,' has drawn much curiosity from such distinguished scholars as John K. Fairbank and Joseph Needham, who were puzzled by the question of what had gone wrong with China in comparison with the more dynamic Europe and Japan. In the late 1960s, a 'frustrated' Lucian Pye once claimed that Chinese political culture was an anomaly: his theory, he said, "makes sense logically, but it falls apart when applied to traditional China."[62] And this frustration with China's 'anomaly' has continued well into the present day.[63]

Still, when China seems less than amenable to liberal change, its perceived Otherness can take on a meaning of menace. For example, to say that "a modernizing

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[59] Friedman, *National Identity and Democratic Prospects in Socialist China*, p. 16.
[60] Michael Mandelbaum, "Westernizing Russia and China," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 3 (1997), p. 93.
[61] Tu Wei-ming, "Introduction: Cultural Perspectives," *Daedalus* 122, no. 2 (1993), pp. ix-x.
[62] Quoted in Tani E. Barlow, "~~Colonialism~~'s Career in Postwar China Studies," in Tani E. Barlow ed., *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997, p. 384.
[63] Lucian W. Pye, "China: Erratic State, Frustrated Society," *Foreign Affairs* 69, no. 4 (1990), pp. 56-74; and Steven M. Goldstein, "China in Transition: The Political Foundations of Incremental Reform," *The China Quarterly*, no. 144 (1995), pp. 1105-1131.

and stable China could be a bulwark for regional peace and prosperity," Michel Oksenberg and Elizabeth Economy suggest that a China falling short of "modernisation," as during the Cold War, would be a threat: China's "isolation was costly and dangerous for China, the region, and the world…. The weak and divided China of the late 1960s and early 1970s invited foreign aggression from the Soviet Union and was a source of global and regional instability."[64] This is basically what Richard Nixon meant by saying that "The world cannot be safe until China changes."[65] And this 'China as the problem' attitude has been a central belief of those 'democratic peace' advocates turned 'China threat' theorists, who are continually deeply troubled by the scenario of "what if China doesn't democratize?"[66] Indeed, according to Steve Chan, this liberal anxiety may hold the key to understanding why China is particularly susceptible to being "a source of concern in the West, especially the United States." As he notes:

> The importance of China has to do with perceptions, especially those regarding the potential that Beijing will become an example, source, or model that contradicts Western liberalism as the reigning paradigm. In an era of supposed universalizing cosmopolitanism, China demonstrates the potency and persistence of nationalism, and embodies an alternative to Western and especially U.S. conceptions of democracy and capitalism. China is a reminder that history is not close to an end.[67]

True, in most contemporary liberal literature on China, these attitudes of indifference and suspicion have largely given way to the above-mentioned sense of optimism. While Chinese history and culture may be taken as an anomaly or burden for its upcoming convergence with the West, many have believed that this obstacle is no match for the advancing force of (Western) modern science and technology like gunships, the (printing) press, satellite TV, and the Internet, to name but a few. As Robert Wright puts it:

> as technology shrank the world, China's solitude couldn't last—a point made forcefully by Western gunships in the nineteenth century and made just as inescapably by commercial vessels today…. [China] must face the same logic the rest of the world faces: In the age of the Internet, even more than in the age of industry and print, granting enough economic liberty for cutting-edge prosperity while denying political liberty is a tall order…. In short, two things that help explain China's distinctive past—its

[64] Oksenberg and Economy, "Introduction: China Joins the World," pp. 5-6.
[65] Richard M. Nixon, "Asia After Viet Nam," *Foreign Affairs* 45, no. 1 (1967), p. 121.
[66] Edward Friedman and Barrett L. McCormick eds., *What If China Doesn't Democratize: Implications for War and Peace*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000.
[67] Steve Chan, "Relating to China: Problematic Approaches and Feasible Emphases," *World Affairs* 161, no. 4 (1999), p.179.

> ideographic script and its geographical isolation from the modern world—*are of vanishing relevance*.[68]

Still, despite the apparent optimism, a fundamentally paradoxical attitude towards China persists. An attitude which is analogous to what Homi Bhabha has called "colonial mimicry," or "the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, as *a subject of a difference that is almost the same but not quite*."[69] That is, on the one hand, China is said to have great potential of becoming like 'us.' On the other hand, its inherent Otherness seems to place a constant strain on its full conversion. For example, strongly believing in the prospect of convergence, Joseph Levenson wrote in 1953 that, under the transforming agency of industrialisation, Chinese society would become "an approximation of modern western society."[70] Half a century on, China today remains "a work in progress."[71] More recently, much to Beijing's dismay, the European Union continued to deny China market economy status, a status which would not only suggest a sense of equality but also render the EU's high trade barriers to Chinese goods untenable.[72] Thus, the 'approximation' discourse on China is a strategy of denoting inferiority and exclusion, rather than signifying equality and inclusion. The persisting paradox that China is almost the same but not quite has little to do with China per se, but rather reflects an incessantly changing liberal discourse of the "standard of civilisation,"[73] a discourse which aims primarily to perpetually maintain the imagined superiority of the Western self. It is to this point that the following section will turn.

Writing the Chinese 'Other,' Constructing the Western Self

Like the 'China threat' argument, Western liberal discourse of 'China as opportunity' is both dependent on and constructed for a discursive Western self. It is an image invoked as a useful or even necessary foil to highlight something discursively called 'the West,' or the 'indispensable nation.' In distinction from the Chinese 'Other,' the West can acquire its desired self-identity, as something not just different, but also better, superior,

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[68] Robert Wright, "Same Difference," *The New Republic*, March 27, 2000, p. 23.
[69] Quoted in Michael J. Shapiro, *The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices in Biography, Photography, and Policy Analysis*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988, pp. 118-119.
[70] Joseph R. Levenson, *Liang Ch'i Ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 8.
[71] Patrick E. Tyler, *A Great Wall: Six Presidents and China: An Investigative History*, New York: Century Foundation Book, 2000, p. 422.
[72] "EU Denies Beijing Market Economy Status," Reuters, June 28, 2004.
[73] See Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of "Civilization" in International Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

and/or universal. For example, images usually associated with China such as 'lower,' 'immature,' 'traditional,' 'abnormal,' 'stagnant,' 'the later-comer,' 'the past,' and 'the periphery' are essential to the creation and confirmation of such American self-perceptions as 'higher,' 'mature,' 'modern,' 'normal,' 'dynamic,' 'the vanguard,' 'the future,' and 'the centre,' all the kinds of 'positive' values which are allegedly absent in China, and which the U.S. therefore can offer as self-images. Consequently, by describing what China was or is, those discourses have the effect of demonstrating what *the West* has left behind, and what *the West*, as the mirror of China's future, has to offer.

In this respect we may recall the still relevant example of the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci, who claimed that the Chinese "have *no* conception of the rules of logic, and consequently treat the precepts of the science of ethics *without* any regard to the intrinsic co-ordination of the various divisions of this subject [emphases added]."[74] Here, with China being understood primarily by negation, Ricci was speaking of Europe as much as of China. What was lacking in China was designed to signify what was present in Europe, where Ricci came from. As Jonathan Spence notes, the "implication was clearly that with a more rigorous system of logic, and a renewed concentration on mathematics and science, which *the West was in a position to offer*, China would become a better place."[75]

To be sure, in contemporary China studies, this kind of religious, Eurocentric attitude has faded into the background. Nonetheless, the discursive function of self-fashioning has by no means vanished, but rather has been wrapped and rendered less visible in more 'universal,' 'egalitarian' terms such as 'the international community.' In doing so, the self-fashioning process has often become more effective. This is certainly the case, for example, with regard to McCormick's definition of democracy. Speaking in a tongue seemingly without ethnocentric bias, he suggests that China's democratisation "can be no less Chinese than Japanese democracy is Japanese, and it certainly does not have to be in the American image." And yet, McCormick cannot help placing some 'universal' limits on what should be counted as democratisation. At the very least, he suggests, "any democracy must yield power to officials chosen in open and competitive universal elections and be based on rule of law and respect for basic

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[74] Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matteo Ricci: 1583-1610* (trans. Louis J. Gallagher), New York: Random House, 1953, p. 30.
[75] Jonathan D. Spence, *The Chan's Great Continent: China in Western Minds*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1998, p. 35.

civil and political rights. Within these limits there are many possibilities."[76] Through this minimalist definition strategy, however, a particular kind of Western democracy is smuggled in as allegedly 'universal' or 'minimal' standards of democracy per se.[77]

Thus understood, the 'opportunity for convergence' theme is foregrounded by Western observers less because of its factual correspondence to Chinese 'reality' as such, but more because of its function of validating and legitimising 'our' longstanding self-imagination in terms, for example, of the standard-bearer of world civilisation and international norms or the indisputable leader of international society. For instance, many liberal scholars have shown a keen interest in the question of a civil society in China. But as Jonathan Unger points out, one of the major factors in the popularity of the notion of a 'civil society' is that "it happens to accord with the political hopes of most of us. We *want* to perceive a society in China in the midst of gradually organizing itself and quietly undermining the strength of an oppressive state."[78]

Perhaps a more dramatic example of this self-identification logic concerns Western reports on the Tiananmen incident of 1989. As we now know, the demonstrations leading up to this incident were motivated by a diversity of reasons and goals, and a yearning for Western liberal democracy was certainly not the main factor behind the Tiananmen uprising. As one Western observer living in Beijing at that time wrote, "the students were primarily upset about the unfairness of economic reforms" and thus the "origins of the movement among Chinese students were less romantic, and less clearly about democracy *per se*."[79] And yet, Western and particularly American reporters almost invariably romanticised it in terms of a pro-democracy movement. As Harry Harding notes:

> [American] news reports tended to idealize the antigovernment demonstrators and to suggest that they wanted to transfer American political institutions to China… the demonstrations were nearly universally portrayed as prodemocracy movement in the American press. Moreover, the *Goddess of Freedom and Democracy* was often renamed the *Statue of Liberty* by American reporters, even though it drew largely on socialist realist antecedents and bore slight resemblance to the statue in New York harbor.
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> Conversely, some of the less favorable aspects of the demonstrations were unknown to American reporters or, less forgivably, known but deliberately set aside. The protests were almost invariably described as nonviolent, and yet some demonstrators resorted to

[76] McCormick, "Democracy or Dictatorship?" p. 96. See also Nathan, *China's Transition*, p. 64.
[77] See James L. Richardson, "Contending Liberalisms: Past and Present." *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 1 (1997), p. 24.
[78] Jonathan Unger, "Recent Trends in Modern China Studies in the English-language World: An Editor's Perspective," in Lucien Bianco et al., *The Development of Contemporary China Studies*, Tokyo: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for Unesco, 1994, p. 183.
[79] Trevor Corson, "China's Blue-Collar Blues," *The Atlantic Monthly* 285, no. 2 (2000), p. 22.

> violence as Chinese troops moved toward Tiananmen Square on June 4. Student leaders called for a more open and democratic government, and yet their movement was frequently characterized by factionalism and hierarchy, and they viewed the possibility of worker participation in the protests with considerable disdain. Perhaps most spectacular, some student leaders violated their own hunger strike—a fact known by some members of the American news media, but not reported because it ran counter to the favorable image of the mass demonstrations that the journalists wanted to convey.[80]

Clearly, as Harding has revealed, what led to those uniformly favourable reports of the Tiananmen demonstrations was not mere coincidence. The remarkable consensus among reporters indicates a more general inclination on the part of Western observers to seize upon every possible example of change or development elsewhere as some proof of the universal appeal of their own 'democratic' identity.[81] Thus, the image of China as 'opportunity' speaks primarily to the deeply missionary sense of self in the West and the U.S. particularly, a point which has been candidly acknowledged by leading liberal observers themselves like Andrew Nathan, who notes "a missionary impulse inherent in the American character—a desire to see other people confirm our values by becoming more like us…. Today, as in the past, American attitudes about China are in part a projection of American attitudes about ourselves and our own society."[82] Although the ostensibly 'empirically verifiable' knowledge of China championed by Nathan and other liberal China specialists seems to have been exempted from what he calls "American attitudes" here, his important observation is as applicable to the former as it is to the latter.

I would not, however, call the missionary impulse an 'inherent' character of America. Rather, it is a discursively constructed image central to an inherently fragile, heterogenous American self. This 'vulnerability' has been noted, for example, by Michel Oksenberg, who claims that "Stripped of confidence that their values transcend the cultural differences of their diverse origins, Americans would remain divided by their separate pasts."[83] In this context, the Chinese 'Other' is particularly useful in that it seems to resonate with and reinforce the 'frontier' myth in the dominant American self-imagery. As a 'new frontier' on the western coast of the Pacific Ocean first 'discovered' by nineteenth-century American pioneers, China serves as both a formidable

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[80] Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship*: *The United States and China since 1972*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1992, pp. 240-241.
[81] Madsen, *China and the American Dream*, p. 17.
[82] Nathan, *China's Crisis*, pp. 78-81.
[83] Michel Oksenberg, "Taiwan, Tibet, and Hong Kong in Sino-American Relations," in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China: U.S./China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997, p. 59.

'wilderness' challenge to the already 'civilised' United States and a promising opportunity for an evangelical America to push its frontier still further into this 'wilderness.'

Certainly, the meaning of the Western self as the guardian of universal history need not rely on the specific construction of China per se. As mentioned earlier, the construction of the Western/American self as a rational and universal subject is from the beginning built into the modernist quest for certain truth in general, and the liberal theorising of global politics in particular. Having said this, the Chinese 'Other' now proves particularly attractive and useful to the liberal project of Western (particularly American) self-construction.[84] Andrew Nathan explains that this might have something to do with Chinese modern history: "Because of its weakness, China was open to foreign influence for most of the last hundred years, but it was not part of the empire of any other nation. Thus it seemed more available than any other large country to be 'saved' by America—a promising field for American energy and ambition."[85] From a different direction, Michael Hunt believes that it is China's unique, powerful tradition that makes it a particularly worthwhile Other for the American self-construction. As he notes, "we imagine ourselves locked in a special relationship with the Chinese, whose apparent moderation and pragmatism mirror our own most prized attributes and validate our own longings for a world made over in our own image. If China with its old and radically different culture can be won, where can we not prevail?"[86]

In this sense, it may be argued that China has become an Other *par excellence*, so to speak, powerful enough to inspire, galvanise, and prove the 'manifest destiny' of America once and for all. Through this particularly forceful form of Othering, China is effectively reduced to nothing more or less than a mirror image of the West. This Othering makes no allowance for understanding China outside of the parameter of the Western self-understanding, and makes no room for recognising the basic legitimacy of the 'China difference.' Setting out to know the different world of China, the liberal discourse ends up 'discovering' the possibility of only one world, namely, a world essentially resembling the Western self.

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[84] Australian Sinologist Pierre Ryckmans argues that "there was never a more powerful antidote to the temptation of Western ethnocentrism than the study of Chinese civilisation." Quoted in Bernard Lane, "It's Our Lotus Love Affair," *The Australian* ("China Report"), December 16, 2002, p. 10.
[85] Nathan, *China's Crisis*, p. 78.
[86] Michael H. Hunt, "Chinese Foreign Relations in Historical Perspective," in Harry Harding ed., *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984, pp. 40-41.

At this stage, it may be useful to draw attention to an insight made by Todorov in relation to some relatively 'liberal' attitudes of certain learned Conquistadors towards the American Indians. He writes: "If it is incontestable that the prejudice of superiority is an obstacle in the road to knowledge, we must also admit that the prejudice of equality is a still greater one, for it consists in identifying the other purely and simply with one's own 'ego ideal' (or with oneself)."[87] Similarly, I suggest that if it is ethnocentric to view China as incapable of change or development at all, it is no less ethnocentric to see it as capable of change into only one kind of future—one's own kind of future.

An 'Opportunity for Convergence' or Potential for Crisis?

It is worth saying, I suppose, that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with self/other construction per se.[88] In order for the self to be intelligible, there has to be some kind of other against which the self can be made meaningful. However, to make a contingent self/other differentiation is one thing, to invoke a self/Other dichotomy as something fixed and real, as in this case, is quite another matter. This is primarily because, in doing so, such a dichotomy speaks to a particular kind of power relationship, which always has the potential for control, domination, and, very likely, violent confrontation in practice. It is on the basis of this equation that I take issue with the conventional (realist) critique of the liberal discourse as mere 'utopianism' or 'fantasy.'[89] The point being that while a fantasy is often assumed to be disconnected from social reality and to misinform social practice,[90] the liberal 'fantasy' here is inherently interconnected with social reality via its self-conscious intervention in the framing of certain Western attitudes and policies.

To put it simply, the liberal understanding of 'what is happening in China' is always intrinsically connected to a conclusion about what should be done in practice.

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[87] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (trans. Richard Howard), Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, p. 165.

[88] Thus, to some extent, we can understand why Western liberals come to construct China and the West as the way they do. Michel Oksenberg explains that "the United States cannot limit the pursuit of its values to its own shores. To do so would call into question their universal validity and jeopardize their pursuit at home." Oksenberg, "Taiwan, Tibet, and Hong Kong in Sino-American Relations," p. 60.

[89] See Mosher, *China Misperceived*; and Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

[90] For example, *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines "fantasy" as "an illusory appearance," "delusive imagination," and "the process or the faculty of forming mental representations of things not actually present." <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/findword?query_type=word&queryword=fantasy>.

For example, confident of his knowledge of both democracy and China, Lucian Pye is able to speculate about "*what would have to change* for China to become a constitutional democracy in the twenty-first century [emphasis added]."[91] Similarly, with his belief in an evolutionary process from communism to democracy, the would-be U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher had little difficulty putting forth a China policy in 1993, that was "to seek to facilitate a broad, peaceful evolution in China from communism to democracy by encouraging the forces of economic and political liberalization."[92]

It is in this sense that the liberal discourse is about power and control. More specifically, it seeks to naturalise an artificially constructed power relationship in which the West (and the U.S. particularly) occupies the top position as the knowing subject concerning current global political, economic, and cultural affairs and future human development, and China is assigned to the status of a knowable object whose development entails Western inspiration, approval, pressure, engagement, and supervision. In this regard, the difference between the liberal and realist discourses is that, as James L. Richardson notes, the former represents "an ideology tirelessly promoted by the powerful that excludes all reference to power,"[93] one based apparently less on coercion and more on consent. Consent, according to neoliberal theory, can be achieved mainly by 'international learning,' as if it were a natural, spontaneous, power-free, or purely technical process, often with the question of who may be in that authoritative 'teaching' position being left unasked. Despite this deliberate omission, however, from time to time the liberal discourse has disclosed its normative role in legitimising and securing the West in general and the United States in particular as a benevolent global hegemon.[94]

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[91] Lucian W. Pye, "Chinese Democracy and Constitutional Development," in Fumio Itoh, ed., *China in the Twenty-First Century: Politics, Economy, and Society*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1997, p. 207.

[92] James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999, pp. 276-277.

[93] James L. Richardson, *Contending Liberalisms in World Politics: Ideology and Power*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001, p. 87.

[94] See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vantage Books, 1978, p. 7; and Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine*, New York: Vantage Books, 1992, p. 37. The notion of "hegemony" by consent should be attributed to the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. In the context of international politics, Stanley Hoffmann made a similar proposition: "Perhaps international politics today should be defined less as a struggle for power than as a contest for the shaping of perceptions. When force loses some of its prominence, power—my exercise of control over you—*becomes the art of making you see the world the way I see it, and of making you behave in accordance with that vision*. International politics in the past was often an arena of coercion without persuasion; it is tending to become an arena of persuasion, more or less coercive [emphasis added]." Stanley Hoffmann, "Perceptions, Reality, and the Franco-American

For example, speaking to the Pacific Basin Economic Council on 20 May 1996, U.S. President Clinton envisioned the emergence of an Asia-Pacific Community, where "Superpower confrontation has given way to growing cooperation. Freedom and democracy are on the march. Modern telecommunications have collapsed the distances between us. The new global economy is transforming the way we work and live, bringing tremendous opportunities for all our peoples." With this cheery picture of growing consensus and opportunity for all, what Clinton really wanted to convey was a message of the necessity of American leadership, since this transformation was "one America helped to inspire," and the absence of "our" leadership "could spark a dangerous and destabilizing arms race that would profoundly alter the strategic landscape." According to Clinton, therefore, change in Asia hinged upon a continuity of U.S. hegemony. As he remarked, "I have spoken today about challenge and change, but I pledge to you as President of the United States that *one thing remains unchanging*, and that is *America's commitment to lead with strength, steadiness, and good judgment* [emphases added]."[95] Here, the hierarchical relationship between the U.S. and Asia cannot be clearer: on the one hand, it is Asia that needs to make those changes conceived and developed by 'us.' On the other hand, 'our' hegemonic role in that region must remain *unchanged* or *unchallenged*.[96]

Throughout Clinton's speech, China was rated as at the forefront of Asia's historic transformation. It can thus be assumed that this hierarchical power relationship applies also to U.S.-China relations, in which China must look to the U.S. for leadership and 'good judgment.' Little wonder then, that for Clinton, Cold War geopolitical alliances in Asia, recently revamped under the new U.S.-Japan 'Defense Guidelines,' should remain the backbone of the new vision for the global integration of China. This position was perhaps most famously outlined in the Nye Report, named after the prominent neoliberal IR theorist Joseph Nye, Jr., then Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs. Although China was not the specified target in this

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Conflict," in John C. Farrell and Asa P. Smith, eds., *Image and Reality in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1967, pp. 58-59.

[95] Bill Clinton, "U.S.-East Asia Strength and Prosperity in the 21st Century," *US Department of State Dispatch*, May 27, 1996, pp. 261-263.

[96] Rob Wilson argues that the discourse of the Asia-Pacific Community or the "Pacific Rim" reflects "the desire for regional coherence, shared teleology, and hegemonic unity" on the part of the U.S.-centred transnational capital. Rob Wilson, "Doing Cultural Studies Inside APEC: Literature, Cultural Identity, and Global/Local Dynamics in the American Pacific," *Comparative Literature* 53, no. 4 (2001), p. 390. For another example of this kind of critical engagement with this issue, see John Feffer, "Gunboat Globalization: The Intersection of Economics and Security in East Asia," *Social Justice* 27, no. 4 (2000), pp. 45-62.

report, its recommended deployment of an expeditionary force of 100,000 troops in Japan and Korea for the next 20 years could hardly be justified were it not for a concern about China.[97] Here, (neorealist) containment and (neoliberal) engagement have clearly converged in U.S. China policy.

Consistent with this particular rendition of power relations, two specific types of Western liberal policy on China have emerged. One is to actively promote democracy and human rights in China, the other is to engage China through free trade and international integration. Both policies are optimistic about the prospect of China's convergence with the West. They differ chiefly over how best to bring that prospect into reality. In the discussion to follow, I want to examine how these two policies, like their realist 'containment' counterpart, are designed to advance U.S. interests and dominance over the Chinese 'Other,' even if mainly by non-military and consensual means.

