

CHINA'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE USA:

The View from Open Sources

This report for the U.S.-China Commission is designed to illustrate the value that could be obtained if China's main open source publications were monitored and translated in order to understand China's perceptions of the U.S. The report both lists and actually employs many of these publications in order to illustrate important themes in China's view of the U.S. It is preliminary, not a comprehensive review. Much more needs to be done. Several obstacles that need to be overcome are listed.

The report builds on two earlier books – Professor David Shambaugh's classic book *Beautiful Imperialist* (Princeton, 1991), and my own book completed in 1999 *China Debates the Future Security Environment* (NDU, 2000). It is very unfortunate that these two studies are the sole book-length efforts to explore Chinese open sources about the U.S. Much more needs to be done, far beyond merely updating these two earlier books. Additional themes need to be identified. Additional publications and important authors need to be assessed. Most important, the growing Chinese use of the internet to analyze the U.S. and its policies also needs to be explored.

OBSTACLES TO EMPLOYING CHINESE OPEN SOURCES ABOUT THE U.S.

Chinese reactions to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 illustrate many of the obstacles to using open sources. There appears to be no national data bank that would identify the relative authority and relative "representativeness" of Chinese authors and Chinese publications. The CIA's Foreign Broadcast Information Service apparently once performed this service, but no longer does so. However, both the FBIS budget and the scope of its activities about open sources have been classified by the CIA, so this subject would have to be pursued by the Congressional Oversight Committees.

All authors quoted in this study are Party members with access to a system of confidential Party documents, many of which deal with assessment of the future security environment. Debate must remain within the limits of Party guidance.

Some policy debates are not disclosed. For example, an article in the *New York Times* about China's bid to enter the World Trade Organization (WTO), reported, "China's top trade official, acknowledging for the first time that many lower level Chinese officials oppose the nation's proposed entry to the WTO, said in newspaper reports published on Monday that the government would begin a broad campaign to try to temper the internal discord. . . . Until now, Beijing's stance has been to pretend no opposition existed, even though many Chinese officials are known to be unhappy

at the prospect of more open competition with international companies, one of the consequences of joining the trade organization.”¹

Books by Party members clearly will contrast with the freewheeling debates in American books about the future. In the United States, there is certainly no “party line” from the White House about the nature of world politics in 2020. Yet, as “scientific socialists,” the leaders of the Communist Party of China are expected to have an official view of the future security environment and to disseminate this in confidential Party documents to members. The line may be unclear between narrow doctrines that Party scholars are expected to accept uncritically and broad areas that may be debated. Foreign readers, even if they know the Chinese language, can become lost in the woods if unfamiliar with Party context—which points are ideologically mandated and which are open to debate. One clue appears when there is extensive repetition by Chinese authors of “boiler plate” (*tifa*) phrases describing the future. Such repetition probably signals quotations from Central Party documents, but to foreign readers such terms may appear to be an uncanny coincidence of the same phrases used by dozens of Chinese authors.

The Party seems ambivalent about open debates. For 20 years, Party leaders have even debated whether or not to have open debates. The 20th anniversary on May 11, 1998, of the publication of the article, “Practice is the Sole Criterion of Testing Truth,” led to numerous pieces in the Chinese press commemorating the debate over economic reform and opening up, that was ignited by the article.² Not only do they now praise the past debate, but they also advocate that in order to further carry out China’s reforms, the country needs to “inherit the pioneering spirit of the debate . . . adhere to the ideological line of emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts, and initiate a new stage for China’s development.”³ One book written as part of the commemoration of the “criterion of truth” debate and the reforms that it brought about may itself even be ushering in a new open form of academic debate in China.⁴ *Jiaofeng* (Crossing swords), by Ma Licheng and Ling Zhizhun, describes three periods of the “emancipation of the mind” since the end of the Cultural Revolution, in 1978, 1992, and 1997. According to a review in *Ching Pao*, the book broke all of the norms of Chinese veiled debates. “It criticizes people by name in total disregard of their ‘face’ or feelings. All parties involved in the sword crossing in the book are

¹Seth Faison, “China Seeks to Win Over Dissenters on Joining Trade Group,” *New York Times*, International Business Section, June 8, 1999.

² Not only do Chinese analysts generally not admit publicly to the existence of debates, but usually they do not even refer to, let alone criticize, other author’s views in their writings.

³Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service, “Party Schools Commemorate Debate on the Criterion for Truth,” May 14, 1998, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)-CHI-98-134, May 15, 1998. See also, “PRC Marks 20th Anniversary of Ideological Debate,” Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service, May 3, 1998, in FBIS-CHI-98-123, May 6, 1998, and “Free Minds Essential to Reform,” *China Daily*, May 5, 1998, 4.

referred to directly by name and by the title of their works rather than by quoting and commenting on people's opinions as was usually the case in the past. It has been calculated that over 100 articles were cited. Even *Renmin ribao* and *Qiushi* [Party Central Committee publications] were cited. It is really clear where its spearhead is directed against."⁵

FUTURE USE OF CHINESE OPEN SOURCES

Most of the themes in China's perceptions described in this report to the U.S.- China Commission were noted in both David Shambaugh's book about Chinese open sources that were published in the 1980s and my own book that covered Chinese open sources published in the 1990s.

What about the future? Are Chinese views of the USA changing? If so, which authors are leading the way?

At least three key questions ought to be addressed in future translations of these open sources.

First, Are There Changes in the Chinese Prediction of Inevitable US Decline?

Differing only in their views of exactly how fast and in what ways America's powers will decline, Chinese analysts have agreed for at least thirty years in asserting that the U.S. is losing economic, political, and military influence around the world, and therein, its status as a superpower.

Second, Is There Any Shift Away from the View of the U.S. as a Weak Military Power?

Chinese assessments for the past three decades do not treat the United States as "weak" in any absolute sense, only "relative" to specific situations such as the defense of Taiwan. For example, a series of books on the U.S. Armed Forces asserts U.S. technological superiority in practically every field, but the U.S. can supposedly still be defeated, even by North Korea.⁶

⁴Ma Licheng and Ling Zhizhun, *Jiaofeng* (Crossing swords)(Beijing.: China Today Publishing House, March 1998).

⁵According to the *Ching Pao*, the editor-in-chief of the Chinese periodical *Zhongliu*, who was criticized by the book, retaliated by "accusing the authors of 'bullying,' 'baring their fangs,' 'breathing strong as a bull,' and 'becoming arrogant and overbearing.'" See Tsou Wang, "Jiaofeng (Crossing swords) Gives Rise to Confrontation, Puts the Authorities in a 'Dilemma'," *Ching Pao* (The Mirror), August 12, 1998, in FBIS-CHI-98-224, August 13, 1998.

⁶The United States has cut defense personnel by 40 percent, to the smallest level since 1950. Weapon purchases have

Will this Chinese “line” continue? Will China shift its views because of President George W. Bush’s call for a coalition war against terrorism? China’s think tanks have been predicting for decades that various anti-U.S. rivalries and struggles will gradually cause all U.S. alliances to weaken and fade.

Third, Is There Any Evidence of Chinese Appreciation for the U.S. Role in Building a Prosperous and Strong China?

It often astonishes U.S. observers that Chinese open sources do not even “credit,