Promoting Human Rights and Democracy in China

As noted above, while many liberals argue that China has not scored very well on human rights and democracy, with the outburst of 'democratic' aspiration in the Tiananmen Incident of 1989, Western analysts came to find a mirror image of the Western self in China. On the day after the Tiananmen crackdown, President George Bush Sr. told reporters that "the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square were advocating basic human rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of association. *These are goals we support around the world* [emphasis added]."[98] In particular, the television footage of one young man standing defiantly alone in front of a column of advancing tanks provided a highly visualised footnote to the perceived dichotomy between the Chinese people who were longing for 'our' ways of life and their brutal, repressive government determined to stand in their way.

From this perspective, China was not a monolithic threat to be feared, but represented a profound paradox between the emerging opportunity of change and the continued threat of a dictatorship, a paradox to which 'we' could offer solutions, such as the ideals of democracy and human rights. At this juncture, as Harry Harding notes, it

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[97] See Chalmers Johnson, "In Search of a New Cold War," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 55, no. 5 (1999), p. 51. Apart from the Nye Report, see also Rowen, "Off-Center on the Middle Kingdom," p. 103; Kenneth Lieberthal, "A New China Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 6 (1995), p. 48; and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The Case for Deep Engagement," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 4 (1995), pp. 90-102.

[98] George H. Bush, "The President's News Conference," in Scott Kennedy ed., *China Cross Talk: The American Debate over China Policy since Normalization*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003, p. 87.

was a common assumption among Western human rights activists and moralist politicians that "China simply needed a push from abroad for the democratic impulses evident during the 'Beijing Spring' to succeed."[99] This policy, I argue, while seemingly designed to help the Chinese by confronting the authoritarian threat, often ends up indistinguishable from the hardline policy of containment advocated by 'China threat' theorists.

It was precisely on the back of this foreign policy platform that Bill Clinton rode to political prominence. Soon after the crackdown, and in accusing his political rival George Bush Sr. of coddling "the butchers of Beijing," Clinton laid out his vision of how to deal with China, stating: "If you want to continue most-favored-nation status for your government-owned industries as well as your private ones, observe human rights in the future, open your society."[100] In this context, the first Clinton administration pursued a harsh China policy with an almost new sense of evangelism. In 1993, reminiscent of the way in which a teacher gives an assignment to a student, Clinton signed an executive order, demanding China meet a set of human rights conditions in twelve months; otherwise it would lose its most favoured nation (MFN) status. Echoing John Stuart Mill's belief that "if [the Chinese] are ever to be farther improved, it must be by foreigners,"[101] contemporary liberals hold that Western public pressure is the most effective leverage available to bring about human rights improvements in China.[102]

The world has every right to be concerned with human rights abuses, and Beijing's actions in Tiananmen Square were rightly condemned. Indeed, given China's importance, its human rights may justify some special attention. But the point is that, more often than not, Western concerns with 'human rights and democracy' are less about improving Chinese human rights situation and more about strengthening Western moral authority and disciplining and exploiting China. A good example of this concerns Jesse Helms, the now retired U.S. Senator from the top textile producing state of North Carolina, who has developed a loathing for China ostensibly on the grounds of its Communist ideology and poor human rights record. For this reason, he has acted constantly to support economic sanctions against China and oppose its right to MFN status or entry to the WTO. While most would believe that Helms acted out of an

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[99] Harding, "Breaking the Impasse over Human Rights," p. 170.
[100] Quoted in Lasater, *The Taiwan Conundrum in U.S. China Policy*, p. 156.
[101] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (ed. David Spitz), New York: W. W. Norton, 1975, p. 67.
[102] Robert L. Bernstein and Richard Dicker, "Human Rights First," *Foreign Policy*, no. 94 (1994), p. 43.

atavistic anticommunism, Bruce Cumings points out that "much if not most of his obstructionism derived from his support of Textile interests in the South [particularly the Carolinas]."[103]

At the same time, among the foreign policy elite, there has existed little interest in China's genuine human rights and democracy issues—such as unemployment, inequality, environmental refugees, exploitation of women, and so forth. Nor was there much concern for human rights abuses in China during the Cultural Revolution when the U.S. needed China's strategic partnership against the Soviet Union.[104] As Richard Madsen points out, on the issue of China's human rights, the Carter administration believed that the best way to make the Chinese government improve its human rights was to leave the issue out of the negotiations, and meanwhile build close relations with Chinese leaders, thereby allowing American institutions to gradually work their magic on the Chinese.[105]

While China's human rights has come under more scrutiny in recent years, attention tends to be focused on the political plight of a small number of Chinese elites. As John Bryan Starr points out, "American human rights organizations and the US Congress have been interested less in the rapid expansion of civil rights for the majority of the Chinese people than in the very serious violation of a small minority's civil rights, the individuals who have been imprisoned or sentenced to reform through labor for their dissident political and religious views."[106] While the civil rights of elite members of Chinese society are important, it is in regard to the majority of Chinese people that human rights and democracy issues require most attention. But Western trade sanctions, the most common tool in human right diplomacy, are often so formulated that they end up punishing "the innocent more than the guilty," to borrow Hoffmann's phrase.[107] For example, American trade penalties against China, by one journalist's account, would increase the cost of Chinese products on American shelves by a third or more. This would bankrupt thousands of Chinese factories and devastate

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[103] Bruce Cumings, "The Political Economy of China's Turning Outward," in Samuel S. Kim ed., *China and the World: New Directions in Chinese Foreign Relations*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989, p. 229.
[104] Yu Bin, *East Asia: Geopolitique into the Twenty-first Century—A Chinese View*, Stanford, CA: Asia Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, June 1997, p. 6.
[105] Madsen, *China and the American Dream*, p. 132.
[106] Quoted in Enbao Wang, "Engagement or containment? Americans' views on China and Sino-US relations," *Journal of Contemporary China* 11, no. 31 (2002), p. 386.
[107] Stanley Hoffmann, quoted in Jim George, *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re)Introduction to International Relations*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1994, p. 5.

many businesses in mainland China and Hong Kong.[108] Ridiculing this policy's potential damage to Hong Kong's economy, the leader of Hong Kong's Democratic Party, Martin Lee, said in an interview in 1997 that revoking the MFN status for China would be like saying: "If you [Beijing] still beat your wife [Hong Kong] and violently, I shall shoot her."[109]

Thus, contrary to the conventional notion that Western 'human rights and democracy' policy acts out of altruist concerns for universal values, self-interest and power politics remain at the core of this China policy. As such, however ostensibly well-intended this policy may be, it is not an appropriate response to the complexities of the issues of human rights and democracy in post-Tiananmen China. Certainly, it has helped bring a few high-profile political dissidents out of China. For the most part, however, rather than helping bring about the opportunity for convergence between the West and China, the often indiscriminate, collective punishment strategy may well achieve the opposite result, that is, alienating a large proportion of the Chinese public or even strengthening xenophobic sentiment.

As Jianwei Wang indicates, many Chinese perceive a basic hypocrisy in America's human right diplomacy. Referring to American aid during China's serious floods in 1991, a Chinese professor said: "You Americans just offered aid of $25,000. What the hell is this? You talk about human rights and humanity every day, where are they?" A business person described this amount as "laughable," reminding people that "the United States seldom offers aid out of pure humanitarian considerations."[110] Another classic example in this regard is America's opposition to Beijing's bid to host the 2000 Olympic Games on the basis of China's abysmal human rights record. Most Chinese saw hosting the Olympics as a great honour for their nation, and did not see the point of trumpeting human rights by holding the bid hostage. Blaming America for their bid failure, many felt bitterly disappointed and enraged. As a result of a series of similar incidents, Harry Harding has observed that there has been "a decline in good will toward the United States and a rise in nationalism among many urban Chinese. Even those who acknowledged the violations of human rights in China still resented

[108] Tyler, *A Great Wall*, pp. 393-394.
[109] Quoted in David M. Lampton, "Ending the MFN Battle," *NBR Analysis* 8, no. 4 (1997), p. 7.
[110] Jianwei Wang, *Limited Adversaries: Post-Cold War Sino-American Mutual Images*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 184.

American pressure and questioned American motives."[111] I shall give a more detailed account of these Chinese reactions to the Western hardline policy on China in the next chapter. For the present purpose, suffice it to say that the misguided liberal policy of promoting human rights and democracy in China has achieved very little, and has sometimes fuelled tensions and mistrust in Sino-Western relations. Acknowledging this policy failure, many liberal China watchers, from a neoliberal and/or a neoliberal institutionalist point of view, opt for an alternative policy now commonly termed 'engagement.'

Engaging China: Implications for Sino-U.S. Relations

The engagement policy is premised on the perceived opportunities for convergence related to China's economic development, market reforms, and increasing integration with international society. Thus, in terms of the final objective of 'converting' China, the engagement advocates have no fundamental disagreement with the human rights advocates. However, engagers believe that it is foolhardy to antagonise the Chinese leadership, which they see as moving slowly but steadily in the direction of market liberalisation and international integration.[112] Tough measures such as unilateral economic sanctions have not succeeded in changing China,[113] they argue, and human rights policy is less than effective when it is pursued with more than a whiff of hypocrisy and double standard, as is often the case. Thus, for the engagers, it is better to engage China through free trade and multilateral institutional frameworks, which also serve to foster democratic forces and enhance human rights in the long run.[114]

Of course, what exactly constitutes 'engagement' may vary from one scholar to another. For example, by 'engagement,' Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert Ross mean the "use of non-coercive methods to ameliorate the non-status-quo elements of a rising major power's behavior."[115] For Michel Oksenberg and Elizabeth Economy, engagement can mean multilateralism, strategic dialogue, promoting institutional

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[111] Harding, "Breaking the Human Rights Impasse," p. 172. See also Ming Wan, *Human Rights in Chinese Foreign Policy: Defining and Defending National Interests*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
[112] Robert S. Ross, "Why Our Hardliners Are Wrong," *The National Interest*, no. 49 (1997), pp. 50-51.
[113] Bloch, "Commercial Diplomacy," pp. 205-206.
[114] James Lilley, "Freedom through Trade," *Foreign Policy*, no. 94 (1994), p. 40; Lampton argues that "Involving China in the WTO and obtaining deadlines for compliance (even if allowing for longer transition times than one would wish) is preferable to having China outside the WTO, with no deadlines for compliance whatsoever." Lampton, "A Growing China in a Shrinking World," p. 137.
[115] Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, eds., *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power*, London: Routledge, 1999, p. xiv.

development, behaving credibly and avoiding hypocrisy, working with nongovernmental organisations and the private sector, providing incentives, and careful targeting or threatening of sanctions in the realms of trade, the environment, and arms proliferation, all of which can be useful strategies in ensuring Chinese compliance with its international agreements.[116] Also calling for an engagement policy, Nicholas Lardy urges America to drop remaining economic sanctions, develop systematic technical assistance program to help China meet its international obligations, and be extraordinarily judicious in exploiting highly protectionist measures against China.[117] Differences of emphasis aside, there is a shared optimism about the prospect of transforming China's 'soul' through non-coercive means.

At first sight, and given its emphasis on order and cooperation rather than confrontation, this policy might well have a positive impact on Sino-Western relations and hold a better chance of bringing about the long cherished goal of convergence.[118] But, as I will argue in the pages that follow, it is almost as likely to promote instability and conflict in Sino-Western relations as is the more confrontational human rights/democracy policy.

The problem, again, is that at the core of this policy is an asymmetrical or hierarchical relationship of power enacted by the self/Other discourse of China as 'opportunity.' The crucial conduit of this 'engagement' policy has been free trade facilitated through a variety of multilateral economic institutions and international regimes. These institutions and regimes, as Robert Gilpin notes, are undergirded often by rules that "represent the desires of Western Europe and the United States to reassert the positions they have lost over the past several decades in the international system."[119] Consequently, these frameworks within which China is to be dealt with are far from neutral. The implication is that China is not treated as an equal partner, but rather as an entity needing to be engaged: the intimation being that without 'our' engagement or involvement, China could remain mired in isolation and underdevelopment, or even degenerate into chaos and instability. Robert Ross, for one, proposes that "there would never have been a democracy movement in the spring of 1989 without Western interaction with the Chinese economy."[120] This, I argue, is another way of saying what

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[116] Economy and Oksenberg eds., *China Joins the World*, p. viii.
[117] Lardy, *Integrating China into the Global Economy*, pp. 166-173.
[118] Bates Gill, "Limited Engagement," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 4 (1999), p. 66.
[119] Robert Gilpin, "APEC in a New International Order," *NBR Analysis* 6, no. 5 (1995), p. 19.
[120] Ross, "Why Our Hardliners Are Wrong," p. 51.

Lehmann has said, the "liberal global economic agenda must prevail and must be driven by the industrialized countries."[121]

Since engagement aims at making China do "what we want it to do,"[122] ultimately there is a price to pay on the part of China. This has been vividly demonstrated by one of the most important cases of 'engagement,' notably, the admission of China into the WTO. In the long-drawn-out process of joining this organisation, China had been subjected to harsher and more rigorous terms of entry than any other WTO member. Operating in a way reminiscent of the Open Door policy at the turn of the twentieth century, the Western powers, led by the U.S., made a concerted effort to share the offers made to them by China and to ensure their accession standards set for China were consistent.[123] Aiming to use China's accession as a template for other "transition economies," they demanded that China's membership be based on "commercially viable terms."[124] As a consequence, China, now finally a member, needs not only to abide by all of the WTO rules, but also to undertake extra obligations that exceed normal WTO standards.[125]

What is most remarkable about these kinds of control tactics is that it has been achieved so far with little complaint from China's top leadership, which has largely 'learned' that "there was no viable alternative to the globalization of production and that, indeed, China through WTO membership would benefit from greater participation in the trend."[126] In other words, this domination, unlike the 'scramble for concessions' episode roughly a century ago, is based mainly on 'consent,' which, as Antonio Gramsci would tell us, has proved a more effective and more complete form of hegemony. By becoming 'socialised' into what Robert Cox calls the "transnational managerial class,"[127] the Chinese ruling elites are no longer just the target of engagement, but also in a way one of its most ardent advocates. While we need to be careful not to overemphasise the common bondage between the two parties,

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[121] Jean-Pierre Lehmann, "Developing Economies and the Demographic and Democratic Imperatives of Globalization," *International Affairs* 77, no. 1 (2001), p. 81.
[122] Ross, "Why Our Hardliners Are Wrong," p. 51; Barber B. Conable, Jr., and David M. Lampton, "China: The Coming Power," *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 5 (1992/1993), p. 147; and Freeman, "Sino-American Relations: Back to Basics," p. 10.
[123] Margaret M. Pearson, "The Case of China's Accession to GATT/WTO," in David M. Lampton ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, *1978-2000*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 356.
[124] Lardy, *Integrating China into the Global Economy*, p. 63.
[125] *Ibid*., p. 2.
[126] *Ibid*., p. 20.
[127] Robert W. Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.

nevertheless, as Shaun Breslin notes, "the decision to join the WTO in 1999 cannot be considered without a recognition of an alliance between reformers in Beijing, and those in the US and elsewhere that wanted to promote a type of reform that conforms with international norms and the interest of the 'international community.'"[128] According to Margaret M. Pearson, although it is not true that the GATT/WTO division in China's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC) is "in the pocket" of the WTO, it is true that "the institutional norms of MOFTEC [have become] increasingly aligned with the norms of the international regime, and its officials became the strongest advocates within the government of China's adoption of international practices."[129] It is small wonder then that for some commentators, it is time to accept China into the Group of Eight. It no longer matters, it seems, whether its rulers are thugs or not, so long as—as one analyst puts it—"they are thugs we can work with."[130] To the popular cry here that 'free trade' is at the expense of human rights, the answer, as offered by James A. Dorn, is that free trade is indeed itself a fundamental human right, concerning in particular "property rights" and "our right to trade."[131]

Thus, from the outset, what is advertised as crucial to China's prosperity, human rights, and democracy has really proved essential mostly for the West, or more precisely, for Western corporate interests, to better penetrate and control China's economy, society, culture, and politics. Although portrayed by most liberal commentators as mutually beneficial, in the past decade or so, the increasing opening of the Chinese market has been accompanied by the domination of Western multinational corporations in many important sectors of the Chinese economy, particularly in the auto, electronics, detergent, and beverage sectors.[132] According to recent research, Motorola, Nokia, and Ericsson have captured 95 percent of the Chinese market for cellular phones; meanwhile, Coca-Cola is the dominant supplier of carbonated beverages with a market share fifteen times its closest domestic competitor, and in terms of sales volume, China is expected to take over Japan as Coca-Cola's biggest

[128] Shaun Breslin, "IR, Area Studies and IPE: Rethinking the Study of China's International Relations," Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation (CSGR) Working Paper No. 94/02, University of Warwick, Coventry, April 2002, p. 28.
[129] Pearson, "The Case of China's Accession to GATT/WTO," p. 355.
[130] Nicholas D. Kristof, "Bringing China In From the Cold," *The New York Times*, June 3, 2003, p. A31.
[131] James A. Dorn, "Trade and Human Rights: The Case of China," *CATO Journal* 16, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1996), pp. 77-98.
[132] Yong Wang, "China's Domestic WTO Debate," *China Business Review* 27, no. 1 (2000), p. 54.

market in Asia in 2004.[133] A survey of 136 foreign consumer-goods companies conducted in 2004 finds that 70 percent are making profits or at least breaking even.[134] By 2000, foreign-invested firms which accounted for only about one-eighth of all manufacturing output, were responsible for almost one-half of all of China's exports. Also, foreign firms were responsible for a third of all Chinese imports by 1992 and consistently more than half of all imports since 1995.[135] This dominant role of transnational companies in generating exports, according to Lardy, "reflects China's deep rather than shallow integration into the world economy."[136]

Clinton was well aware of this largely one-sided benefit. Upon the U.S. congressional approval of the Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) deal with China in September 2000, he proposed that: "we will find, I believe, that *America has more influence in China* with an outstretched hand than with a clenched fist [emphasis added]."[137] By now, what Western scholars and officials really mean by 'integration' or 'engagement' should have become abundantly clear. As a result of this policy and the willing collaboration from Beijing, and in their quest for profits, Western transnational corporations have gained increasing access to and more control over a variety of dimensions of Chinese life. As Arif Dirlik points out:

> global advertisers and marketers are on their way to achieving an unparalleled oversight of the country as a whole and micro-level insights into Chinese society through their intense surveillance of popular habits and tastes, class, gender and age differences in life-styles, urban-rural and regional variations in culture, and even the savings of the population, including the meagre savings of the majority.[138]

In this way, there is nothing 'textual' about the discursive construction of China and its people as mere 'objects,' as China has indeed been objectified and commoditified (e.g., market consumers and cheap labour) in order to accelerate Western capital penetration, just as the description of China as a 'sea of heathenism' during the 'China for Christ'

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[133] Lardy, *Integrating China into the Global Economy*, p. 2; Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, p. 114; and CRIENGLISH.com, "China, Coke's Top Asian Market," <http://english1.people.com.cn/200406/21/eng20040621_147022.html>.
[134] Jonathan Barlow, "Foreign Firms Cash in on China Consumers," *China Daily* (Hong Kong ed.), July 9, 2004, p. 19.
[135] Lardy, *Integrating China into the Global Economy*, p. 6.
[136] *Ibid*., p. 61.
[137] Bill Clinton, "In Clinton's Words: 'An Outstretched Hand,'" *The New York Times*, September 20, 2000, p. A16.
[138] Arif Dirlik, "Markets, Culture, Power: The Making of a 'Second Cultural Revolution' in China." *Asian Studies Review*, 25, 1 (2001), p. 15.

movement between the two world wars enabled missionaries to raise funds and rally support back home for their divine task of making converts.

Meanwhile, one further point must be made here in relation to this neoliberal 'integration' scheme, which, by actively promoting economic liberalisation in China, has been partly responsible for a myriad of problems in the country such as massive unemployment, poverty, rampant corruption, human rights violations, environmental degradation, and social and economic inequality. In the words of Shaun Breslin, "you do not have to travel too far from the gleaming new commercial centre of Beijing to witness the growing gap between urban and rural dwellers in China."[139] Breslin's comment reveals the tip of an iceberg which represents a broader problem of the growing gap between a small number of winners and (many more) losers in the market-driven reforms. According to a leading Chinese economist, in 1990, the annual income of the richest 20 percent in China was 4.2 times that of the poorest 20 percent; the figure was 6.9 times in 1993, and in 1998 it reached a staggering figure of 9.6 times.[140] While the exact figures may be subject to dispute, there is little doubt that the gap between rich and poor is rapidly widening in the course of China's integration into the global free market. One major underlying cause of this gap is unemployment, which has now affected a great number of people, particularly women, ethnic minorities, peasants, migrant workers, and urban workers in state-owned enterprises (SOEs). For example, China's new emphasis on market forces and profits are widely believed to be responsible for the worsening problem of unemployment in SOEs, which, according to a Chinese Academy of Social Sciences annual report, could surge above 15% in the coming years.[141] Even before its accession to the WTO, according to Dorothy J. Solinger, "the global climate enshrining market principles [had] infected both Chinese policymakers and Chinese managers, as firms of all types [had] taken a stiffer stance toward labor under a much heightened pressure for profits." The textile sector, for example, designated as a breakthrough area in a campaign to 'reform' the state-owned sector, was ordered to slash 1.2 million jobs over the period of 1998-2000, for the

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[139] Shaun Breslin, "The Limits of Economic Reform," *New Political Economy* 3, no. 3 (1998), p. 439.
[140] Li Peilin, "Zhongguo pinfu chaju de xintai yingxiang yu zhili duice" ("The Psychological Effects of the Gap between Rich and Poor in China and Countermeasures"), <http://202.130.245.40/chinese/null/314698.htm>. On another note of the inequality issue, the "digital divide," 45 percent of China's Internet users live in Shanghai, Beijing or in the affluent province of Guangdong, which account for only 8 percent of the country's total population. Eighty percent of users live in large cities; almost 80 percent are men and 85 percent are 18 to 35 (according to a government-sponsored survey by the China Internet Network Information Centre). See Jennifer 8. Lee, "Tracking the Web Across China: From the 'Wang Ba' of the West. . .," *The New York Times*, March 29, 2000, p. H6.
[141] "Urban Discontent," *The Economist*, June 15, 2002, pp. 13-14.

purpose of cutting losses and boosting profits.[142] For the unemployed, whose numbers were as high as 100 million in 1999,[143] China's double-digit growth, booming exports, and miracle economy make little sense as far as their daily life is concerned. As Xudong Zhang observes:

> The widening socioeconomic cleavage in the global socioeconomic system has been internalized in Chinese society. As a result, two China's seem to co-exist: there is a China already integrated with the world market and a China still unable or unwilling to enter the playground of finance capital, global competition, and neo-liberal social policies.[144]

Indeed, according to an Australian China scholar, the new class division caused by the market reforms is so familiar to Westerners that "we really can... close our eyes and think of (Victorian) England."[145]

Consequently, it seems that the dreamy story of 'convergence' told by Western liberals is yet to materialise. At best, China's 'convergence' is partial, uneven, and superficial, and is at the expense of economic and political coherence within Chinese society. [146] This is not surprising, however, for this neoliberal, elite-driven, 'democratisation from above' promise, as Richard Falk points out, is designed not to liberalise and democratise domestic society or global relations but to reproduce the world as a "homogenised supermarket for those with purchasing power" while those without it "are excluded and to the extent required, suppressed by police, paramilitary and military means."[147]

This is not to suggest that neoliberal reforms have brought China no benefit at all. Indeed, in this process, some Chinese have benefited greatly. For example, Julia Bloch Chang quotes nine chief executive officers of the Fortune 100 companies as saying:

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[142] Dorothy J. Solinger, "Globalization and the Paradox of Participation: The Chinese Case," *Global Governance* 7, no. 2 (2001), pp. 181-182.
[143] *Ibid*., p. 183.
[144] Xudong Zhang, "Challenging the Eurocentric, Cold War View of China and the Making of a Post-Tiananmen Intellectual Field," *East Asia: An International Quarterly* 19, no. 1-2 (2001), p. 17. See also, David S. Broder, "The Chinese Divide," *The Washington Post*, June 27, 2004, p. B7.
[145] Michael Dutton, *Streetlife China: Transforming Culture, Rights and Markets*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 130. For more discussions on the dark side of the consequences of economic liberalisation and globalisation in China, see, for example, Anita Chan, "Labor Standards and Human Rights: The Case of Chinese Workers under Market Socialism," *Human Rights Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1998), pp. 886-904; Tim Oakes, "Bathing in the Far Village: Globalization, Transnational Capital, and the Cultural Politics of Modernity in China," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 7, no. 2 (1999), pp. 307-342; and Tani E. Barlow et al., "Roundtable: Globalization, Postsocialism, and the People's Republic of China," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26, no. 41 (2001), pp. 1273-1291.
[146] See, for example, Shaun Breslin, "Decentralisation, Globalisation and China's Partial Re-engagement with the Global Economy," *New Political Economy* 5, no. 2 (2000), pp. 205-226.
[147] Quoted in James George and Rodd McGibbon, "Dangerous Liaisons: Neoliberal Foreign Policy and Australia's Regional Engagement," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 33, no. 3 (1998), p. 407.

"U.S. companies operating in China bring with them management, personnel, ethical, environmental, manufacturing, quality and many other traditional and innovative business 'best practices.' These practices often have a profound and positive impact on the lives of Chinese employees and other Chinese with whom our companies interact."[148] Yet, insofar as those who have reaped benefits represent only a small proportion of the Chinese population, this is precisely one of the causes of China's rich-poor inequality problem, rather than its solution.

Could these 'domestic' problems affect the overall process of China's integration into the world community? The answer, sadly, is yes. Indeed, the aforementioned 'domestic' problems are precisely what the report of the Commission on Global Governance has identified as "the underlying political, social, economic, and environmental causes of conflict" in global politics.[149] Indeed, many studies have demonstrated the "direct connections among persistent patterns of inequality—especially as they fall across lines of group identity, as they almost always do—and regimes of economic hardship in the long-standing violent conflicts that have torn apart Africa, the former communist states, and other parts of the world."[150]

In recent years, this linkage has been particularly evident in Southeast Asia, a region which until the 1997-1998 financial crisis had been widely hailed as an economic miracle and an exemplar of modernisation and regional integration. Now, just a few years later, the region at large, with few exceptions, is characterised more by sluggish economic growth, weak governance, social despair, popular unrest, separatist resurgence, religious extremism, and terrorist activities. While there is certainly more than one contributing factor to the financial crisis and these specific problems, Richard Higgott has argued, correctly I think, that the economic crisis "represents a set-back for the inexorable process of international economic liberalisation that has come to be known as 'globalisation.'"[151] Similar backlashes against the process of 'globalisation' are already present in China, although they may not have reached a boiling point on a large scale. Some specific examples of the backlashes will be given in the next chapter. At present, the point I am trying to make is that a similar economic crisis in China,

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[148] Bloch, "Commercial Diplomacy," p. 193.
[149] Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 93.
[150] See Craig N. Murphy, "Political Consequences of the New Inequality," *International Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (2001), p. 351.
[151] Richard Higgott, "The Asian Economic Crisis: A Study in the Politics of Resentment," *New Political Economy* 3, no. 3 (1998), p. 334.

should it happen, could have far greater implications for the West and for Sino-Western relations.

While the consequences of Western discourse and policy on Southeast Asia and other regions have begun to attract critical reflections, so far no similar reflections have made significant inroads into mainstream liberal studies of Chinese foreign relations, where the tone continues to be one of optimism and smugness, with most of the problems in China either ignored entirely or reduced to merely technical and temporary hurdles or even necessary evils. David Lampton, for example, views the issues of "winners and losers in the global economy" as something natural, unavoidable, and hence "entirely understandable."[152] Others conveniently call them the "results of a difficult transition away from Leninist economic irrationality."[153] Thus, according to Douglas H. Paal, these are "problems [that] can be fixed."[154] In earlier times, pondering over the problem of converting China, specialists such as Doak Barnett and John Fairbank stressed the need for strengthening "technical bureaucrats" and a "therapeutic" treatment of the Chinese leadership.[155] Today, in a similar fashion, the neoliberal engagement policy stresses the importance of technical, legal, managerial, and other assistance to China, as well as confidence building measures and common understanding among policy-making elites. While these steps are useful in many ways, they are unlikely to solve the many problems in China, problems which would pose great challenge to the Western liberal construction of China as an 'opportunity for convergence.'

To conclude, in this chapter, I have argued that the conventional liberal discourse of Chinese foreign relations, based on a modernist self-understanding of the West and the United States, is simply inadequate in understanding and dealing with an inherently dynamic and volatile 'China,' even against the backdrop of alleged global homogenisation. And, to a large extent, this discursive strategy is not dissimilar to the 'China threat' discourse, for both speak to a self/Other ontology and power politics

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[152] Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, p. 200.
[153] Edward Friedman, "Reflecting Mirrors across the Taiwan Straits: American Perspectives on a China Threat," in Herbert Yee and Ian Storey eds., *The China Threat: Perceptions, Myths and Reality*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002, p. 79. For a critique of the liberal international theory's silence on these issues in general, see James L. Richardson, "Critical Liberalism in International Relations," Department of International Relations Working Paper No. 2002/7, Canberra: Australian National University, September 2002, pp. 1-27.
[154] Paal, "China and the East Asian Security Environment," p. 119.
[155] Madsen, *China and the American Dream*, pp. 42-43.

strategy in their understanding of China in global politics. In short, while the realist 'China threat' theory as practice has obviously dangerous implications for Sino-Western relations, the 'China as opportunity' perception, for all its teleological scenarios of convergence, is no less problematic. In this sense, neither containment nor engagement is a natural, spontaneous response to an independent reality of China as 'threat' or 'opportunity.' Both policies have much to do with the particular ways in which Western strategists give meaning to the Western self and the Chinese 'Other.'

This is a significant dimension of the linkage between Western theory and international relations practice. But it is only part of the knowledge/power nexus associated with mainstream Western studies of Chinese foreign policy. As illustrated in Chapters 3-4, for at least one and a half centuries, Western 'knowledge' of China not only set the tone for its China policy, but in doing so, also profoundly influenced the ways in which China related itself to the outside world in both theory and practice. In the next chapter, therefore, I turn to an analysis of how contemporary Western IR discourses of China affect the Chinese worldview and foreign behaviour in the post-Tiananmen era.

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Chinese Foreign Relations as Social Constructs in the Post-Tiananmen Era

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> *Our actions are likely to be more influential than we might have imagined. That also means we must take more responsibility for the messages we send to the different elements within China's decision-making elites.*
>
> Brent Scowcroft and Kevin Nealer[1]

> *Chinese nationalism could take either benign or malignant form. Much—but not all—depends on how the West interacts with China. The standard Western view of Chinese nationalism as something Communist elites use to legitimize their rule is more than just an oversimplification of a complex reality: it dangerously trivializes the role of Chinese popular sentiment.*
>
> Peter Hays Gries[2]

MY critical analysis of Western IR literature on China in the previous two chapters might well be objected to for the reason that it ignores the 'hard facts' on the ground. For example, liberal scholars may point out that the 'opportunity for convergence' is clearly real, for the Chinese themselves are talking about opening up, global integration, and joining track with international norms. Similarly, realist observers may contend that because the Chinese are caught up with nationalist fervour and realpolitik ideas and busy with military build-up and sabre-rattling in the Taiwan Strait, the 'China threat' is more than just a discursive construct.

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[1] Brent Scowcroft and Kevin Nealer, "China Without Fear or Favor: A Strategy from Strength for the New Administration," February 27, 2001**,** <http://ffip.com/ issuebriefs022701.htm>.

[2] Peter Hays Gries, "A 'China Threat'?: Power and Passion in Chinese 'Face Nationalism,'" *World Affairs* 162, no. 2 (1999), p. 71.

To some extent, these observers are right. Both the 'China threat' and 'China as opportunity' theses have certain 'empirical' qualities, and they were so acknowledged in the previous two chapters. Having said that, however, I want to suggest that the existence of the 'threat' or 'opportunity' reality in China says more about the self-fulfilling consequences of Western discourse as social construction than about its objective truth status. In other words, these trends are not pregiven, but have much to do with the very ways in which China has been so constructed by Western discursive practice.

More specifically, in the first half of this chapter, I want to illustrate how China's transformation into a more responsible member in the international community is largely a product of the Western liberal conception of it, which is in many ways self-fulfilling in practice. I argue, moreover, that this self-fulfilling prophecy also has its own limitations and paradoxical implications for China's foreign relations. Thus, in spite of, or perhaps because of, its shaping power on Chinese perceptions and foreign behaviour, this discourse is unlikely to remake a homogeneous China in the image of the West. In the second half, I will look at how the Western realist discourse on China proves to be also a self-fulfilling prophecy with even more dangerous practical implications. But first let me begin with the constitutive influence of the (neo)liberal discourse on China.

The (Neo)Liberal Discourse of 'Opportunity' After Tiananmen: Implications for Sino-Western Relations

In 1990, one year after the Tiananmen crackdown, and during his confirmation hearings to become CIA director, Robert Gates testified that the demise of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and Moscow had taught the U.S. intelligence community to be prepared for the prospect of China's democratic transition as well.[3] Taking place amidst unprecedented optimism at the end of the Cold War, Gates' testimony reflected a renewed liberal confidence in China's convergence with the West. In a similar manner, John G. Stoessinger wrote a decade ago that "sometime before the year 2000, a Chinese Gorbachev may well make his appearance, a liberator from the ranks of China's youth

[3] James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999, p. 229.

that almost had its day in 1989. And then, after a century of travails and revolution, Dr. Sun Yat-sen's democratic dream, which he had nurtured as a youth, might be fulfilled at last."[4]

Now, at the beginning of the new century, these optimistic predictions seem to have come closer to reality. No Gorbachev has emerged so far in China, but Jiang Zemin, still China's actual top leader, has been perceived by many Western observers to embody many of the positive traits of the last Soviet leader. For example, Nicholas Kristof points out that "What few Americans realize is that Mr. Jiang is, in Chinese terms, deeply pro-American." In fact, he goes so far as to call Jiang Zemin "our man in Beijing."[5] In a subtly different manner, Bill Clinton praised Jiang as "a man of extraordinary intellect" and his government as "the right leadership at the right time."[6] In more general terms, the observation of China 'becoming more like us' seems to have also been borne out. In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. and China's entry into the WTO in late 2001, many Western observers have become more convinced that the unfolding reality of contemporary Chinese foreign relations is marked by growing maturity, peacefulness and responsibility. "China is changing," a senior official in the current Bush administration told the *New York Times*. "We really see a China that is trying to establish itself as a more respected figure in a global sense."[7]

Globalisation, the WTO, and China's 'Peaceful Rise': A 'Chinese' Perspective

China is indeed changing, and much of this change takes on a (neo)liberal quality. For anyone who is familiar with contemporary Chinese discourses on international relations, it is not difficult to discern much of their similarity with Western neoliberal theory, as in the past two decades or so key neoliberal concepts such as globalisation, interdependence, and international institutions have made increasing inroads into Chinese foreign policy thinking and practice. Given the vast literature in China, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive survey of this issue. For now, the following

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[4] John G. Stoessinger, *Nations at Dawn: China, Russia, and America*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994, p. 119.
[5] Nicholas D. Kristof, "Our Man in Beijing," *The New York Times*, January 25, 2002, p. A23.
[6] Melinda Liu and Russell Watson, "The Ties That Bind," *Newsweek* (international ed.), July 13, 1998, p. 28.
[7] James Dao, "Closer Ties With China May Help U.S. on Iraq," *The New York Times*, October 4, 2002, p. A16. See also John Pomfret, "China Embraces More Moderate Foreign Policy," *The Washington Post*, October 24, 2002, p. A23.

discussion should serve as a snapshot of the liberalisation of contemporary Chinese strategic thinking on China's relations with the world in general and on the issues of globalisation, democratic peace, international institutions, global learning, and global responsibility in particular.

Mainstream Chinese discourse perceives globalisation as a largely neutral, technology-driven phenomenon of global interconnectedness stemming from the increasingly rapid flow and exchange of goods, capital, people, information, and technology across national borders. As a result, Wang Jisi, director of the Institute of American Studies in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), suggests that "while it might be subject to domestic control, for the world as a whole, the process of globalisation is an irreversible trend of the times."[8] Globalisation is a reality rather than a choice, claimed the Xinhua News Agency's magazine *Liaowang zhoukan* (Outlook Weekly).[9] Indeed, long frustrated by the ethnocentric connotation of the term *modernisation*, many Chinese intellectuals see globalisation as a more neutral process, in that both developing and developed countries seem to be in the throes of globalisation.[10]

With globalisation seen largely as a process of accelerated flow of information and ideas, some observers anticipate the expanding influence of democratic values.[11] For example, in *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), a highly influential policy journal, Shi Yinhong and Song Dexing argue that globalisation, world multipolarisation, and political democratisation constitute three interrelated major trends in contemporary world politics, which together provide greater impetus for world progress, justice, and peace.[12] More explicitly, Chinese liberal scholar Liu Junning suggests that in the political sense globalisation means democratisation. Echoing 'democratic peace' theory, he argues that thanks to globalisation, democracy as an

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[8] Wang Jisi, "Quanqiuhua jiu shi Xifanghua ma?" (Is Globalisation Westernisation?), <http://www.irchina.org/xueren/china/view.asp?id=112>. See also Wang Sirui, "Shidai tezheng yu Zhongguo de jiyu" (Characteristics of the Times and China's Opportunity), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 6 (1999), p. 58.

[9] "Get Ready for Global Challenge," *China Daily* (North American ed.), January 9, 2001, p. 4.

[10] Wang Sirui, "Xiandaihua yu renlei zhuliu wenming" (Modernisation and Mainstream Human Civilisation), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 2 (1992), p. 4.

[11] Xiao Gongqin, "Minzuzhuyi yu shiji zhijiao de sixiang fenhua" (Nationalism and the Ideological Break-up at the Turn of the New Century), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 4 (1999), p. 105.

[12] Shi Yinhong and Song Dexing, "21 shiji qianqi Zhongguo guoji taidu, waijiao zhexue he genben zhanlue sikao" (Reflections on China's International Attitudes, Diplomatic Philosophy and Fundamental Strategy in the Early Twenty-first Century), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 1 (2001), pp.14-15.

inherently non-violent and peaceful political system has increasingly had a global reach and that China should embrace the wave of democratisation.[13]

If the arguments of political globalisation and democratic peace remain controversial,[14] many Chinese analysts accept the neoliberal view that the development of economic globalisation and a resulting interdependent free market are conducive to international peace. They believe that with economic globalisation in full swing, different countries now have been increasingly bound together by emerging common interests. As a result, the old territory-oriented, zero-sum military competition will give way to non-zero-sum economic competition, thereby reducing the possibility of interstate war, particularly among the more globalised states.[15] As Pu Ping notes,

> Economic globalisation has led to an interdependent situation of "I am part of you and you are also part of me" among all nations…. In an interdependent international system, every country has to rely on other countries to develop its economy or even to survive. This serves as a significant guarantee for promoting peace, strengthening cooperation, and preventing conflict.[16]

Thus, with the end of the Cold War and the onset of globalisation, many Chinese scholars flirt with Fukuyama's liberal triumphalism concerning the perceived coming of a homogeneous world centred on such 'universal' values as liberal democracy and the free market. For example, He Fang, former deputy director-general of the China Centre for International Studies (affiliated to the State Council), argues:

> Given the unprecedented development of world economy and science and technology in the post-World War II period, the globe has shrunk even further. The intensification of international interdependence and the acceleration and deepening of internationalisation are an inevitable trend in human history and international social development. The rise and fall of a country depends to a large extent on whether it seeks to open up and adapt itself to the change of the international situation. This is especially true at an economic level as it is well known that multinational corporations play an increasingly important

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[13] Liu Junning, "Quanqiuhua yu minzhu zhengzhi" (Globalisation and Democratic Politics), *Dangdai shijie yu shehuizhuyi* (Contemporary World and Socialism), no. 3 (1998), pp. 26-27. See also Liu Jianfei, "Zhongguo minzhu zhengzhi jianshe yu Zhong-Mei guanxi" (China's Construction of Democratic Politics and Sino-US Relations), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 2 (2003), p. 81.

[14] See, for example, Liu Junning, Liu Beicheng, Jin Canrong, Xiao Yuankai, and Liu Liqun, "Guanyu 'minzhu heping lun' wenti taolun fayan zhaiyao" (Abstracts from the Discussions on the Issue of "Democratic Peace"), *Ouzhou* (Europe), no. 4 (1995), pp. 9-14.

[15] Liang Guangyan, "Quanqiuhua shidai: dangdai guoji anquan de beijing" (The Age of Globalisation: The Background of Contemporary International Security), in Wang Yizhou ed., *Quanqiuhua shidai de guoji anquan* (International Security in the Age of Globalisation), Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999, p. 19.

[16] Pu Ping, "Jingji quanqiuhua yu kua shiji de Zhongguo" (Economic Globalisation and China at the Turn of the New Century), in Li Jingzhi ed., *Shiji zhijiao de Zhongguo yu shijie* (China and the World at the Turn of the New Century), Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1999, pp. 177-178.

> role in world economy, which can only consist of one system—two parallel markets simply do not exist.[17]

Similarly, by dividing human history into three historical phases (pre-civilisation, multi-civilisation, and global civilisation), Wang Sirui suggests that humankind is currently moving from the second phase to the early stage of the third one, which is characterised by the globalisation of a mainstream civilisation based on the time-tested principles of democratic politics and market economy.[18] In this context, when Samuel Huntington put forward his 'clash of civilisations' theory in the early 1990s, most Chinese intellectuals were puzzled by such a 'discordant' voice in the post-Cold War era and were quick to denounce it as a manifestation of the Cold War mindset.[19]

This positive reading of (economic) globalisation has obvious foreign policy implications. Among other things, it urges China to take up the opportunity offered by globalisation, learn and accept international norms, integrate itself into international institutions, and take a more cooperative, responsible approach to security and international peace. According to Shi Yinhong and Song Dexing, the tides of globalisation, democratisation, and institutionalisation of international justice, together with the trend of multipolarisation, constitute the basic, unavoidable international environment for China's survival and development. Therefore, if China wants to be a "normal" country with "a mature national mentality," it has to situate itself in this environment and conform to the common interests of international society. To this end, they argue that China is required to "develop and strengthen the ability of learning and self-reform."[20] Indeed, learning, one of the key concepts in Western IR literature on China, has now become almost a buzzword in Chinese foreign relations thinking. As Su Changhe points out,

> International normative structures have influenced China's political, economic, and foreign relations discourses. "Joining international tracks" and "compliance with international customs" have been the most fashionable catchphrases in the 1990s. Other frequently used

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[17] He Fang, "Shijie geju de zhongda bianhua he Zhongguo de guojiguanxi lilun" (Major Changes in World Structure and International Relations Theory in China), in Yuan Ming ed., *Kua shiji de tiaozhan: Zhongguo guojiguanxi xueke de fazhan* (Challenges of the New Century: The Development of Chinese International Relations Discipline), Chongqin: Chongqing chubanshe, 1992, p. 10.

[18] Wang Sirui, "Xiandaihua yu renlei zhuliu wenming," pp. 3, 10.

[19] Tian Dewen, "Baituo 'Lengzhan siwei moshi'" (Beyond the "Cold War Theoretical Framework"), in Wang Jisi ed., *Wenming yu guoji zhengzhi: Zhongguo xuezhe ping Hengtingdun de wenming chongtu lun* (Civilisation and International Politics: Chinese Scholars' Comments on Huntington's Clash of Civilisations Thesis), Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1995, pp. 111-117.

[20] Shi Yinhong and Song Dexing, "21 shiji qianqi Zhongguo guoji taidu, waijiao zhexue he genben zhanlue sikao," p. 16.

> words include "international responsibility," "multilateralism," "international game-play norms."… the use of [which] demonstrates a process of China's learning from, and adaptation to international institutions.[21]

From this viewpoint, since international institutions such as the IMF and WTO are both a product of globalisation and a vehicle of it, they constitute the necessary gateway for China to embrace globalisation and learn from international society. Take, for example, the issue of China's entry into the WTO. Despite some dissenting voices,[22] the WTO debates are overwhelmingly one-sided, in favour of joining the organisation sooner rather than later.[23] Feng Zhaokui at the CASS has said that China's accession will bring the country into the frontline of globalisation.[24] Further, in a widely circulated article, Long Yongtu, China's chief negotiator for WTO entry, believes that joining the organisation is necessary for China to become part of mainstream international society.[25] This senior trade official insisted that "China's economy must become a market economy in order to become part of the global economic system, as well as the economic globalization process."[26]

As far as China's sovereignty and national security are concerned, Chinese scholars and officials are not unaware of the pitfalls associated with globalisation and multilateral institutions. In fact, the phrase 'opportunity and challenge' is almost a cliché in Chinese analyses of globalisation and international institutions. And yet, according to Allen Carlson, in recent years a more flexible attitude towards sovereignty has emerged and is widely accepted by Chinese foreign policy elites,[27] who argue that since there is no alternative to participating in this process, the best way to minimise risks and elevate China's international standing is to ardently take up the challenges.[28]

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[21] Su Changhe, "Zhongguo yu guoji zhidu" (China and International Institutions), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and International Politics), no. 10 (2002), p. 9.
[22] See, for example, Yong Wang, "China's Domestic WTO Debate," *China Business Review* 27, no. 1 (2000), pp. 54-62.
[23] Joseph Kahn, "Some Chinese See the Future, and It's Capitalist," *The New York Times*, May 4, 2002, p. B9.
[24] "Get Ready for Global Challenge," *China Daily*, p. 4.
[25] Long Yongtu, "Jiaru Shimao zuzhi, rongru guoji shehui zhuliu" (Joining the WTO, Melting into Mainstream International Society), *Guoji maoyi wenti* (Issues of International Trade), no. 9 (1999), pp. 1-3.
[26] Quoted in Nicholas R. Lardy, *Integrating China into the Global Economy*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002, p. 21.
[27] Allen Carlson, "Protecting Sovereignty, Accepting Intervention: The Dilemma of Chinese Foreign Relations in the 1990s," National Committee on United States-China Relations, China Policy Series, No. 18 (September 2002), p. 12.
[28] See Yang Shenggang and Guo Can, "Quanqiuhua beijing xia de Zhongguo ru Shi: Jincheng, jiyu yu tiaozhan" (China's Entry into the WTO against the Background of Globalisation: Process, Opportunity, and Challenge), *Guoji wenti yanjiu* (Journal of International Studies), no. 1 (2002), pp. 19-20; and Wang

Liu Qingjian from the People's University of China admits that a developing country's participation in international institutions involves enormous dilemmas. However, taking a leaf from Stephen Krasner's metaphor that people can earn more money by simply improving their card playing skills than by trying to change the playing rules, Liu proposes that developing countries like China must face these dilemmas by actively seeking to join international institutions, familiarising themselves with the principles, norms, and rules of those institutions, and reforming their domestic structures accordingly.[29] Others, while acknowledging the enormous challenges facing China's security, believe that national security, which is thought to be defined increasingly in economic terms, can be achieved mainly by non-military means (e.g., international cooperation and multilateral diplomacy).[30] Non-military means for Tang Shiping remain above all about political influence, which can be derived from China's participation in various international organisations (e.g., the U.N. and IMF) and its strategic partnership with world powers.[31]

More importantly, these perspectives provide a major setting for the formulation of a number of China's official viewpoints, which, despite a routine emphasis on sovereignty, share this optimistic worldview with the mainstream intelligentsia.[32] Based on these largely favourable interpretations of the world, the Chinese government accepts that China should go along with international trends, for here lie its main sources of prosperity, prestige, and even international legitimacy. In 2002, in the opening paragraphs of the Report to the Communist Party's Sixteenth National Congress, General Secretary Jiang Zemin declared that given the pressing situations of world

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Yizhou, *Quanqiu zhengzhi he Zhongguo waijiao* (Global Politics and China's Foreign Policy), Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2003, particularly "Zixu" (Preface), pp. 7-8.

[29] Liu Qingjian, "Fazhanzhong guojia guojizhidu xuanze de kunjing jiqi lixing sikao" (Developing Countries' Dilemmas in Choosing International Institutions: Rational Reflections), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and International Politics), no. 12 (2002), pp. 47-48.

[30] State Council of the People's Republic of China, *China's National Defense*, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, 1998, <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/doctrine/cnd9807/NationalDefense-2.html>; Zhao Ying, "Jingji anquan: Shangsheng zhe de zhongyao anquan wenti" (Economic Security: A Security Matter of Growing Importance), in Wang Yizhou ed., *Quanqiuhua shidai de guoji anquan* (International Security in the Age of Globalisation), Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999, p. 160.

[31] Tang Shiping, "Zai lun Zhongguo da zhanlue" (A Second Thought on China's Grand Strategy), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 4 (2001), p. 35.

[32] Wu Zichen argues that the globalisation theory in China's academic circles has been accepted by state-run media, popular literature, and official documents. Wu Zichen, "Zhongguo waijiao sixiang de yanbian" (The Evolution of China's Diplomatic Philosophy), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 2 (2002), p. 67.

multipolarisation and globalisation as well as rapid development of science and technology, "we must move forward, or we will fall behind."[33]

This shift in official worldview has been gaining momentum since the mid-1990s, if not earlier. In the Sino-French Joint Communiqué signed in May 1997, China pledged to work with the international community to "achieve a more prosperous, stable, safe, and balanced world," marking the beginning of the so-called 'One World' theory in place of the old 'Three Worlds' theory. In his obituary to Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin reiterated the notion that "the contemporary world is an open world, and China's development cannot do without it."[34] In November 2002, the 'One World' theme was further incorporated into Jiang Zemin's Report to the Party's Sixteenth National Congress, as he repeated the word *gongtong*, which means 'common,' 'collective,' 'joint,' or 'shared,' on twelve occasions (e.g., "the common aspirations of all peoples," "the common interests of humanity," "common development," and "common prosperity") in its 1500 word-long section on "The International Situation and Our External Work."[35] Indeed, it has now become the consensual judgment of the Chinese leadership that:

> Peace and development remain the themes of our era…. The growing trends towards world multipolarisation and economic globalisation have brought about opportunities and favourable conditions for world peace and development. A new world war is unlikely in the foreseeable future. It is realistic to presume a fairly long period of peace in the world and a favourable climate in China's surrounding areas.[36]

More importantly, amid this positive reading of (economic) globalization, interdependence, and international institutions are Chinese foreign policy elites' attempts to redefine Chinese national interest, identity, and international strategies, a process which sees the liberal self/Other dichotomy directly implanted into Chinese images of self and others in international relations. Many Chinese have, willingly or unwittingly, equated the West with the universal, irresistible trends of economic development and modernisation, with which, they believe, China should identify

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[33] Jiang Zemin, *Quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui, kaichuang Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi shiye de xin jumian: Zai Zhongguo Gongchandang di shiliu ci quanguo daibiao dahui shang de baogao* (Build a Well-off Society in an All-Round Way and Create a New Situation in Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics: Report to the Sixteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China), Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2002, p. 1 (Hereafter: "Jiang, *The 16th Congress Report*").

[34] Yu Xilai and Wu Zichen, "Shijie xin zhixu yu xinxing daguo de lishi jueze" (The New World Order and the Historic Choice of Rising New Great Powers), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 2 (1998), p. 1.

[35] Jiang, *The 16th Congress Report*, pp. 46-49.

[36] *Ibid*., pp. 46-47.

itself.[37] Some Chinese analysts conclude that "In terms of regional security, proliferation, terrorism, international crime, drug trafficking, environmental issues and trade, our interests are increasingly aligned with the developed world."[38] The United States, in particular, has been valorised by many Chinese intellectuals and officials as central to the success of China's modernisation and nation-building. Some argue that "American leadership is not something you like or dislike. It is an objective necessity. If China desires to be a part of the international community, it should recognize this reality."[39] Against this background, the 'September 11' attacks in New York and Washington quickly sparked an outpouring of sympathy with the United States among the Chinese, with some intellectuals declaring that "Tonight we are all Americans."[40]

Associated with this strong identification with the U.S./the West is the phenomenon of self-Othering or self-Orientalisation in Chinese self-imagery.[41] Relying extensively on the dichotomous frameworks of modernity/tradition, advanced/backward, developed/developing, global/local, mainstream civilisation/marginal civilisation, interdependence/isolation, and so forth, many Chinese intellectuals have explicitly or implicitly equated China, or at least its pre-reform history, with the second part of each dichotomy. For example, some Chinese intellectuals have reduced "the entire experience of [China's] socialism to the gulags" while others call the older laid-off blue-collar workers—and there are now millions of them—"historical baggage."[42] All this, it seems, borders on what Arif Dirlik calls "the abandonment of any possibility of alternatives; the impossibility, in other words, of imagining outsides to a globalised capitalism."[43]

Nowhere is this self-Othering most evident than in the process by which the Chinese take Western concerns as their own concerns, as illustrated by mainstream

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[37] Suisheng Zhao, "Chinese Nationalism and Authoritarianism in the 1990s," in Suisheng Zhao ed., *China and Democracy: The Prospect for a Democratic China*, New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 261.
[38] See Pomfret, "China Embraces More Moderate Foreign Policy," p. A23.
[39] Jianwei Wang, *Limited Adversaries: Post-Cold War Sino-American Mutual Images*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 172.
[40] This theme comes from an open letter to the U.S. President signed by 86 Chinese intellectuals. See Bao Zunxin et al., "Zhi Bushi Zongtong he Meiguo renmin de gongkaixin" (An Open Letter to President Bush and the American People), <http://chinese.pku.edu.cn/bbs/thread.php?tid=26734>.
[41] For a critical analysis of China's self-Othering, see Zhang Yiwu, "Xiandaixing de zhongjie: Yige wufa huibi de keti" (The End of Modernity: An Unavoidable Topic), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 3 (1994), pp. 104-109.
[42] See Xu Jilin, Liu Qing, Luo Gang, and Xue Yi, "In Search of a 'Third Way': A Conversation regarding 'Liberalism' and the 'New Left Wing,'" in Gloria Davies ed., *Voicing Concerns: Contemporary Chinese Critical Inquiry*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001, p. 201; and Yilu Zhao, "China's Wealthy Live by a Creed: Hobbes and Darwin, Meet Marx," *The New York Times*, February 29, 2004, p. 4.7.
[43] Arif Dirlik, "Markets, Culture, Power: The Making of a 'Second Cultural Revolution' in China," *Asian Studies Review* 25, no. 1 (2001), p. 4.

Chinese IR discourse's appropriation of the Western preoccupation with the question of "will China become a responsible power."[44] For example, in an essay on the relationship between China and international institutions, Su Changhe is concerned with the questions of "How will China honour its commitment to international institutions in which it participates? Will China, as some have suggested, 'become an irresponsible country' in the course of its rise?"[45] Similarly, for Yu Xilai, "central to the re-orientation of China's great power identity is simply to remove the suspicion and anxiety over China felt by the world: Is China in the twenty-first century going to be a challenger to the international order or a mainstay of world peace and development?"[46] No matter what conclusion these authors may come to, they inadvertently accept and reinforce the Western liberal construction of China as an inferior, potentially dangerous Other that needs to be dealt with.

Indeed, all this is not surprising as it is symptomatic of the PRC government's commitment to free market reform and capitalist-style development. After all, the Chinese leadership, led by Jiang Zemin, has long identified contemporary China's international interests with the U.S.-dominated world order.[47] As Beijing steps up its effort to cooperate with the U.S. in the war on terrorism and becomes increasingly involved in multilateral institutions, it has strived to project a self-image of a "responsible member of international society" in response to the international concern over the direction of its future foreign and security policy.[48] For example, on the eve of China's final accession to the WTO, Long Yongtu reassured the international community that "China will be a responsible member that will play a constructive role, abide by the rules, and do its best to contribute to the improvement of the multilateral trading system."[49] In line with this commitment, the emphasis of China's security policy

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[44] Xia Liping, "China: A Responsible Great Power," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 10, no. 26 (2001), pp. 17-25.
[45] Su Changhe, "Zhongguo yu guoji zhidu," p. 6.
[46] Yu Xilai, "21 shiji Zhongguo xiandaihua yicheng (shang)" (The Agenda of China's Modernisation in the Twenty-first Century, Part I), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 2 (2001), p. 68.
[47] For a discussion on China's close ideological alliance with the capitalist global order, see, for example, Xudong Zhang, "The Making of the Post-Tiananmen Intellectual Field: A Critical Overview," in Xudong Zhang ed., *Whither China? Intellectual Politics in Contemporary China*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001, pp. 1-75.
[48] Helen Purkitt and Li Qingsi, "Zhongguo weilai de xingxiang" (The Future Image of China), *Xiandai guoji guanxi* (Contemporary International Relations), no. 10 (2001), p. 44; and Alastair Iain Johnston, "Meiguo xuezhe guanyu Zhongguo yu guojizuzhi yanjiu" (American Scholarship on China and International Institutions), The Ford Foundation Sponsored Research Project Working Paper No. 2, (Beijing: Institute of World Economics and International Politics, CASS, no date), p. 5.
[49] "China Will Be Responsible WTO Member: Senior Trade Official," *People's Daily*, September 9, 2001, <http://english1.people.com.cn/english/200109/09/eng20010909_79692.html>.

has also shifted towards notions such as 'cooperative security' (*hezuo anquan*) and 'mutual security' (*xianghu anquan*). In 2001, Jiang Zemin distilled this policy into the so-called 'New Security Concept' (*xin anquan guan*) of 'mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and cooperation' (*huxin*, *huli*, *pingdeng*, *xiezuo*).[50] Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that this new thinking draws much insight from the (liberal-minded) intelligentsia.[51]

Indeed, it is in this context that China's recent commitment to a 'peaceful rise' has taken shape. The theme of China's 'peaceful rise' made its first appearance during Chinese President Hu Jintao's tour of Southeast Asia in October 2003, and has ever since been reiterated by Hu and Premier Wen Jiabao on several important occasions.[52] Early this year, the Chinese government allegedly earmarked 2 million yuan for a collective research project on 'China's peaceful rise' based in the Central School of the Communist Party,[53] a significant move which illustrates the depth of the Chinese leadership's keen desire to be seen as an 'opportunity' rather than a 'threat' in the international community.

Under these new conceptual frameworks, in recent years China seems to have become more comfortable and active in dealing with global and regional multilateral forums, mechanisms, and organisations, such as ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), APEC, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and the six-way talks on North Korea nuclear crisis. Consequently, as some have pointed out, for China the 1990s was a period of "grand integration" into international society.[54] Jia Qingguo at Beijing University similarly observes that China's diplomacy is shifting from the traditional passive and defensive diplomacy focused on nationalism towards a new, active and open diplomacy based on international dialogues and (neoliberal) cooperation.[55] While China's acceptance of neoliberal theory and practice in international relations is a gradual, incomplete process, and despite lingering doubts over China's sincerity toward

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[50] Qin Yaqing, "Shidaiguan, anquanguan, yu zhixuguan" (Concepts of the Times, Security, and Order), *Guoji zhengzhi yanjiu* (Studies of International Politics), no. 1 (2003), pp. 28-29.
[51] See Wang Yizhou, "Zhongguo guojiguanxi yanjiu: Dui chengjiu yu queshi de jidian ganshou" (The Study of International Relations in China: Some Reflections on Its Achievements and Shortcomings), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and International Politics), no. 4 (2003), p. 11.
[52] For example, Hu Jintao's speech at the forum marking the 110th birthday of Mao Zedong and Wen Jiabao's speech delivered at Harvard University during his visit to the U.S. in December 2003.
[53] <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2004-03-15/09093023345.shtml>.
[54] Yu Zhengliang et al., *Quanqiuhua shidai de guoji guanxi* (International Relations in the Age of Globalisation), Shanghai: Fudandaxue chubanshe, 2000, pp. 276-281.
[55] Jia Qingguo, "China's Reemerging and Its Diplomatic Strategy," paper presented at the Conference of China's Development and International Relations in the 21st Century, Beijing, May 1998.

the neoliberal world order, this momentous change has been viewed by some analysts as nothing less than a kind of paradigm shift.[56]

The (Neo)Liberal Influence on the Chinese Worldview and Foreign Policy

In the previous pages, I provided an outline of neoliberal Chinese IR perspectives that are influenced by Western liberal discourse. Now I want to turn to the question of how this influence has been carried out. In other words, how has Western discourse travelled transnationally and had a powerful shaping effect on those who are on the receiving end?[57] Of course, the issue of 'travelling theory' concerning Chinese foreign relations literature is a complex one. In the present context, my attention will be limited to a few important factors that have been responsible for "the over-dependence on the US as a source of ideas" in the Chinese IR community.[58] Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, designed ultimately to 'change China,'[59] the Western engagement policy is a key factor. This is perhaps best exemplified by the Bush Sr. administration's post-Tiananmen China policy. Hoping and believing that China "will return to the policy of reform pursued before June 3 [1989],"[60] George Bush Sr. sought to carry on the pre-Tiananmen policy of engagement, albeit in a watered-down form. Shortly after the Tiananmen tragedy, he sent his National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft to Beijing to convey Washington's continued desire for a solid relationship. "President Bush still regards you as his friend, a friend forever," Scowcroft told Deng Xiaoping on 11 December 1989.[61] In response, Deng praised his visit, saying that "... in spite of the disputes and various problems and differences between us, in the end, Sino-U.S. relations have to be improved. That is something necessary for world peace and stability."[62]

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[56] See Tang Shiping, "Lijie Zhongguo de anquan zhanlue" (Understanding China's Security Strategy), *Guoji zhengzhi yanjiu* (Studies of International Politics), no. 3 (2002), p. 131; and Weixing Hu, Gerald Chan, and Daojiong Zha eds., *China's International Relations in the 21st Century: Dynamics of Paradigm Shifts*, Washington, DC: University Press of America, 2000.

[57] The question of "travelling theory" is perhaps most famously dealt with by Edward W. Said. See his *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983, Chapter 10, "Traveling Theory."

[58] Shaun Breslin, "IR, Area Studies and IPE: Rethinking the Study of China's International Relations," Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation (CSGR) Working Paper No. 94/02, University of Warwick, Coventry, April 2002, p. 7.

[59] "To change China" is a long-held commitment in the Western liberal tradition. See, for example, Jonathan D. Spence, *To Change China: Western Advisers in China 1620-1960*, Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1969.

[60] Quoted in Mann, *About Face*, p. 216.

[61] Jonathan Mirsky, "The Empire Strikes Back," *New York Review of Books* 37, no. 1 (1990), p. 21.

[62] Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping Wenxuan* (Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping), <http://www.ccyl.org.cn/zuzhi/theory/dspws/page3/zhongmei.htm>.

It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that Bush Sr.'s policy signal played an important role in Deng's desire of getting Sino-U.S. relations back on track. Indeed, it was in this context that Deng painted a cautiously sanguine picture of the international situation in 1990:

> We should not think that the situation has deteriorated seriously or that we are in a very unfavourable position. Things are not so bad as they seem. In this world there are plenty of complicated contradictions, and some deep-seated ones have just come to light. There are contradictions that we can use, conditions that are favourable to us, opportunities that we can take advantage of….[63]

Partly encouraged by the sustained engagement approach of the Bush Sr. administration, Deng Xiaoping embarked on his famous 1992 'Tour to the South' (*nanxun*) to drum up support for the continuation of the policies of reform and opening to the outside world. Under his 'no debate' (*bu zhenglun*) policy, the post-Tiananmen questioning of the nature and direction of such policies fell silent. Meanwhile, the Western engagement policy almost immediately paid off. Following on the heels of Deng's vow to develop the economy at a steadier and faster pace, in the early months of 1993, as U.S. Ambassador to China J. Stapleton Roy noticed, suddenly, the titans of American business were rushing to Beijing. As James Mann notes, "Nineteen ninety-three was the peak year for new investment in China, both from the United States and from the rest of the world. That year, China signed 83,437 new contracts with foreign companies, worth $111 billion in new investment; more than 6,700 of these contracts were with American companies."[64]

In this sense, Western engagement proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy in China. After witnessing a series of 'success stories' of their integration into the previously illusive international society, many Chinese have now become convinced that the world is indeed filled with great opportunities, and that the neoliberal promise of a more peaceful and more prosperous international society is no longer a holy grail. Jiang Zemin's report to the Sixteenth National Congress of the CCP seems to have summed up this point well: "A broad view of the overall situation shows that for our country, the first two decades of the twenty-first century are a period of important strategic opportunities, which we must grasp firmly to make great contributions."[65] The

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[63] Deng Xiaoping, "Guoji xingshi yu jingji wenti" (The International Situation and Economic Issues), March 3, 1990, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/d1130.html>.
[64] Mann, *About Face*, p. 284.
[65] Jiang, *The 16th Congress Report*, p. 19.

emergence of a period of strategic opportunities, as Pan Zhongqi points out, is "intimately linked to the overall favourable international security environment" created by Western engagement.[66] This demonstrates the existence of what Xiao Gongqin calls "a beneficial interactive relationship between America's dove camp with a pragmatic China policy and the moderate foreign policy of the Chinese government."[67]

Secondly, I suggest that Western ideas would not be able to deeply penetrate China without China's reforms and opening up (*gaige kaifang*) policies. Certainly, these policies were initially crafted mainly out of Chinese domestic concerns, such as boosting the legitimacy of the Communist government, rather than being designed to transform China into a Western-style society per se. Nevertheless, as Margaret M. Pearson notes, the policies have, however unwittingly, "laid the groundwork for subsequent penetration of external ideas."[68]

Thanks to both the Western and Chinese policies, multiple channels, either formal or informal, have been established to facilitate the flow of liberal ideas to China. For example, the two-way travels of Western and Chinese IR scholars, which started after the normalisation of Sino-U.S. relations, have intensified. As early as 1979, the Ford Foundation identified IR as one of the three areas (the other two being economics and law) for it to support in scholarly exchanges between the U.S. and China.[69] On the one hand, prominent Western IR scholars and China specialists such as Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye Jr., Peter Katzenstein, Robert Scalapino, Harry Harding, Iain Johnston, and Samuel Kim have made regular trips to China attending conferences and workshops, giving lectures, and conducting fieldwork research projects. The presence in China of many more Western scholars in other disciplines of social sciences has played a similar role in familiarising their Chinese counterparts with Western worldviews in a more general sense. According to a report on the USIA Fulbright Scholar Program, in 1998–1999, 99 U.S. scholars received grants to East Asia and the Pacific. With 21 scholars,

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[66] Pan Zhongqi, "Guoji anquan zhixu de biange yu Zhongguo de zhanluejiyuqi" (The Transformation of International Security Order and China's Strategic Opportunities Period), *Guoji wenti yanjiu* (Journal of International Studies), no. 6 (2003), p. 41.

[67] Xiao Gongqin, "Shi xi Zhong Mei zhengzhi wenhua zhangli" (A Preliminary Analysis of the Tension between Chinese and American Political Cultures), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 2 (2001), p. 46.

[68] Margaret M. Pearson, "The Case of China's Accession to GATT/WTO," in David M. Lampton ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, *1978-2000*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 354.

[69] Yongjin Zhang, "The 'English School' in China: A Travelogue of Ideas and Their Diffusion," *European Journal of International Relations* 9, no. 1 (2003), p. 101.

China had the largest number of Fulbright scholars in the region and the third largest number of U.S. grantees worldwide (after Germany and Russia).[70]

On the other hand, for more than two decades, tens of thousands of Chinese scholars and young students, most of whom are sponsored by Western foundations and universities, have flocked to the U.S. and other Western destinations to study or undertake research in International Relations and other related disciplines, "through which the dominance of US perspectives in international relations is partially transmitted to the emerging IR community in China."[71] While this does not mean that Chinese students have automatically accepted Western liberal ideas, it is nevertheless important to point out that many are admitted and sponsored on the conditions that their proposed researches fall within the scope of the host universities and/or sponsors' intellectual and political objectives. "Although many Chinese students have not returned to China, the sheer scope of academic exchange—of scholars as well as students—suggests a major channel of outside influence."[72] But increasingly, after multi-year training, many overseas Chinese IR scholars have now returned to their home country and taken up senior positions in leading Chinese universities, research institutions, and think tanks,[73] thereby further helping to disseminate Western IR theories to a wider Chinese audience, including the top Chinese leadership.

One example of this is Qin Yaqing, a PhD graduate in IR from the University of Missouri and now Vice-President of Beijing's Foreign Affairs College. On 23 February 2004, Qin was invited to give a lecture on "the international situation and China's security environment" to the newly elected members of the Central Committee Politburo of the CCP. Some prominent points in this lecture included the limitation of traditional state sovereignty, the great opportunities of globalisation, the importance of multilateral cooperation, and the need for China's peaceful rise in line with international norms. Much the same, it seems, could have been articulated by a Western neoliberal IR scholar. In his concluding remarks after this lecture, Chinese President Hu Jintao

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[70] The Council for International Exchange of Scholars, *The 1998-1999 Annual Report of the USIA Fulbright Scholar Program*, <www.cies.org/cies/ar98/ar98a.pdf>.
[71] Breslin, "IR, Area Studies and IPE," p. 6.
[72] Thomas G. Moore and Dixia Yang, "Empowered and Restrained: Chinese Foreign Policy in the Age of Economic Interdependence," in David M. Lampton ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978-2000*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 194.
[73] Currently no data is available on the percentage of Western-trained IR scholars who occupy senior positions in China. However, the following data should be illustrative: as of 2002, returned overseas scholars in all disciplines constituted 58 percent of Chinese university professors with the professional title of PhD supervisor, 51 percent of university leaders, and 94 percent of directors and project managers in Chinese research institutes. See Ning Yi and Pang Yongsan, *Zhongguo ren re shui le* (Whom Have the Chinese Offended), Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2003, p. 24.

echoed Qin's ideas by emphasising that it is important for China to abide by international institutions and norms.[74]

In addition to the person-to-person contacts is the translation and publication of Western IR literature, particularly that from the liberal stream. In recent years, there has been literally an explosion of the number of Western IR books being translated and published in Chinese. For example, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, Jr.'s *Power and Interdependence*, and Keohane's *After Hegemony*, two of the neoliberal classics, have long made their way into China. Very often, not long after their original publications in the West, Chinese readers could find Chinese versions of such key 'engagement' literature as Andrew Nathan and Robert Ross's *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress*, Ezra F. Vogel's *Living with China*, Michel Oksenberg and Elizabeth Economy's *China Joins the World*, and Iain Johnston and Robert Ross's *Engaging China*. Recently, nearly a dozen leading Chinese publishers have been geared up in a race to bring even more Western IR works to China.[75] As a result, most important IR literature in the West is no longer foreign to well-informed Chinese scholars. As John Derbyshire points out, "Translations of works by American political scientists played an important part [in China], and I never cease to be surprised at how intimately familiar Chinese intellectuals are with names like Francis Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington, Edward Said, and so on."[76]

Worthy of note also is the influence of multilateral institutions, particularly multilateral economic institutions (MEIs). As Thomas Moore and Dixia Yang note, in an effort to "transmit the principles and rules of economic liberalism to China… MEIs have served as a significant source of domestic and foreign policy change in China."[77] And finally, all these factors converge on a positivist attitude towards knowledge among mainstream Chinese scholars. A professor from Beijing University argues that "as a kind of knowledge product of social sciences, [Western] IR theory also belongs to the whole world, with its indisputable characteristics of universalism." As a result, "to study

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[74] See Wang Guangze, "Qin Yaqing fangtan: Gouzhu Zhongguo da zhoubian zhanlue" (Interview with Qin Yaqing: Building China's Grand Strategy regarding the Surrounding Areas). See <http://stock.163.com/ economy2003/editor_2003/040303/040303_187199.html>.

[75] For example, Shanghai renmin chubanshe (Shanghai People's Press), Shijie zhishi chubanshe (World Affairs Press), Changzheng chubanshe (Long March Press), Beijingdaxue chubanshe (Beijing University Press), and Zhejiang renmin chubanshe (Zhejiang People's Press) all have published series in international studies and international relations theories. See Wang Yizhou, "Zhongguo guojiguanxi yanjiu: Dui chengjiu yu queshi de jidian ganshou," p 10.

[76] John Derbyshire, "China's New Left," *New York Sun*, November 5, 2003, <http://olimu.com/Journalism/Texts/Reviews/ ChinasNewOrder.htm>.

[77] Moore and Yang, "Empowered and Restrained," p. 194.

international relations theory means that [Chinese IR scholars] must learn from the West in a faithful, down-to-earth manner."[78] For this reason, many object to the call for "developing IR theory with Chinese characteristics," for fear that such an endeavour would be too ideological, and hence less than scientific.[79]

Given these important channels and mechanisms of Western liberal influence, it is clear that China's liberal transformation is anything but a natural or spontaneous process; it is always social and political. Just as "laissez faire was planned,"[80] China's acceptance of Western neoliberal ideas at least partly reveals the will to power on the part of mainstream Western IR theorists and China specialists who want the world and China to become the way they see these "objects."

Some Paradoxes in the (Neo)Liberal Construction of China as 'Opportunity'

Thus far, I have argued that the lenses through which China sees both the world and itself cannot be detached from certain powerful discursive lenses through which Western observers look at the world and China. However, despite, or perhaps because of this social constitutive effect, I want to argue that the 'China as opportunity' scenario is far from *the* reality of contemporary China and its foreign relations. The linear, almost naïve, reasoning favoured by the 'opportunity' adherents is that "Shenzhen [can be] Hong Kong-ized, Guangdong [can be] Shenzhen-ized, and the whole country [can be] Guangdong-ized." [81] On the contrary, I suggest, amid the apparent Chinese enthusiasm for the capitalist global order, many Chinese not only do not share such an

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[78] Zhu Feng, "Guojiguanxi lilun zai Zhongguo de fazhan: Wenti yu sikao" (The Development of International Relations Theory in China: Problems and Thinking), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and International Politics) no. 3 (2003), p. 25.

[79] Wang Yizhou, *Dangdai guojizhengzhi xilun* (An Analysis of Contemporary International Politics), Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1995; Ren Xiao, "Lilun yu guojiguanxi lilun: Yixie sikao" (Theory and International Relations Theory: Some Thoughts), *Ouzhou* (Europe), no. 4 (2000), p. 24; Su Changhe and Peng Zhaochang, "Zhongguo guojiguanxi lilun de pinkun" (The Poverty of Chinese International Relations Theory), in Ren Xiao ed., *Guojiguanxi lilun xin shiye* (New Perspectives on IR Theory), Beijing: Changzheng chubanshe, 2001, pp. 26-38. Beijing University professor Liang Shoude is one of the leading advocates of "developing IR theory with Chinese characteristics." See his "Lun Guojizhengzhixue de Zhongguo tese" (On Chinese Characteristics of the Study of International Politics), *Guojizhengzhi yanjiu* (Study of International Politics), no. 1 (1994), pp. 15-21; and "Guoji zhengzhi zai Zhongguo: Zailun guojizhengzhixue lilun de 'Zhongguo tese'" (The Study of International Politics in China: Revisiting the "Chinese Characteristics" of International Political Theory), *Guojizhengzhi yanjiu* (Study of International Politics), no. 1 (1997), pp. 1-9. See also, Song Xinning, "Building International Relations Theory with Chinese Characteristics," *Journal of Contemporary China* 10, no. 26 (2001), pp. 61-74.

[80] James L. Richardson, *Contending Liberalisms in World Politics: Ideology and Power*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001, p. 176.

[81] Edward Friedman, *National Identity and Democratic Prospects in Socialist China*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995, p. 4.

upbeat mode of representation, but also question China's wisdom of uncritically enmeshing itself in the globalisation process, and doubt the desirability and/or possibility of its perceived convergence with the West.

Certainly, as noted in the preceding chapter, many liberal observers are aware of such difficulties in China's transformation. However, this awareness has not led to any significant doubts about the liberal belief in the theme of convergence, much less to a questioning of the role liberal discourse has played in creating those difficulties. In the discussion to follow, I want therefore to focus on this unquestioned dimension of the liberal discursive practice in relation to China. Before proceeding any further, it is worth noting that not all the cacophonous Chinese voices and developments can be attributed to the paradoxical influence of Western liberal discourse alone. These are no doubt the combined result of many different factors. Nevertheless, I want to emphasise that Western liberal discursive practice does play a significant role in China's 'paradoxical' developments.

While Western liberal observers often take delight in talking about China's learning, socialisation, integration, and cooperation in a globalising world, a closer examination of such opportunities reveals that they are available at most to a tiny proportion of the Chinese populace, mainly the political and economic elites, or what Xiao Gongqin calls a "new middle social stratum."[82] For the majority of the Chinese population, particularly farmers, migrant workers, women, and laid-off workers (although each category should not be treated as a monolithic whole), the process of global integration has been less than a happy experience. True, the current living standards of most Chinese have improved since the introduction of the reform and opening up policies, and many of them have become more aware of the outside world. However, in more recent years as China's development strategy has shifted increasingly towards relying on export-led growth and favouring greater integration with the globalising world economy, not only has that improvement stagnated, there have also emerged chronic unemployment, rampant corruption, unprecedented ecological destruction, a widening gap between rich and poor, and uneven development between urban/coastal and rural/inland areas.[83] As noted in the pervious chapter, this is not

[82] Gongqin Xiao suggests that this new middle class is composed mainly of "government technocrats, private entrepreneurs, university professors, lawyers, white-collar employees of companies backed by foreign capital, journalists in the state-owned media, and so on." Gongqin Xiao, "The Rise of the Technocrats," *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 1 (2003), p. 62.

[83] See Azizur Rahman Khan and Carl Riskin, *Inequality and Poverty in China in the Age of Globalization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 5-6; and Wang Shaoguang, Hu Angang, and

surprising, as the current reforms are driven more by the common desire to seek profits by the Chinese government and international capital. In this context, people's world awareness, instead of being translated into equally enthusiastic acceptance of the brave new world of the global free market as in the case of the new Chinese middle class, has in many ways served to exacerbate their disillusionment and frustration with China's global integration.

In the city of Beijing, for example, the winning of the 2008 Olympics bid has provided unprecedented development and investment opportunities for both domestic and foreign businesses, as the myriad of cranes at construction cites on the Beijing skyline attest. Amid this development frenzy, however, construction workers, mainly from the countryside, are often at a loss to relate themselves to this prosperity to which they contribute enormously. Typically working more than twelve hours a day on the scaffolds, many of them frequently end up empty-handed at the year's end, due to construction companies' common practice of defaulting payment in a drive to cut costs and boost profits. One poem, allegedly authored by a migrant construction worker, wrote:

> *From the 1980s to the new century*
> *The city's face has changed daily*
> *Among its tens of thousands of twinkling lights*
> *None, however, lightens our night…*[84]

This widespread sense of exclusion is not merely evident at the individual level, but has also been echoed on a much larger scale by a voice from a poor inner region of China:

> You know, the relationship between us inlanders and you guys on the coast is just like that between underdeveloped countries and industrial nations. We supply you with raw materials and cheap migrant labor, but you turn around and sell us secondhand products at high prices. The gap bleeds us inland people of capital and resources. You robbed us of everything, from money to women![85]

In a systematic effort to create an investor-friendly environment and let the free market run its course, the Chinese government has openly given priority to economic efficiency over social equality. It has focused its efforts on instituting a more neoliberal economic paradigm, and making its investment regime more liberalised and more

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Ding Yuanzhu, "Jingji fanrong beihou de shehui bu wending" (Social Instability behind Economic Prosperity), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 3 (2002), pp. 26-33.

[84] This poem was quoted by the host of China's Central TV Station's "Jinri shuofa" ("Legal Report") program (November 15, 2003) to highlight the prevalent plight of migrant workers in China's big cities.

[85] Quoted in Xiao-huang Yin, "China's Gilded Age," *The Atlantic Monthly* 273, no. 4 (1994), p. 52.

attractive to international capital.[86] Critical of the government policy, Beijing economist Han Deqiang said in a speech to the European Parliament in July 2001 that "We are told [by the mainstream media in China that] 'Join the WTO, so that reform and the opening up policy won't be reversed.' This could be translated as 'Join the WTO, so that the wallets of the rich won't be under threat.'"[87] It is not that the government is blind to the rich-poor gap and regional disparities. It has frequently vowed to address the growing list of problems. But according to Han, given the confinement of globalisation and neoliberal doctrine, the government has little space to solve the problems.[88]

In consequence, many disadvantaged people who, for various reasons, do not have the opportunity, skills, capital, or personal connections to take on fierce market competition, are increasingly left behind in the neoliberal reforms. In this context, what often follows is a strong nostalgia for the past among the marginalised, as illustrated by a new craze for Mao Zedong in recent years.[89] "No one likes the old days," an old Chinese woman tried to explain why more villagers now hung Mao's picture on their walls. "But under his leadership at least we all lived the same kind of life. Chairman Mao put the interests of us villagers first. Now the leaders have forgotten us. We are no longer treated the same way as the town folks."[90]

More often than not, the widely-felt nostalgia and despair lead to deep resentment and even trigger social unrest. In 1999 alone, the number of labour disputes in China was totalled at more than 120,000, 14 times more than that in 1992.[91] In this regard, one of the most high-profile examples in recent years was perhaps the 1999 'siege' of the Chinese Communist Party headquarters by thousands of *Falun Gong* sect members, many of whom were disgruntled laid-off workers. Such incidents, according to some Chinese critics of globalisation, are bound to increase as China immerses itself further

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[86] See Qin Hui, "Zhongguo gaige: lishi yu lunli de pingjia" (China's Reforms: A Historical and Ethical Appraisal), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 1 (2000), p. 59; and Breslin, "IR, Area Studies and IPE," p. 24.

[87] Han Deqiang, "The Advantages and Disadvantages of China's Accession to the WTO," July 2001, <http://www.spectrezine.org/global/wtochina.htm>.

[88] Kim Petersen, "The Broken Iron Rice Bowl," <http://www.dissidentvoice.org/Articles7/Petersen_China-Growth.htm>.

[89] Orville Schell, "Once Again, Long Live Chairman Mao," *The Atlantic Monthly* 270, no. 6 (1992), pp. 32-36.

[90] Xiao-huang Yin, "China's Gilded Age," p. 52.

[91] John Pomfret, "Labor Unrest in China Reflects Increasing Disenchantment," *The Guardian Weekly*, May 4, 2000, p. 37. See also Trevor Corson, "China's Blue-Collar Blues," *The Atlantic Monthly* 285, no. 2 (2000), pp. 20-33; and Anita Chan, "Labor Standards and Human Rights: The Case of Chinese Workers Under Market Socialism," *Human Rights Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1998), pp. 886-904; Elizabeth Perry and Mark Selden, *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict, and Resistance*, 2nd ed., New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

into the WTO. Hu Xingdou, an economist at Beijing Institute of Technology, argues that "China has not yet crossed the most difficult hurdles… so I say the real unrest is yet to happen. What happened in 1989 [i.e., the Tiananmen uprising] was just a preliminary stage."[92] Indeed, as laid-off workers took to the streets shouting "Down with the newborn bourgeoisie," "Yes to socialism, no to capitalism," and "Long live the working class," Elizabeth Perry, a long-time observer of Chinese popular protest, seems to have good reason to believe that the resistance to the Communist regime today often has less to do with advocating American-style democracy than with reviving communism.[93]

At first sight, all these slogans and actions, reflecting problems of China's domestic reforms, may have little bearing on its foreign policy, which seems still in the safe hands of the open-minded, socialised elites. And yet, insofar as China's domestic reforms are inextricably linked to its opening up policy,[94] a sustained questioning of the former, I argue, will have significant implications for the latter. Against the background of growing economic disparities, some Chinese scholars, often loosely identified as the 'New Left'[95] (as opposed to the 'Old Left' represented by the revolutionary generation) have already begun to connect the domestic situation with China's international commitment, and question its unwavering commitment to integrating into the Western-dominated world economic system.

For example, Wang Hui, one of the leading scholars in the New Left camp, suggests that it is no longer adequate to simply treat many problems in contemporary China as related only to its tradition and socialist experiment, as many Chinese neoliberals do. Instead, he argues that such problems are already a manifestation of problems embedded in world capitalism, and that any diagnosis of the former must involve a simultaneous problematisation of the increasingly globalising capitalism and

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[92] "Urban Discontent," *The Economist*, June 15, 2002, pp. 13-14. See also Han Deqiang, "The Advantages and Disadvantages of China's Accession to the WTO."
[93] See Corson, "China's Blue-Collar Blues," pp. 22, 31.
[94] Wang Dingding, "Qimeng sile, Qimeng wansui" (The Enlightenment Is Dead, Long Live the Enlightenment), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 1 (1999), p. 79.
[95] It is sometimes also referred to as "New Populism" or "New Conservatism" by Chinese critics. See Baogang He, *The Democratization of China*, New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 32-39; Zhao Yiheng, "'Houxue' yu Zhongguo xin baoshou zhuyi" ("Post-Scholarship" and New Conservatism in China), *Ershiyi shiji* (The Twenty-first Century), no. 2 (1995), pp. 4-15; Liu Qingfeng, "Topography of Intellectual Culture in 1990s Mainland China: A Survey," in Gloria Davies ed., *Voicing Concerns: Contemporary Chinese Critical Inquiry*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001, pp. 55-60. Obviously, this "New Conservatism" in the context of contemporary China should be distinguished from what is called "neoconservatism" in the U.S. For a survey on "Old Left" criticism of the current reform, see Feng Chen, "An Unfinished Battle in China: The Leftist Criticism of the Reform and the Third Thought Emancipation," *The China Quarterly*, no. 158 (June 1999), pp. 447-467.

its problems.[96] Underlying this critical argument are strong doubts concerning the universality of Western liberal democracy and its unquestioned applicability to China, especially in the wake of the September 11 attacks. Indeed, some see these attacks not simply as plotted by religious fundamentalists, but also as "a consequence of modernity itself, which creates so many great opportunities for some, but in the meantime lets others—not necessarily only the poor—feel so marginalized."[97] Further, some suggest that the discourses of freedom, democracy and modernisation are largely Western ideology and social constructs, designed in part to prolong Western dominance over the rest of the world.[98] Believing that the construction of a middle class through economic liberalisation, currently championed by Chinese neoliberals, is not the only method to put China on a path to democracy,[99] New Left scholars have begun calling for a bold reassessment of China's domestic and international practices. In particular, they point to the need to explore alternative ways of building a prosperous and democratic China beyond the confines of the modernist dichotomies between China and the West, tradition and modernity, state and market, and socialism and capitalism.[100]

In this sense, like China's neoliberal foreign policy elites, the New Left too has the makings of an epistemic community as a result of Western socialisation, albeit a much neglected epistemic community in the current neoliberal literature on Chinese foreign relations. True, it is not yet a dominant school of thought in contemporary Chinese intelligentsia, and many of its ideas are open to question. Nevertheless, unlike the Old Left, this new breed has grown up in China's market reform environment and is generally well-informed about Western ideas. For this reason, I want to emphasise that its potential to strike a chord with ordinary people's uneasiness with the increasingly unsettling influence of globalisation, and via this, to sway the future trajectory of Chinese foreign relations, should not be underestimated.

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[96] Wang Hui, "Dangdai Zhongguo de sixiang zhuangkuang yu xiandaixing wenti" (Contemporary Chinese Thought and the Question of Modernity), in Gong Yang ed., *Sichao: Zhongguo "Xin zuopai" jiqi yingxiang* (Thoughts: China's "New Left" and Its Impact), Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2003, p. 36. Its English version appeared in *Social Text* 16, no. 2 (1998), pp. 9-44.

[97] Huang Ping, "September 11th: A Challenge to Whom?" <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/huang.htm>.

[98] See, for example, Fang Ning, Wang Xiaodong, Song Qiang, et al., *Quanqiuhua yinying xia de Zhongguo zhilu* (China's Road under the Shadow of Globalisation), Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 1999.

[99] See Gloria Davies, "The Self-Made Maps of Chinese Intellectuality," in Gloria Davies ed., *Voicing Concerns: Contemporary Chinese Critical Inquiry*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001, pp. 17-46.

[100] Wang Hui, "Dangdai Zhongguo de sixiang zhuangkuang yu xiandaixing wenti," p. 6; and Cui Zhiyuan, "Zhidu chuangxin yu di'erci sixiang jiefang" (Institutional Innovation and the Second Thought Liberation), *Ershiyi shiji* (The Twenty-first Century), no. 24 (August 1994), pp. 10-11.

Some Western analysts concede that the majority of the Chinese may never be ready for a conversion to the West at all. Nevertheless, they argue that given China's extremely large population base, even a small percentage of people may still constitute impressive market opportunities for Western products and services, thereby holding out hope for an eventual transformation in China. But this view is again open to question. On the one hand, China's market potential has often failed to meet high expectations.[101] But more importantly, for many Chinese, integration with the West is not for integration's sake. Rather, at the core of China's yearning for integration is a long-standing nationalist desire to match the West in terms of wealth and power, as illustrated in the preceding chapters.[102] Therefore, likening the current confidence of Western business in China to the nineteenth-century British industrialists' Chinese market dream, Nicholas Kristof observes that "One hundred years later the Chinese would come to afford longer shirt tails, but they would do so by manufacturing their own shirts—in sufficient quantities that they threaten to idle the West's great textile mills."[103]

Indeed, with China's remarkable economic growth, not only are a whole range of Chinese products already competing in the international market, Chinese firms have also begun to join the global competition for natural resources such as oil and iron ore, driving up world commodity prices. "China also wants to be more than the world's sweatshop," wrote a *Washington Post* article, warning that every foreign company must worry that, by investing in China, it is arming future competitors there.[104] "We want to be a global player," said a Chinese oilman. "We're not as good as the West, but we're learning."[105] According to Zhang Yunling, director of the Institute of Asian-Pacific Studies at the CASS, "What we need to learn now is not only how to defend our own market, but how to use the opening to sharpen our own competitive edge in the global market."[106] This is a point on which even pro-Western intellectuals such as the authors of the popular TV series *The Deathsong of the River* seem to agree. Indeed, a

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[101] As *The Economist* puts it, "China has never been the prize that foreign businessmen have imagined—foreigners earn an average return on equity of just 3.3%—and will not be for a long time to come." "Demystifying China," *The Economist*, April 8, 2000, p.19.
[102] Li Xiaojiang writes that "the Western concept of globalization [has come] to be used instrumentally in China as a nationalist battle cry." Li Xiaojiang, "From 'Modernization' to 'Globalization': Where Are Chinese Women?" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26, no. 4 (2001), p. 1275.
[103] Nicholas D. Kristof, "The Rise of China," *Foreign Affair*s 72, no. 5 (1993), p. 62.
[104] Robert J. Samuelson, "The China Riddle," *The Washington Post*, January 30, 2004, p. A21.
[105] John Pomfret, "In Its Own Neighborhood, China Emerges as Leader," *The Washington Post*, October 18, 2001, p. A1.
[106] "Get Ready for Global Challenge," *China Daily*, p. 4.

motivation behind their high-pitched rejection of Chinese tradition and acceptance of Western civilisation is that, as one author puts it, "we want the secret of your power."[107] Therefore, China's integration often involves the sort of 'learning' from the West that is something different from and less encouraging than what is commonly assumed by the West.

It is also commonly believed among Western observers that China's free market economy will inevitably cultivate a middle class and unleash the force of political change which would eventually sound the death knell for its authoritarian regime. Yet, despite some evidence of political reforms, for the past two decades China's accelerated transition from command economy to market economy has yet to be matched by an equally visible progress in democratic governance. Indeed, instead of being a political force for democratisation, so far this new middle class has been bound up with the ruling political elites. Having benefited from the lack of meaningful democratic checks and balances, it exhibits little interest in changing the political status quo. Often with deep contempt and mistrust for the masses, many Chinese elites turn increasingly to a mixed recipe of the free market and neo-authoritarianism (*xin quanwei zhuyi*). Strongly influenced by (Huntington's) modernisation theory, they believe that China should follow the models of some Asian countries and carry out economic liberalisation and marketisation within the existing order of political authoritarianism.[108] As David S. G. Goodman argues, the new middle classes, "far from being alienated from the party-state or seeking their own political voice, appear to be operating in close proximity and through close cooperation."[109] After a recent visit to China, American philosopher Ronald Dworkin drew a similar conclusion. He wrote that the Chinese government "has abandoned the lethal ideological totalitarianism of Mao's era, and of other tyrannies from the last century, but its citizens should now fear an older and more durable form of repression: rule by people with fewer ideological commitments but with enormous power that they will do anything to keep."[110]

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[107] Richard Madsen, *China and the American Dream*: *A Moral Inquiry*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, p. 198.
[108] Xiao Gongqin, "Dongya quanwei zhengzhi yu xiandaihua" (Authoritarian Politics and Modernisation in East Asia), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 2 (1994), pp. 28-34.
[109] David S. G. Goodman, "The New Middle Class," in Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar eds., *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 260-261.
[110] Ronald Dworkin, "Taking Rights Seriously in Beijing," *New York Review of Books* 49, no. 14 (2002), p. 64.

On the surface, it may be argued that this ostensibly home-grown practice of political repression has little to do with Western engagement, whose long-term goal is said to rather undermine authoritarianism. Despite this claim, as I have argued before, engagement as a China policy has been concerned not so much with China's human rights and democratization, as it has with Western geopolitical and corporate interests in a stable China. So long as the Chinese leadership is perceived by U.S. policy-makers as cooperative and helpful in those aspects, its abysmal records of democratic governance and human rights protection are often effectively ignored. Indeed, many engagers have routinely argued that "U.S. policy should be based on respect for the current regime as the only practically available agency of stability and progress in China."[111] In this context, Wang Hui, editor of the influential Chinese journal *Dushu* (Reading), rightly argues that an intimate, symbiotic relationship has been forged between global capital and the local power oligarchy of China.[112] Thus, it is ironic that the Western-inspired market reforms and the penetration of global capital in China, instead of fostering democracy, seem to have given authoritarianism a new lease of life.

Moreover, even if the democratic ideal has made some inroads as a consequence of economic development, it does not necessarily mean that China will become more like the West. For example, the emergence of a free market and the growing influence of the Internet have to some extent been a boon to the development of Chinese democracy. And yet, as Jeffrey Wasserstrom puts it, when Chinese go onto the web and connect with foreign cultures, sometimes they turn to American URLs; often they don't.[113] Likewise, sometimes messages coming out of such 'democratic channels' are pro-Western, but often they point to the opposite direction. In fact, many market bestsellers and pervasive views on Internet forums are highly nationalistic, with the book *China Can Say No* being perhaps the best known example.[114] This is a point that has not been lost on Nicholas Kristof, who writes that "we're also hurt by a freer Chinese press: some quasiprivate Chinese tabloids have the capitalist instinct, and because of the fervor to sell papers they are the ones with the most jingoistic stories."[115]

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[111] Thomas A. Metzger and Ramon H. Myers, "Chinese Nationalism and American Policy," *Orbis* 42, no. 1 (1998), p. 27.
[112] Wang Hui, "Dangdai Zhongguo de sixiang zhuangkuang yu xiandaixing wenti," pp. 3-50.
[113] Jeffrey Wasserstrom, "China: Beyond the Matrix," *The Nation*, May 7, 2001, p. 33.
[114] See Wang Yizhou, *Quanqiu zhengzhi he Zhongguo waijiao*, pp. 162-165; and Xudong Zhang, "Nationalism, Mass Culture, and Intellectual Strategies in Post-Tiananmen China," *Social Text* 16, no. 2 (1998), pp. 109-140.
[115] Nicholas D. Kristof, "The New China Syndrome," *The New York Times*, January 22, 2002, p. A19.

To summarise here, while Western discourse of China as opportunity often shapes Chinese foreign relations in a self-fulfilling manner, its constitutive effect is simultaneously beset with limitations.[116] Indeed, central to its limitations are some of its paradoxical consequences, in which China starts to somehow resemble Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*: it is both a land of market opportunity for Western goods and a country increasingly capable of flexing its own economic muscle; and both a place well-tuned into the rhythm of globalisation on the surface and one plagued with fragmentation, frustration, despair, and resistance underneath.[117] Consequently, any prognosis about China's inevitable conversion to the West should be met with great caution, for it tends to obscure the complex picture of Chinese foreign relations more than it might elucidate. Relevant here is a comment made by Richard Madsen regarding the phenomenon of the *Deathsong of the River*:

> The rise of the vision represented by *Deathsong of the River* demonstrates to Americans not just the power of their ideas about rationality and freedom, science and democracy, but also the limits of their power over such ideas. If Asians adopt these beliefs, they will not borrow them—they will steal them. They will, as they should, interpret them and use them in their own way, in a manner that may not accord with American political and economic interests.[118]

It seems that understanding this point is especially important in that the difficulty of China's becoming more like 'us' has often led many Western scholars, mainly realists, to return to the habit of perceiving China as an inassimilable, hence essentially troublesome or threatening Other, a perception which, as I will argue in the following section, has its own profound constitutive influence on Chinese foreign relations.

The 'China Threat' Discourse: Implications for Chinese Foreign Relations

As noted in Chapter 5, for those scholars known as 'China threat' theorists, China's rising power, realpolitik thinking, Sino-centric, nationalist and even xenophobic sentiments, as well as authoritarian political system, have all signified a looming threat. No doubt, some elements of China's formidable capabilities and sinister intentions

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[116] Hongying Wang, "Multilateralism in Chinese Foreign Policy: The Limits of Socialization," *Asian Survey* 40, no. 3 (2000), pp. 475-491.
[117] Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar eds., *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.
[118] Madsen, *China and the American Dream*, p. 199.

identified by China threat theorists are real (exaggerations notwithstanding), and need to be taken seriously. However, taking them seriously means more than treating them as a pregiven, unquestioned starting point. Quite the reverse. It means that we must put them into perspective, and ask how the China threat, if it is real, has come into existence in the first place. By asking such a question, we may come to better understand that what is problematic is not only the China threat per se, but also the very discourse which projects such a meaning onto China. For, like the 'Red Menace' discourse in the Cold War, here again involves the self-fulfilling effect of discourse as constitutive practice.

Criticism of the China threat thesis as a self-fulfilling prophecy is rife and not new. Joseph Nye, Jr., for example, wrote that:

> In the face of uncertainty among the experts, suppose that we simply posited a 50 percent chance of an aggressive China and a 50 percent chance of China becoming a responsible great power in the region. On this hypothesis, to treat China as an enemy now would in effect discount 50 percent of the future…. Enmity would become a self-fulfilling prophecy.[119]

Thus far, however, the China threat argument is rebutted primarily on the grounds that it matches poorly with current Chinese reality, with its self-fulfilling logic mentioned mostly in passing and in a hypothetical manner. At the same time, few have attempted to show how the much-feared self-fulfilling prophecy is *already* at work in contemporary Sino-Western, particularly Sino-American, relations. In this section, therefore, I will seek to put the 'China threat' issue in a social construction context, and examine how the very 'threat' discourse is responsible for the emergence of a China threat, particularly in the form of Chinese nationalism, realpolitik strategic culture, and assertive foreign policy.

The Social Construction of Nationalist Sentiment in the Post-Tiananmen Era

In recent years, nationalism has become a powerful rallying cry within Chinese society. At the core of this nationalism is an intellectual and political tendency to essentialise China and highlight Chineseness. For example, following the lead of the Chinese government's slogan of 'building socialism with Chinese characteristics,' many Chinese IR scholars explore the question of how to develop IR theory with 'Chinese characteristics.' Amid the new fever of 'national studies' (*guoxue yanjiu*) since the 1990s, there is a passionate call for the return to cultural nativism, to the 'original

[119] Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The Case for Deep Engagement," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 4 (1995), p. 94.

teachings' of Confucius.[120] A main theme in the bestseller *China Can Say No* is the revitalisation of the "core of our own civilisation" and the building of a strong national culture and consciousness.[121] By now, this essentialist notion of the Chinese self, it seems, no longer bears much similarity to the traditional, less dichotomised Chinese attitude towards self and other I discussed in Chapter 3.

Consequently, this tendency in general and popular nationalist sentiment in particular have frequently been cited as one of the most disturbing components of an emerging China threat.[122] Often, they are viewed as something largely orchestrated by the Communist government to bolster its waning legitimacy after the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.[123] Admittedly, there is a grain of truth in this argument. However, as I demonstrated in previous chapters, Chinese nationalism in the past was primarily a social construct in reaction to Western pressure. The same view, I argue, still holds true for contemporary popular nationalism, which remains a kind of highly reactive national psyche, and whose rise and fall cannot be fully understood without taking Western stimulation into account.[124] As Rey Chow notes:

> Chinese intellectuals' obsession with China and their compulsion to emphasize the Chinese dimension to all universal questions are very much an outgrowth of this relatively recent world history. In the face of a preemptive Western hegemony, which expressed itself militarily and territorially in the past, and which expresses itself discursively in the present, Chinese intellectuals in the twentieth century have found themselves occupying a more or less reactive, rather than active, position. The subsequent paranoid tendency to cast doubt on everything Western and to insist on qualifying it with the word *Chinese* thus becomes typical of what I would call *the logic of the wound*.

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[120] Liu Qingfeng, "Topography of Intellectual Culture in 1990s Mainland China," p. 50.

[121] Song Qiang, Zhang Zangzang, Qiao Bian, et al., *Zhongguo keyi shuo bu* (China Can Say No), Beijing: Zhonghua gongshang lianhe chubanshe, 1996, pp. 16, 25, 175.

[122] It is worth noting that contemporary Chinese nationalism is made up by different strands of nationalist thinking, such as popular nationalism, cultural nationalism, and state-sponsored patriotism. Here, I will focus on popular nationalist sentiment, which looks more extreme and yet is also more reactive to Western containment.

[123] Some illustrative samples of this vast literature may include: Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997, pp. 4-5, 11; Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, London: Touchstone Books, 1996, p. 224; Lucian W. Pye, "How China's Nationalism Was Shanghaied," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 29 (1993), pp. 107-133; "China Stokes Anti-U.S. Fires, Recalling Blunders of the Past," *USA Today*, May 11, 1999, p. 14A; Mortimer B. Zucherman, "What Does China Want?" *U.S. News and World Report*, June 7, 1999, p. 72; Zhao, "Chinese Nationalism and Authoritarianism in the 1990s," pp. 253-270; Guanqiu Xu, "Anti-Western Nationalism in China: 1989-1999," *World Affairs* 163, no. 4 (2001), pp. 151-162; and John Derbyshire, "Communist, Nationalist, and Dangerous: The Problem of China," *National Review*, April 30, 2001, pp. 31-33.

[124] Yongnian Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China: Modernization, Identity, and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 110.

> Beginning as a justified reaction to aggression, and gathering and nurturing means of establishing cultural integrity in defense, the logic of the wound is not unique to China.[125]

Similarly, Peter Hays Gries argues that "Chinese nationalism cannot be comprehended in isolation; instead, it must be understood as constantly evolving as Chinese interact with other nationalities. In particular, because of the stature of the United States and Japan, Sino-American and Sino-Japanese relations are central to the evolution of Chinese nationalism today."[126]

In this section, I want to build on this idea by concentrating specifically on the revival of a particularly influential stripe of nationalism since the mid-1990s, namely, popular nationalism. While ostensibly coinciding with the malfunction of communism as a unifying ideology, I argue that the upsurge in Chinese popular nationalism has largely been enabled by the rise of the China threat argument and the resulting containment rhetoric and policy in the West (the U.S. in particular), which may include the liberal 'human rights' diplomacy. As noted in Chapter 5, the rhetoric of the China threat, however imagined, has 'real-world' implications for Sino-Western relations by informing a string of Western attempts to 'rein in' or 'embarrass' China (although some of them look more accidental than deliberate), which often lead to highly charged diplomatic 'incidents.' Over the short span of the past decade, we have witnessed, for example, the Western opposition towards Beijing's bid to host the 2000 Olympics, the *Yinhe* Incident of 1993,[127] U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and intervention in the Taiwan Strait missile crisis, U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, the 1999 Cox Report's allegations of Chinese missile proliferation and espionage, the 2001 Spy Plane incident, and so forth. Although at the same time the U.S. engagement policy to China has continued, it is these high-profile diplomatic rows in Sino-U.S. relations that have attracted most public attention in China and led to a decline of Chinese intellectual elites' good will towards the United States.

Commenting on the impact of the recent frictions between China and the U.S., Zi Zhongyun, former director of the CASS's Institute of American Studies, has this to say: "The Chinese feel a sense of injustice…. [They] feel that while their back just becomes

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[125] Rey Chow, "Introduction: On Chineseness as a Theoretic Problem," *Boundary 2*, 25, no. 3 (1998), p. 6.

[126] Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004, p. 135.

[127] In July-August 1993, The *Yinhe*, a Chinese vessel, suspected by the U.S. to be carrying chemical weapon materials to Iran, was pursued by U.S. warships and aircraft and eventually was forced to accept U.S. inspection of its cargo in the Persian Gulf. While no such chemicals aboard the ship were found, the U.S. refused to apologise for its action.

straightened a bit, with their national dream, suppressed for more than one hundred years, still to be fulfilled, Americans and other Westerners are already worried that China has grown too tall."[128] In the same vein, Yongjin Zhang suggests that "even at the dawn of the new millennium, China's full membership in the global international society continues to be contested, as many [in the West] question China's sincerity and willingness to accept the responsibilities that are associated with Great Power status."[129] But for many Chinese who have derived some satisfaction and national pride from their newly found economic prosperity, all this rather demonstrates Western insincerity about welcoming China's development and/or its unwillingness to abandon its past practice of China bashing. In this context, a thwarted Chinese nationalism is turned into resentment towards the West, particularly the U.S. In reaction to such Western pressure, one veteran Chinese diplomat is quoted as saying:

> To tell you the truth, a large number of Chinese intellectuals I know feel sickened about the way the United States brandishes MFN trade status as a weapon to push down China…. The behaviour of the American Congress hurt Chinese feelings badly. To put it bluntly, you Americans are rich and strong, we Chinese are poor and weak. Therefore you feel free to bully us. I have every favourable feelings about some aspects of the United States, but on this issue I am disgusted. You take China as a piece on the chessboard of domestic politics, kicking it here and kicking it there. How do we Chinese feel? …. Are you Americans advocating fair play? Where is the fair play? The only reason is that China is still poor so that you can kick me around. They are mistaken. We Chinese will not stomach this insult (*yanbuxia zhekouqi*). We are prepared for the West.[130]

Western commentators, on the other hand, often dismiss such Chinese arguments as nothing more than a manifestation of China's 'siege mentality.' They believe that by imposing sanctions on China, the West acts essentially for the benefit of the Chinese people, who they believe really should welcome foreign pressure on Beijing's dictators. While their policy is indeed welcomed by some, in general it has not gone down well with the majority, who seem unable to appreciate the West's good will in pursuing a kind of collective punishment policy towards China. As one Chinese points out:

> Americans should remember that although we could have many differences with our government and we complain a lot, when we face external pressures, we will forget these differences and share the same feeling with the government…. If you Americans think

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[128] Zi Zhongyun, "Bainian sixiang de chongji yu zhuangji" (A Hundred Years of Ideological Impact and Clash in Sino-U.S. Relations), *Meiguo yanjiu* (American Studies), no. 4 (1996), p. 26.
[129] Yongjin Zhang, "System, Empire and State in Chinese International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 1 (2001), p. 63.
[130] Wang, *Limited Adversaries*, p. 170.

> that you can kick around the Chinese government without hurting ordinary people's feelings, you are deceiving yourselves.[131]

With such Chinese emotion running high, small wonder that *Beijing ren zai Niuyue* (A Beijing Man in New York), a nationalistic Chinese television series screened in 1993, quickly gained popularity in post-Tiananmen China. This series is remembered particularly for its visualisation of Chinese nationalism against the United States into a revengeful bodily encounter between a Beijing man Wang Qiming (who has made a fortune in New York) and a white American prostitute crying out "I love you," while Wang showers her with American dollar bills.[132] Wang's act allegedly won widespread applause among its Chinese audience. Geremie Barmé's phrase "to screw foreigners is patriotic" sarcastically captures the gist of this kind of nationalist extremism.[133]

In this context also emerged *Zhongguo keyi shuo bu* (China Can Say No), one of the most antiforeign books ever published in contemporary China, with chapters entitled "Don't Shun the Words 'Prepare for War,'" "America, Don't Go too Far on the Question of Taiwan," "U.S. Foreign Policy is Dishonest and Irresponsible," "We Don't Want MFN Status…," "I Won't Fly with a Boeing 777," and the like. Striking a responsive chord not only in mainland China, but also in the broader Chinese Diaspora around the globe, it immediately became a best seller.[134] In the book, the authors, mainly young journalists and freelance writers, all tell a similar story of how they, once placing their faith in the United States, have gradually become disillusioned at U.S. China policy. For example, Song Qiang describes the dramatic changes in his own images of America. In the 1970s, he felt excited to know that the Americans were on China's side against the Soviet Union. In the 1980s, his positive feelings about the U.S. reached such a high pitch that he saw America in almost every aspect as the model for China. However, in the face of a series of hostile American gestures in the early 1990s,

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[131] *Ibid*., p. 171.
[132] See Baogang He and Yingjie Guo, *Nationalism, National Identity and Democratization in China*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000, Chapter 3.
[133] Geremie R. Barmé, "To Screw Foreigners Is Patriotic: China's Avant-Garde Nationalists," *The China Journal*, no. 34, (July 1995), pp. 209-234.
[134] Within four months of its first launch, 130,000 copies were sold in China alone. Shortly following the publication of *China Can Say No*, a series of "Say No" books emerged in China. While some books criticise the "Say No" mentality, many others echo or complement its hardline stance. Song Qiang, et al., *Zhongguo haishi neng shuo bu* (China Can Still Say No), Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 1996; Zhang Xueli, *Zhongguo heyi shuo bu* (How Can China Say No), Beijing: Hualing chubanshe, 1996; Jia Qingguo, *Zhongguo bujinjin shuo bu* (China Does Not Merely Say No), Beijing: Zhonghua gongshang lianhe chubanshe, 1996; and Shen Jiru, *Zhongguo budang "bu xiansheng": Dangdai Zhongguo de guoji zhanlue wenti* (China Should Not Become "Mr No": The Issue of Contemporary China's International Strategy), Beijing: Jinri Zhongguo chubanshe, 1998.

his high hope for the U.S. gave way to bitter disappointment.[135] To underscore the depth of this sense of disappointment, we may consider one passage written by Zhang Zangzang, another author of this book:

> Why do you [Americans] always demand that China alone renounce the right to use force [regarding Taiwan]? Why couldn't you just lay down arms and sit together to negotiate during your American Civil War? It doesn't matter if the negotiation would last for one hundred years, for [according to your logic] it's better to deal with problems from a long-term perspective. Thus, do not do to others what you would not have others do to you.[136]

In recent years, perhaps no other event has contributed more to arousing Chinese nationalism than the U.S.'s 'accidental' bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia in May 1999, in which three Chinese nationals were killed and many more wounded. The vivid scene of the destroyed building and the grief of the victims' relatives galvanised many ordinary Chinese, whose worldview turned nationalistic and anti-American almost overnight.[137] As one American journalist in Beijing found out at that time, many university students who cheered Michael Jordan and welcomed President Clinton's visit just the year before were now lashing out against all things American. At the People's University in Beijing, several American students were surrounded by a group of Chinese students who shouted "Blood must be repaid with blood!" Many people took to the streets to vent their anger, with some throwing rocks at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. Although many students did not like the rock throwing, they said they understood why it had occurred. "I know the protest looked extreme," one student said. "But I think compared to what we were responding to, it was pretty restrained."[138] A Chinese IR specialist watched this whole drama unfolding on TV with disbelief, writing that "when the elderly man returned from Yugoslavia with the photo of his [perished] son and daughter-in-law held in his arms, how did he feel? The message on his mind certainly is 'China must become strong.'"[139] According to a survey study at the time, this sense of national humiliation was widely shared among Chinese university students, who believed that it was primarily their country's weakness that had prompted

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[135] Song Qiang, et al., *Zhongguo keyi shuo bu*, pp. 3-51.
[136] *Ibid*., pp. 62-63.
[137] David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001, p. 254.
[138] Elisabeth Rosenthal, "China Students Are Caught Up by Nationalism," *The New York Times*, May 12, 1999, p. A1.
[139] Zhang Wenmu, "Quanqiuhua jincheng zhong de Zhongguo guojia liyi" (China's National Interests in the Process of Globalisation), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 1 (2002), p. 54.

America to repeatedly harass China and then get away with it.[140] Indeed, for many who previously had little interest in or knowledge about international politics, this seemed to be a significant and unforgettable formative experience. Two years later, there was almost a rerun of the bombing incident. This time the Spy Plane drama was much closer to home soil, and again it did not fail to inflame heated nationalist sentiment.

Thus understood, these Chinese reactions, hostile as they might be, can no longer be oversimplified or totalised as entrenched, xenophobic anti-Americanism per se.[141] Rather, it seems that they are highly predicated on the ways in which China is treated by the West. In spite of this, however, they need to be taken seriously. This is because the accumulation of these reactive, nationalist, and essentialist sentiments could easily turn into "a narcissistic, megalomanic affirmation of China" and "fascistic arrogance and self-aggrandizement."[142] Taking on a life of their own, this highly appealing vision of China could then negatively impact on its relations with the West in the long term. Among other things, this new appreciation of a sense of national humiliation has given rise to the questioning of the fundamental direction of Chinese foreign policy as pursued by the neoliberal ruling elites. For example, one influential commentator argues that the problem in Sino-Western relations is not that "we Chinese" are unwilling to learn from outside, but that the West-led outside world does not welcome "us" to do so.[143] Indeed, for many Chinese intellectuals, this now widely held perception reverberates strongly with the longstanding agony that Western 'teachers' never really welcomed their Chinese 'students' to learn their real secrets. Out of this doubt over Western sincerity have now grown both a strong criticism of China's neoliberal views of the outside world as 'one-sided wishful thinking,' and a heightened fascination with realism and

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[140] See Chen Shengluo, "Liangge Meiguo: Zhongguo daxuesheng de Meiguo guan" (Two Americas: Chinese University Students' Views on the United States), <http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wkgb.asp>.

[141] Jeffrey Wasserstrom, "Anti-Americanisms, Thick Description, and Collective Action," <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/wasserstrom.htm>; and Dingxin Zhao, "An Angle on Nationalism in China Today: Attitudes Among Beijing Students After Belgrade 1999," *The China Quarterly*, no. 172 (2002), pp. 885-905.

[142] Chow, "Introduction: On Chineseness as a Theoretic Problem," p. 6.

[143] Shi Zhong, "Weilai de chongtu" (Future Conflict), in Wang Jisi ed., *Wenming yu guoji zhengzhi: Zhongguo xuezhe ping Hengtingdun de wenming chongtu lun* (Civilisation and International Politics: Chinese Scholars Comment on Huntington's Theory of the Clash of Civilisations), Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1995, p. 142. See also, Shi Zhong, "Zhongguo xiandaihua mianlin de tiaozhan" (Challenges Facing China's Modernisation), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 1 (1994), p. 8; Wu Guoguang, "Yi lixing minzu zhuyi kangheng 'weidu Zhongguo'" (Rational Nationalism as a Counterbalance against "Containing China"), *Ershiyi shiji* (The Twenty-first Century), no. 34 (April 1996), pp. 28-29. See also, Wu Guoguang and Liu Jinghua, "'Weidu Zhongguo': Shenhua yu xianshi" ("Containing China": Myth and Reality), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 1 (1996), pp. 55-56; and Zhang Wenmu, "Quanqiuhua shiye zhong de Zhongguo guojia anquan wenti" (The Issue of Chinese National Security from the Perspective of Globalisation), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and International Politics), no. 3 (2002), p. 5.

power politics in China's strategic thinking and IR studies, to which my analysis will now turn.

The 'Renaissance' of Realism in Contemporary Chinese Strategic Thinking: Implications for Sino-U.S. Relations

Echoing the China debate in the West, the past decade or so has seen numerous debates among Chinese students of IR with regard to issues such as the 'nature' of globalisation and international institutions, their implications for China, and China's international strategy. On the one hand, as noted above, a number of Chinese scholars and social elites depict a largely cheerful picture of China's international environment. At the same time, other scholars hold onto a realist, mostly pessimistic interpretation of international relations. As some China observers in the West have pointed out, Chinese strategic thinking is characterised by a realpolitik worldview, an outdated Westphalian notion of sovereignty, and the absence of liberal, normative IR theory,[144] so much so, as noted in Chapter 5, that this has been taken as unmistakable evidence of an unsatisfied, dangerous hegemon on the horizon.

While noting the salient presence of a Chinese realpolitik perspective, I want to differ with Western scholars by focusing on the socially constructed dimension of Chinese realpolitik thinking. I argue that, like popular nationalism, such a worldview is not a kind of pregiven, timeless Chinese feature, but is highly conditioned on a particular way in which China is discursively constructed and acted upon by the West. Such constitutive influence is evident at two levels, one being discursive or theoretical, and the other practical.

At the discursive level, just as the liberal strand of international relations theory has greatly influenced Chinese IR scholars, so has the 'scientific' theory of realism. In particular, the substantial public fanfare generated by Western claims of the China threat has helped transfer, even if unwittingly, a realist notion of international relations

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[144] For example, Samuel Kim has been struck by the "prevalence of Western hard realism and realist theory, not normative world order theory." Samuel S. Kim, *China In and Out of the Changing World Order*, Center of International Studies World Order Studies Program Occasional Paper No. 21, Princeton University, 1991, p. 8. See also, Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995; Thomas J. Christensen, "Chinese Realpolitik," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 5 (1996), pp. 37-52; Yong Deng, "The Chinese Conception of National Interests in International Relations," *The China Quarterly*, no. 154 (1998), pp. 308-329; Gerald Chan, *Chinese Perspectives on International Relations: A Framework for Analysis*, London: Macmillan, 1999; and Yong Deng and Fei-ling Wang eds., *In the Eyes of the Dragon: China Views the World*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.

to the lexicon of Chinese IR thinking.[145] Though disgusted by the 'China threat' alarm, many scholars are nevertheless persuaded by the mostly realist assumptions underlying the 'threat' argument, such as the primacy of power and the imperative of self-help in an anarchical international structure. These, indeed, are assumptions which the Chinese have been collectively taught by the West for more than a century.

For example, Zhang Wenmu at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (affiliated with the Ministry of State Security) is convinced that international relations is still in what Hobbes called "the state of nature."[146] Zhu Feng views the Western IR theory of power politics as the most important theoretical framework within which to interpret contemporary international relations.[147] Wang Xiaodong argues that the real foundation of national security and international cooperation is *shili* (power).[148] Strongly influenced by realism and Kenneth Waltz's neorealism particularly, a Berkeley-trained professor at Nankai University in Tianjin, Zhang Ruizhuang accords self-interestedness a universal truth status, which is seen as the fundamental goal of all rational actors, individuals and states alike. He argues that this realist assumption is simply a recognition of the world's reality and an adaptation to the natural propensity of human behaviour. As a consequence, he suggests, conflicts of interests among nations are inevitable; and therefore, if you want peace, then prepare for war.[149]

This is a point on which, Yan Xuetong, another Berkeley-trained IR scholar, seems to have no disagreement. In his book *Zhongguo guojia liyi fenxi* (An Analysis of China's National Interests), Yan argues that "the realisation of the national interest depends on power. Without it, defending the national interest is merely wishful

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[145] Of course, as we know, the Chinese awareness of Western realist theory long preceded the current "China threat" discourse, given their historical experience of Western power politics during the periods of imperialist domination and the Cold War. Nevertheless, the recent China threat discourse and containment policy have helped revive the memory of China's past humiliation at the hands of Western powers, and made the theory of power politics more relevant to contemporary Chinese understanding of international relations.

[146] Zhang Wenmu, "Quanqiuhua jincheng zhong de Zhongguo guojia liyi," p. 58.

[147] Zhu Feng, "Guojiguanxi lilun zai Zhongguo de fazhan," p. 25.

[148] Wang Xiaodong, "Guang daoqian you you shenme yong?" (So What Is the Use of Merely Seeking Apology), in Fang Ning, Wang Xiaodong, Song Qiang, et al., *Quanqiuhua yinying xia de Zhongguo zhilu* (China's Road under the Shadow of Globalisation), Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 1999, p. 44.

[149] Zhang Ruizhuang, "Zhongguo ying xuanze shenmeyang de waijiao zhexue?" (What Kind of Foreign Policy Thinking Should China Choose?), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 1 (1999), p. 61; Zhang Ruizhuang, "'Chenzhuo yingdui' yu 'zifeiwugong'" ("Meet Challenges with Calm" and "Voluntarily Relinquish One's Own Prowess), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and International Politics), no. 1 (2002), p. 72.

thinking."[150] The references in his book overwhelmingly refer to works of prominent Western realists such as Alfred T. Mahan, Hans Morgenthau, Arnold Wolfers, Charles A. Beard, Paul Kennedy, Stephen D. Krasner, and Gerald Segal. Given this, it would be hard to argue that his hard-core realpolitik thinking is entirely home-grown and has little to do with Western discursive influence. As Yuan Ming notes, before Yan's book was published, the notion "national interests" was not widely used in Chinese official documents, which largely clung to the phrase "interests of the ruling class." In this sense, "[Yan Xuetong's] book represents a breakthrough, both in an academic and a political sense, and as such it has been hailed by younger Chinese readers who favor a national-interest orientation. It brings fresh ideas to international studies in China."[151] Indeed, by Samuel Kim's own account, the writings of mainstream Western realists have weighed heavily on the thinking of Chinese IR scholars.[152]

At the practical level, the Western influence on Chinese realpolitik thinking is equally important. Without this dimension, the influence would be incomplete and less than enduring. In the eyes of many Chinese IR analysts, it is above all Western containment of China and power politics practice in general that have driven home the realist theory of international relations. For example, while there existed previously some dissenting views on China's dominant world outlook concerning 'peace and development,' globalisation, and multipolarisation, it was not until after the 1999 Chinese Embassy bombing that questions about 'peace and development' were rekindled and hotly debated.[153] Among other things, this event prompted many scholars to rethink such crucial questions as "Is the outside world overall friendly or hostile to China? Has human history really entered into the era of 'peace and development,' or is it merely out of China's imagination?"[154] According to Zhang Wenmu, as two major world issues, neither peace nor development have been realised. In fact, he argues, "the 'opportunities' of peace and development for China as a legacy of the 1980s have begun to evaporate amidst NATO's unilateral military actions in Yugoslavia at the end of the twentieth century."[155] This proposition is shared by Wang Xiaodong, who writes that

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[150] Yan Xuetong, *Zhongguo guojia liyi fenxi* (An Analysis of China's National Interests), Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1996, p. 311.
[151] Yuan Ming, "Reorienting Chinese Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy*, no. 107 (1997), p. 166.
[152] Kim, *China In and Out of the Changing World Order*, p. 8n17.
[153] Tang Shiping, "Lijie Zhongguo de anquan zhanlue," p. 133.
[154] *Ibid*., p. 133.
[155] Zhang Wenmu, "Kesuowo zhanzheng yu Zhongguo xin shiji anquan zhanlue" (The Kosovo War and China's Security Strategy in the New Century), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 3 (1999), p. 9.

"the view that the world is 'multipolarising' has fallen through. NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia sufficiently demonstrates that there is only one pole in this world, which is the United States." He laments that "in the realm of international relations at least, the world is still a world of might makes right."[156]

By casting a long shadow on Chinese IR thinking, Western (particularly American) power politics practice inevitably contributes to the (re)formulation of Chinese foreign policy and strategic options. For example, referring to the upsurge in U.S. military spending and various Western attempts to block China's efforts to join the world economic system, Zhang Ruizhuang lashes out at those who "talk only of peace and cooperation while ignoring the danger of war and the threat of hegemonism, talk only of economy and development while ignoring politics and security, and talk only of globalisation and interdependence while ignoring national interests and sovereignty."[157] Zhang urges Chinese strategic analysts to take neorealism seriously, not only because, in his view, its account of international relations is more accurate and plausible than that of other IR theories, but also because it (together with classical realism) is precisely the principal guideline of U.S. global strategy. In this context, he argues that it is naïve for many liberal-minded Chinese scholars to believe that so long as China forgets 'revolution and war' it will be allowed to concentrate on its own development and to live in peace and contentment. [158]

Thus, the message is that China should also adopt (neo)realism as its foreign policy doctrine, a doctrine which centres on military power, tit-for-tat strategy and a worst-case scenario. Shocked by the spectacular performance of America's precision weapons and modern command systems in the Gulf War and, more recently, in the 'Shock and Awe' campaign in Iraq, many Chinese commentators have come to recognise the added importance of modern military power and realise that economic development alone cannot guarantee national security.[159] As Xu Xin notes, in the post-Cold War world order, a broad lesson some in the Chinese military learned was that "whoever possesses high-tech weapons will have a bigger say in world military affairs, which in turn will promote those countries' political and economic development.

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[156] Wang Xiaodong, "Minzuzhuyi he minzhuzhuyi" (Nationalism and Democratic Ideas), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 3 (1999), pp. 11, 13.
[157] Zhang Ruizhuang, "Chonggu Zhongguo waijiao suochu zhi guoji huanjing: Heping yu fazhan bingfei dangdai shijie zhuti" (Re-evaluating the International Environment of China's Foreign Relations: Peace and Development Are Not the Main Themes of the Contemporary World), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 1 (2001), p. 29.
[158] *Ibid*., p. 25.
[159] Fang Ning, Wang Xiaodong, Song Qiang et al., *Quanqiuhua yinying xia de Zhongguo zhilu*, pp. 3-20.

Defence is the backing force behind politics and the economy."[160] A staunch supporter for China's military build-up, Zhang Wenmu has reasoned that the unfortunate *Yinhe* incident, the Spy Plane incident, as well as the thorny issue of Taiwan, all boil down to China's military weakness, particularly its lack of sea/air supremacy (in comparison to the U.S.)[161] He argues that economic globalisation has not rendered active national defence obsolete, but only added new urgency to it.[162]

Sadly, what has been learned here seems to remain that of Social Darwinism, and at this juncture, China does indeed look suspiciously like an enemy, equipped not only with growing capabilities, but also with sinister intentions. But it needs to be pointed out that this learning, however lamentable, has been facilitated by Western, particularly American, international behaviour. And this 'enemy,' however scary, is not a natural enemy of the West, but is rather its "intimate enemy," a "mirror-effect" of China's "socialisation" into the international system. Thus, while some Westerners see a "China threat" out there, some Chinese similarly conceive of an inherently threatening U.S. bent on containing China no matter what.[163] Interestingly, Western complicity in the hardening of China's security thinking has been acknowledged, if only unwittingly, by the Pentagon, which suggests that "Debate over the proper ordering of China's national priorities has surfaced periodically—particularly in the face of external challenges to China's security interests. For example, following Operation Allied Force in 1999, Beijing seriously considered upgrading the priority attached to military modernization."[164]

To emphasise the Western complicity in the development of Chinese hardline strategic thinking does not render the latter less dangerous. Rather, the contrary is true,

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[160] Quoted in Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power: US Relations with China since 1949*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 248.
[161] Zhang Wenmu, "Jingji quanqiuhua yu Zhongguo haiquan" (Economic Globalisation and China's Mastery of the Seas), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 1 (2003), p. 91.
[162] Zhang Wenmu, "Quanqiuhua jincheng zhong de Zhongguo guojia liyi," p. 58.
[163] This "no matter what" mentality has recently become commonplace among some Chinese strategic analysts. See, for example, Wang Xiaodong, "Dangdai Zhongguo minzuzhuyi lun" (On Contemporary Chinese Nationalism), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 5 (2000), pp. 69-82; Zhang Ruizhuang, "'Chenzhuo yingdui' yu 'zifeiwugong,'" p. 71; Meng Xiangqing, "Lun Zhongguo de guoji juese zhuanhuan yu duiwai anquan zhanlue de jiben dingwei" (On the Transformation of China's International Role and the Basic Orientation of Its External Security Strategy), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and International Politics), no. 7 (2002), p. 3; Men Honghua, "Zhongguo guojia zhanlue liyi de tuozhan" (The Expansion of China's National Strategic Interests), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 2 (2003), p. 86; and. For a discussion of how such "mirror images" of China and the United States were constructed, see Robert A. Pastor, "China and the United States: Who Threatens Whom?" *Journal of International Affairs* 54, no. 2 (2001), pp. 427-443.
[164] US Department of Defense, *Annual Report on Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, July 12, 2002, p. 9, < http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jul2002/d20020712china.pdf>.

particularly if it joins forces with the nationalist sentiment. Recently, a special commentator for *Renminwang* (www.people.com.cn), the official website of the *People's Daily*, argued that in this superpower-cum-hegemonism world, "our national spirit has not been too much, but too little, not too strong, but too weak, and it should not be criticised and restrained, but instead be vigorously promoted and cultivated."[165] And should this informal alliance gain further ground, one should not be surprised if Chinese foreign policy reformulation takes a dreadful Cold War turn. For example, in the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, some Chinese strategic thinkers were so alarmed by the U.S. show of force that they told Helmut Sonnenfeldt, one of Henry Kissinger's close associates, that they were rereading the early works of George F. Kennan because they believed that "containment had been the basis of American policy toward the Soviet Union; now that the United States was turning containment against China, they wanted to learn how it had started and evolved."[166] Or take another example. In an article published in the *Global Times*, a subsidiary of the *People's Daily*, Zhou Jianming contends that China has for too long misread the international situation as one of 'peace and development,' overlooked the rise of realist/neo-conservative thinking in the U.S., and overestimated the trend of multipolarisation and the peaceful effect of economic globalisation. He proposes that "given that America is already changing the course of its China strategy, and treating China as its main threat and rival, our continued illusion about Sino-American relations is not only unrealistic, but also highly destructive for our nation." Therefore, "we must… come to a new judgment on U.S. global strategy and China policy, and consider our countermeasures in a worst-case scenario."[167]

At this point, it seems no longer difficult to figure out how far the self-fulfilling prophecy of the 'China threat' discourse as practice can go, and what this could mean for future Sino-Western relations, particularly Sino-U.S. relations. Certainly, Western containment has not always cornered all Chinese strategic analysts into this hard-line, belligerent position. It is even suggested that foreign pressure plays a positive part in

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[165] Lin Zhibo, "Questioning the 'New Thinking on Sino-Japanese Relations,'" <http://www.irchina.org/news/view.asp?id=129>. See also, Wu Guoguang and Liu Jinghua, "'Weidu Zhongguo': Shenhua yu xianshi," p. 60; and Wang Xiaodong, "Dangdai Zhongguo minzuzhuyi lun," pp. 77-78.

[166] Chalmers Johnson, "Containing China: U.S. and Japan Drift Toward Disaster," *Japan Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1996), p.12.

[167] Zhou Jianming, "Bixu cong zuihuai de kenengxing lai kaolü women de guojia anquan zhanlue: Zhuyi guancha Meiguo zhanlue dongxiang" ([We] Must Consider Our National Security Strategy in a Worst-case Scenario: Watch the Trend of U.S. Strategy Closely), *Huanqiu shibao* (Global Times), May 11, 2001, p. 4.

bringing China into many multilateral frameworks.[168] For example, troubled by a U.S. NMD system aimed at China but for fear of playing into the hands of 'China threat' advocates and escalating the security dilemma, analysts such as Shi Yinhong object to upgrading China's nuclear arsenals in response, but instead propose a "bandwagoning" (*dache*) approach to Sino-U.S. relations.[169] More significantly, as noted before, the Chinese government, still convinced of the existence of unprecedented strategic opportunity for China's development, also seems unwilling to risk confrontations with the U.S., opting instead for a policy of integration and opening up in an effort to diffuse Western fear.[170] And yet, given the grave consequences of the vicious cycle between the 'China threat' discursive practice and Chinese nationalistic, realpolitik responses, we can ill afford to bet on the 'positive' outcome of Western containment strategy. Indeed, I suggest that the overall constitutive effect of Western containment is such that even some Chinese liberal scholars have difficulty steering a more 'rational' course in China's strategic debates.[171] For instance, Wang Yizhou at the CASS, who calls himself a "realistic liberal," once made this confession: as a scholar from a "weak, developing country," he constantly agonised over his realisation of the "crude reality of power politics and hegemony imposed upon the weak in the daily practice of international politics."[172] Against this backdrop, Tang Shiping rightly claims that various U.S. containment tactics "have begun to upset the conceptual foundation of China's security strategy, for they have jeopardised its optimistic assessments of the security environment formed since 1985. Without such relatively optimistic estimates, China's current [cooperative] security strategy would be difficult to sustain."[173]

This chapter has dealt almost exclusively with some of the most dominant voices of strategic importance in contemporary China. Very often, these are also the kinds of

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[168] See Bin Yu, "China and Its Asian Neighbors: Implications for Sino-U.S. Relations"; and Thomas J. Christensen, "Pride, Pressure, and Politics: The Roots of China's Worldview," both in Yong Deng and Fei-ling Wang eds., *In the Eyes of the Dragon: China Views the World*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999, pp. 183-210, and pp. 239-256, respectively.

[169] Shi Yinhong, "Chenzhuo yingdui NMD" (Deal with the NMD with Calm), *Huanqiu shibao* (Global Times), April 6, 2001, p. 4; Shi Yinhong and Song Dexing, "21 shiji qianqi Zhongguo guoji taidu, waijiao zhexue he genben zhanlue sikao," pp. 16-17; and Ye Zicheng, and Feng Yin, "Zhong-Mei guanxi shilun" (Ten Theses on Sino-American Relations), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and International Politics), no. 5 (2002), p. 2.

[170] This logic is evident in Long Yongtu, "Jiaru Shimao zuzhi, rongru guoji shehui zhuliu," p. 2.

[171] Wu Guoguang, "Yi lixing minzu zhuyi kangheng 'weidu Zhongguo,'" pp. 25-33.

[172] Wang Yizhou, *Quanqiu zhengzhi he Zhongguo waijiao*, p. 10; and Wang Yizhou, *Dangdai guoji zhengzhi xilun*, p. 13.

[173] Tang Shiping, "Lijie Zhongguo de anquan zhanlue," p. 132

voices that have attracted most attention from Western students of Chinese foreign relations. In this chapter, however, I have treated them in a way that is markedly different from the conventional way of accounting for Chinese worldview and foreign policy in Western IR literature. That is, unlike the mainstream approaches that take these perceptions as pregiven, here I have attempted to reconnect them to the international context of Western theory as constitutive practice, a context from which they largely arise. Thus understood, it is no longer appropriate to cast Chinese worldview and foreign policy as purely Chinese or domestic in nature, since to varying degrees they have been a product of socio-historical construction enacted by the particular Western framings of China and its foreign relations, be they the (neo)realist discourse of China in terms of a threat or the (neo)liberal image of 'opportunity.'

While it is erroneous to suggest that the ways in which China makes sense of global politics and conducts its foreign relations are always determined by Western discourse of it, it is nevertheless true that Western discourse plays an important constitutive role here. Consequently, Western scholars need to take their own analysis as an integral part of their object of study. In particular, it is important for them to pay attention to how their theoretical framings of China as discursive practice might affect the direction of Chinese foreign policy, and what consequences this would engender for Sino-Western relations. In this way, it is also possible to understand and accept that certain problems and paradoxes associated with 'Chinese foreign relations' might not be simply out there, but *might* in fact reflect problems and paradoxes 'here' in the ways of Western theory as (IR) practice in relation to China. With this understanding, scholars of Chinese foreign relations may realise that they are not neutral, detached, and harmless by-standers. And insofar as they are an important part of Sino-Western relations, they can no longer remain silent on their moral responsibility for their thinking *as* political action.

8

Conclusion

> *Modern thought and experience have taught us to be sensitive to what is involved in representation, in studying the Other, in racial thinking, in unthinking and uncritical acceptance of authority and authoritative ideas, in the sociopolitical role of intellectuals, in the great value of a skeptical critical consciousness. Perhaps if we remember that the study of human experience usually has an ethical, to say nothing of a political, consequence in either the best or worst sense, we will not be indifferent to what we do as scholars.*
>
> Edward W. Said[1]

> *The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.*
>
> Albert Einstein

AS it now becomes increasingly clear, China's future is a matter of global consequence. In particular, its relationship with the United States could be a key to world peace in the new century.[2] In this thesis, recognising the great importance of (studying) China in this global context, I have sought to critically engage the field of Chinese foreign policy studies in the West. I have argued that the way we give meaning to the world is intrinsically connected to the way we act within it. In China's case, I have argued that mainstream Western scholars have imposed upon it particular kinds of meaning that have led to particular attitudes and policies towards it, to the exclusion of other possible options. As a result of this process, I have suggested, China itself has

[1] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vantage Books, 1978, p. 327.
[2] Edward Friedman, "Why China Matters," *Journal of International Affairs* 49, No. 2 (1996), p. 302; and Thomas A. Metzger and Ramon H. Myers, "Chinese Nationalism and American Policy," *Orbis* 42, no. 1 (1998), p. 36.

often formulated its foreign policy in line with the prescribed meaning given to it by the West, often with paradoxical implications.

For example, in both historical and contemporary contexts, I have illustrated that Western perceptions of China as a 'threat' have had enormous 'real-world' implications for Sino-Western relations in general and Sino-U.S. relations in particular. As I pointed out in previous chapters, the single-minded (realist) treatment of Taiwan as a national security issue for America, has contributed a great deal to creating and sustaining the tensions across the Taiwan Strait. So too have the policies of continued arms sales to Taiwan, the increased 'policing' and surveillance directed at a 'rising' China, the strengthened military alliance with Japan, the proposed theatre missile defence shield, and the potential arms race in the region. Thus, while the spy plane collision of 2001 might have been an accident, the general danger the collision symbolised was not. Rather, it was a manifestation of the lethal consequences that are always possible given the Western realist mode of representing China as threat. It may, of course, be true that neither America nor China intends to fight each other, but intention alone is often not enough when, as in this case, the very representation of threat suggests that nothing short of aggressive containment or preparedness for war is adequate in dealing with it.

These recent incidents in Sino-U.S. relations, dramatic as they are in their own right, are even more so when viewed in the broader context of a U.S. worldview, which implicitly prescribes the construction/destruction of Others as reflected in America's violent encounters with the Indian Americans, the Filipinos, the North Koreans, and the Vietnamese, among others. Even as these lines are being written, this discourse of Otherness continues to be violently on display, notably but not exclusively in Iraq. Consequently, in the strategic policy-making community in Washington, the portrayal of Saddam's Iraq as a pregiven, intrinsically ruthless enemy threatening the civilised world with weapons of mass destruction has proved an irresistible 'reality.' Yet, now as in the past, such a simplistic construction of Otherness can have dramatic and disastrous political implications. In the case of Iraq, this simple discursive caricature was so powerfully constituted that it quickly provoked a U.S.-led pre-emptive war, resulting in tremendous human suffering and destruction. This, in turn, is fuelling frustration, antagonism, and a violent backlash amongst the Iraqis. The result is a chaotic, vicious situation which has left many to recall, justifiably or not, the memory of the Vietnam debacle, and others to believe that the current military conflict is generating precisely

the kind of problem (e.g., Iraq as a breeding ground for terrorists) that was evoked to justify the war in the first place.[3]

Although the specific discursive strategies associated with Western representations of Iraq and China have been different, the self/Other framework at its core remains effectively the same. Moreover, just as Western strategic analysts have viewed punitive, violent action as the only way to peace and stability on the Iraq issue, "a firm, perhaps military, response" could well be construed as the only rational path to U.S. national security in relation to China.[4] The only difference between China and Iraq in this context is the likely implication for world stability should a conflict arise between the global superpower and the world's most populous nuclear power.

This is not to assert that China poses no threat at all to global peace. On the contrary, a recent development seems to have highlighted the possibility of such danger. As the Taiwan leader Chen Shui-bian moved ever closer to securing formal independence for the island, on 17 May 2004, agencies of the Communist Party and the Chinese government issued for the first time in nearly two decades the most unequivocal warning that any schemes of independence would be crushed "at any cost."[5] Coming at a time when it is widely assumed that China's rising stake in the global economy and U.S. military commitment to Taiwan have doubly dissuaded China from military adventurism, the implications of this warning are both clear and disturbing. It therefore needs to be taken seriously, particularly as the warning has now been followed by a string of military exercises in the region by all parties at stake, including the United States. But instead of reading such belligerent gestures as proof of China's inherent aggressiveness and responding, automatically, with worst-case scenario thinking, our political imagination must be open to more creative ways of dealing with such a complex issue, given that very often such 'aggressiveness' is itself (at least in part) a product of the Western realist approach to China.

Indeed, as I argued in Chapters 3, 4 and 7, it is not possible to understand the phenomena of antagonistic nationalism, realpolitik thinking, and a power politics

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[3] The Vietnam analogy was made most famously by U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy, who declared in his remarks at the Brookings Institution that "Iraq is George Bush's Vietnam." Edward M. Kennedy, "Speech by Senator Edward M. Kenney Delivered at the Brookings Institution," April 5, 2004, <http://www.brook.edu/comm/events/20040405kennedy.pdf>. On the latter point, an annual strategic survey published recently by the London-based, pro-war think tank International Institute of Strategic Studies says that the occupation of Iraq has provided "a potent global recruitment pretext" for al-Qaeda and probably increased worldwide terrorism. See Richard Norton-Taylor, "Occupation Has Boosted Al-Qaida, Says Thinktank," *The Guardian*, May 26, 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/alqaida/story/0,12469,1224821,00.html>.

[4] Gary Schmitt, "Our Ambivalent China Policy," *The Weekly Standard*, July 15, 2002, p. 17.

[5] "Putting a Check on 'Taiwan Independence' a Pressing Task," *China Daily*, May 17, 2004, p. 1.

mentality on China's part without taking into account its longstanding frustration and sense of powerlessness in the face of Western encroachment, domination, isolation, and containment. Consequently, if China does look suspiciously like an enemy, it is perhaps best understood not as a natural enemy of the West, but rather as its 'intimate enemy'—as more or less a mirror image of it—reflecting the very ways China has been perceived and acted upon by Western powers. In this context, even though we cannot reasonably claim that Western theory and practice are always responsible for how China might think and behave, it is worth pondering why outbursts of Chinese nationalist fervour, for example, often relate to events in which China was bullied, victimised, and endured humiliation and injustice. Events which include the numerous military aggressions against it in the century-long period of Western gunboat diplomacy, the more recent bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, and the Spy Plane standoff.

I have suggested throughout the thesis that the (neo)realist way of theorising Chinese foreign relations is self-fulfilling and fraught with peril. But I have argued also that liberal approaches are equally problematic in their political ramifications. As noted in the preceding chapter, liberal discourse has played a positive role in nurturing an increasingly wealthy and liberal-minded middle class in contemporary China. It also seems to have successfully 'socialised' a Chinese foreign policy elite into sharing the (neo)liberal worldview, particularly on multilateral security and global responsibility. These positives notwithstanding, this should not obscure the complex, often paradoxical nature of liberal theory and practice in China—either now or in the past. As I argued in the two preceding chapters, intrinsic to China's miraculous economic development in recent times has been a growing disparity between rich and poor, which has seen the vast majority of the Chinese populace left out of Beijing's Western-induced reforms. A majority now turning increasingly disillusioned, nostalgic for the (Maoist) past and resentful towards the liberalisation of the economy and to the political apparatus behind it. This I argued could seriously disrupt China's much-anticipated and much-vaunted metamorphosis into a 'responsible' member of the international community. *New York Times* business writer Yilu Zhao recently warned that "What the well-off have failed to read from history… is that extreme inequality tends to breed revolutions. Many of China's dynasties fell in peasant uprisings, and extreme inequality fed the Communist revolution."[6] Sensational as this view might seem, her warning is not completely

[6] Yilu Zhao, "China's Wealthy Live by a Creed: Hobbes and Darwin, Meet Marx," *The New York Times*, February 29, 2004, p. 4.7.

unwarranted, given that those who have been hit hardest are often "the social groups that have long served as the political bases of the Chinese government."[7] It may well be true that China's current global integration has gone too far to do an about-turn, but it seems equally true that these new undercurrents, if continued, could boil over and severely undermine the cheery liberal prediction of China as the great global 'opportunity' of the twenty-first century.[8] Indeed, as I illustrated in Chapters 3-4, the West in general and the U.S. in particular have a long list of 'disappointments' concerning their unfulfilled dreams about China, be it in terms of winning over Christian converts or tapping into the fabled China market.

In the foregoing chapter, I argued also that even at the Chinese elite level Western liberal theory and practice do not always have as 'positive' an effect as is commonly believed. For example, while the new Chinese middle classes seem to have developed a ravenous appetite for things Western, they have so far shown little genuine interest in embracing the ideas of equality, democracy, human rights, or meaningful political reforms. This has not been helped by the liberal engagement policy trumpeted in the West, which, rather than proliferating liberal democracy, seems to be most interested in coddling the ruling authoritarian elites. Importantly also, there is the rising salience of the New Left in the Chinese intelligentsia, whose critical responses to the march of global capitalism and the excesses of China's domestic neoliberal reform agenda demonstrates that there remains a significant segment of the Chinese elite which does not necessarily want to be carried away by the dominant neoliberal consensus. The New Left, as an alternative political movement, is likely to be a vibrant force to be reckoned with on China's foreign policy as well as domestic agendas in the decades to come.

And of course, there is another dramatic dimension to be added to the largely untold story associated with the story of neoliberal globalisation and China. A story which confirms that globalisation, in prising open enormous market and investment opportunities in China, is driving a great number of Chinese enterprises to bankruptcy and exacerbating an already ticking time-bomb of massive unemployment in the industrial and agricultural sectors alike. These globalisation forces have begun to boost Chinese economic capability, of course, and a desire to compete with the West at its

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[7] Shaoguang Wang, "The Social and Political Implications of China's WTO Membership," *Journal of Contemporary China* 9, no. 25 (2000), p. 374.

[8] For example, President Bill Clinton hailed China's entry into the WTO as an "opportunity that comes along once in a generation." Quoted in Nicholas R. Lardy, *Integrating China into the Global Economy*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002, p. 3.

own game, thereby creating an economic 'intimate enemy' which could well become the kind of geopolitical problem foreseen by realist analysts (e.g., John Mearsheimer).

None of this should be too surprising. As noted in Chapter 6, the liberal way of framing and dealing with China has not been designed for the causes of Chinese democracy and human rights per se or for genuine equal partnership between the West and China. Rather, it serves primarily as a legitimating code for easier and greater access to Chinese markets and more control over the Chinese mind on matters deemed important to Western interests. Consequently, while neoliberal discourse preaches democracy and human rights, it is always ready to compromise these principles for the sake of profits and stable market access.[9] Similarly, while neoliberalism favours non-coercive means of engagement, it has never purged itself of the will to power. And for that matter, nor has it quite forgotten the usefulness of a Cold War-style, geopolitical strategy of containment as a kind of insurance policy. This is a theme articulated by one of the most ardent neoliberals Thomas Friedman, who acknowledges (rightly) that "The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist."[10]

Thus, if it can be said that Western IR discourse on China is itself embedded in tension at the level of both theory and practice, there is no reason to expect that only the 'positive' side of such discourse will be learned and internalised by China, if by 'China' we mean something more than an elite 'epistemic community' writ large. Samuel S. Kim does not understand this, which is why he is still puzzled by the fact that "the so-called *new* China constantly invokes the principles of the *old* Westphalian international order."[11] This should not be so puzzling if one accepts that the current liberal 'international society' often remains a rehashed form of the Westphalian system and China a (theoretically) rehashed actor in that system.

The point, ultimately, is that China is neither a pre-existing 'threatening Other' nor a passive mirror image of the liberal Western self. Just as there is no such thing as a unitary, essential 'West,' it is impossible to pin down a singular, homogeneous 'China' capable of being 'contained' or 'engaged' in simple terms. This calls into question the essentialist, dichotomous framework of self and Other within which the dominant

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[9] See James L. Richardson, *Contending Liberalisms in World Politics: Ideology and Power*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001, p. 89.
[10] Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, London: HarperCollins, 2000, p. 464.
[11] Kim acknowledges that "in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War… a new world order is another name for Pax Americana II, still anchored in the old Westphalian system of territorial sovereign states." Samuel S. Kim, *China In and Out of the Changing World Order*, Center of International Studies World Order Studies Program Occasional Paper No. 21, Princeton University, 1991, pp. 15, 52.

Western ways of analysing Chinese foreign policy have operated. As I have illustrated throughout this thesis, this dichotomous framework is first and foremost a contingent and highly problematic construct. Its value lies primarily in the artificial but powerful certainty it allows a heterogeneous 'West' in the construction of a secure, positive self-identity.

For example, as I pointed out in Chapter 5, the 'China threat' as conceived by Richard Bernstein, Ross Munro, Richard Betts, and Thomas Christensen, has been derived less from an 'objective' examination of China's military capabilities, strategic posture, or actual foreign behaviour, and more from a (neo)realist conception of China as an aggressive, threatening entity in an unremittingly anarchic system. This conception, in turn, is derived from an entrenched understanding of the Western/American self as the rational orderer of the system, an understanding which has long been passed as the universal reality of world politics per se. The neorealist John Mearsheimer sums up this perspective well in proposing that:

> If… China becomes not only a leading producer of cutting-edge technologies but also the world's wealthiest great power, it would almost *certainly* use its wealth to build a mighty military machine. For sound strategic reasons, moreover, it would *surely* pursue regional hegemony, *just as the United States did* in the western hemisphere during the nineteenth century. So if Chinese relative power grows substantially, one should expect it to attempt to dominate Japan and South Korea, as well as other regional actors, by building military forces that are so powerful that those other states would not dare challenge it. One should also expect it to develop its own version of the Monroe Doctrine, directed at the United States; *just as the United States has made it clear to distant great powers* that they are not allowed to meddle in the western hemisphere, China will make it clear that American interference in Asia is unacceptable [emphases added].[12]

This is a typical example of Western discourse allowing no room for an understanding of China outside the parameters of Western self-perception, an argument that, as I illustrated in Chapter 6, is equally applicable to the (neo)liberal perspective. In this latter context, for example, Western efforts to report and depict the Tiananmen uprising of 1989 as a 'pro-democracy' movement relied on 'pro-Western' interpretations of the movement's motives, interpretations not easily attached to the event. It is as if the Tiananmen movement would make little sense were it not a specific example of the worldwide democratic wave to become more like 'us.' Thus, setting out to know the specifically different society called 'China,' both realist and liberal discourses have invariably ended up 'discovering' the same world everywhere, a world essentially of

[12] John J. Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 5 (2001), pp. 56-57.

their own making. The very notion that 'we' know for sure how China will behave in international relations and what China's 'real goal' is (even before the Chinese themselves know it) brings home this kind of 'objective' knowledge of others as narcissistic, modernist self-imagination. This self/Other construction, as I pointed out in Chapter 2, is particularly evident in regard to the U.S., whose dominant self-imagination has been essential to both the formation of its knowledge of others and to its often violent foreign policy trajectory in global politics based upon that knowledge.

Thus understood, this study has sought to argue that to have a better understanding of Chinese foreign relations in general and Sino-Western relations in particular, it is no longer adequate to engage in the usual task of working more diligently within the discursive confines of the current field of Chinese foreign relations studies. Rather, it requires the more ambitious and more challenging endeavour of radically rethinking the field itself, especially in regard to the ontological and epistemological foundations upon which it has so far functioned. To this end, we need to come to grips with the themes of knowledge/power, and theory/practice that have been developed in critical IR scholarship and in the critical social theory tradition in general, themes which I have sought to engage throughout this thesis.

Until now, the conventional ontological and epistemological foundation upon which a host of common, self-evidentiary assumptions of China have been based, has been rarely, if ever, questioned, and both (neo)realist- and (neo)liberal-minded scholars and politicians remain largely indifferent to these issues in the twenty-first century. If anything, they continue to strive for a kind of God's-eye view of Chinese beliefs and foreign behaviour in terms of 'pre-existing problems.' Hence we have Samuel Huntington, for example, still convinced that what he calls the threat of 'Greater China' to the West is a rapidly growing cultural, economic, and political reality, and Betts and Christensen who equate their 'China threat' analysis with 'the truth.' Similarly, there are many Western liberals who regard the prospect of China's convergence with the West as a kind of historical inevitability, dictated by an impersonal force such as the global free market and/or the universal appeal of ideals such as democracy and human rights. For example, for all the tensions and brutality of free-market capitalism, and in spite of (or perhaps because of) the resentment and resistance against it, Thomas Friedman reasons that global capitalism is now truly global in that, by his own account, even poor villagers in north-eastern China have the aspiration to sell their products

abroad and to make more money. Consequently, he puts forward his version of the 'End of History' thesis:

> …with the collapse of communism in Europe, in the Soviet Union and in China—and all the walls that protected these systems—those people who are unhappy with the Darwinian brutality of free-market capitalism don't have any ready ideological alternative now. When it comes to the question of which system today is the most effective at generating rising standards of living, *the historical debate is over*. The answer is free-market capitalism…. One road. Different speeds. But one road [emphasis added].[13]

Buoyed by such claims to historical certainty, a leading China scholar has declared that "we have accumulated, thanks to China specialists in America and around the world, a high level of understanding of China's basic institutions and of the broad political, social, and economic trends in China since 1949. This is no small achievement."[14]

But as I have indicated throughout this study, it is largely this kind of achievement that has acted as a profound impediment to the understanding of their 'object of study' in terms of a social construct in which they have played a vital part. As such, mainstream China scholars continue to be trapped in a cycle of self-fulfilling, dangerous, and paradoxical theory and practice, with their 'scientific realism' allowing no way out of its own logic. While having recognised the self-fulfilling consequences of the 'China threat' thesis, neoconservative commentator Robert Kagan, for example, continues to fall back on an 'objectivist' approach to China in terms of 'what it is.' Consumed by the question of "what if the prophecy has already been fulfilled?" Kagan advises Americans to take "the emerging confrontations" with China seriously.[15]

As noted already, by concentrating on the pitfalls of Western theory and practice, I have not advocated *ignoring* problems in Chinese foreign relations. Such problems, however discursively constructed, do exist in reality. But to recognise this point is not the same as saying that they represent fixed, essential 'things' about which we can do nothing other than accepting them as 'the way things are.' Insofar as the China 'threat' is real, I have sought to illustrate that it is always *contingent*, *changeable*, and therefore *amenable* to different understandings and responses. Moreover, given that a Sino-American military confrontation would be unimaginably costly and disastrous for both sides (and increasingly for the world at large), as China scholars we are indeed obliged

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[13] Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, p. 104.
[14] Ezra F. Vogel, "Contemporary China Studies in North America: Marginals in a Superpower," in Lucien Bianco et al., *The Development of Contemporary China Studies*, Tokyo: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for Unesco, 1994, p. 194.
[15] Robert Kagan, "China's No. 1 Enemy," *The New York Times,* May 11, 1999, p. A23.

to do something about the so-called 'already fulfilled threat,' if there is one, beginning above all with modifying the very ways we give meaning to China. This of course would require reciprocal and sustained meaning-giving practice by the Chinese as well. Together we might help contribute to the development of perhaps a not so frightening China, a country which we need not necessarily love, but nor need we fear. While this might be considered as idealist, wishful thinking by some, it is indeed how the Sino-U.S. rapprochement in the 1970s came into existence. As noted in Chapter 4, as a result of significant change in American Cold War discourse on China, Communist China was *able* to respond positively to Richard Nixon's new China policy overture, thereby effectively closing the overly antagonistic chapter of Cold War confrontation in Sino-U.S. relations. By the same token, in the post-Cold War era, while Beijing's missile exercises in the Taiwan Strait might well be seen as threatening and unwise, one commentator has astutely suggested that "Had Bill Clinton projected a constancy of purpose and vision in China policy… in 1993-1994… he *might* not have been challenged in the Taiwan Strait in 1995-1996 with missile exercises."[16]

This is why alternative ways of understanding and dealing with China are needed. And it is in this context that I have set out to write this thesis, in the belief that China as a global actor does not have to be the way it 'is.' For this reason, this thesis has made no pretension to be a politically neutral, value-free endeavour. Like the orthodox literature, it *is* itself a kind of discourse with practical implications. But as a practical intervention, it has sought self-consciously not to take sides in accordance with the ready-made, totalised categories of 'the West' and 'China,' but rather to problematise them, and to explain and emphasise that the search for alternative, less dichotomised ways of perceiving and dealing with Sino-Western relations cannot continue to be deferred.

While this thesis has not been specifically designed to offer such alternatives, it has nevertheless indicated in various ways that alternatives are not only necessary and possible, but also existent. As stated at the outset of this thesis, scholars such as Tani E. Barlow, Bruce Cumings, Rey Chow, Jeffrey Wasserstrom, among others, have already begun exploring some ways of interpreting Sino-Western relations beyond the conventional discursive and methodological boundaries. Many works I have used in advancing my arguments throughout this thesis could further serve as possible examples in this regard. And in addition, although this thesis is largely critical in tone, it has not

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[16] David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001, p. 366.

been entirely negative. By criticising and questioning the conventional study of China, it has, if mainly indirectly, suggested how China's international relations could be studied differently. In this sense, I hope that it could make a small contribution not only to an important filed of study but also to the improvement or reconstruction of Sino-Western relations.

For all this, there is no easy alternative answer nor magic solution to the problems discussed here. For example, while it may be useful and understandable to advocate bringing in more Chinese scholars or more 'inside' views to the so far Western-dominated field of Chinese foreign relations studies as an antidote to its predicament,[17] it is wrong to assume that Chinese voices from the 'inside' are necessarily closer to Chinese realities.[18] For, as I have suggested in this study, the ways in which the Chinese perceive themselves and the world are often already coloured by orthodox Western discourses, and may therefore be part of the problem, rather than the solution.

This is not to endorse an 'anything goes' attitude on studying China's foreign relations. Quite the opposite. For the range of social meanings which can be attached to a certain thing is not limitless, and under certain circumstances, it is obvious that some interpretations appear truer than others. Ultimately, it is the different practical consequences associated with different interpretations that matter. Thus, my point here is that while different meaning-giving strategies could all have certain 'real-world' implications, some implications are more dangerous than others. Therefore, when we assign some particular meaning to China, we need to remind ourselves of its potential practical effect, and incessantly bear in mind that such effect, if dangerous, may in some degree be undone if a different, more constructive meaning is given.

In short, however tempting it might be, we cannot here return to the kind of 'Hobson's choice' between *either* a new fixed, definite solution *or* no alternative at all to the continued reign of the conventional meaning-giving regime. Rather, the choice lies in constantly recognising, on the one hand, the impossibility of having a detached,

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[17] For example, the now Hong Kong-based scholar Liu Qingfeng writes that "those who have chosen a professional career overseas, who are now based at Western universities and are engaged in Chinese studies, will necessarily alter the nature of Chinese studies in North America and elsewhere. For instance, the situation that used to prevail, whereby research on mainland Chinese issues was dominated by Western sinologists or Taiwanese scholars, has already begun to change. And thus, mainland scholars working overseas will also begin to exercise a significant influence on Chinese studies through their insights and their research findings on China." Liu Qingfeng, "Topography of Intellectual Culture in 1990s Mainland China: A Survey," in Gloria Davies ed., *Voicing Concerns: Contemporary Chinese Critical Inquiry*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001, p. 53.

[18] This view can be found in Liu Dong, "Jingti renwei de 'Yangjingbang' xuefeng" (Beware of Designer "Pidgin" Scholarship), *Ershiyi shiji* (The Twenty-first Century), no. 32 (1995), pp. 4-13.

God's-eye view of some fundamental truth, and on the other hand, the possibility of formulating nuanced, self-reflective, and responsible ways of seeing an inherently changing world. Such choice, as I have demonstrated in this thesis, is not only clearly possible but also imperative in the study of a complex China amid the volatility, danger, as well as vast potential of contemporary global politics. A 'choice' which might indeed hold the key to world peace in the decades to come.

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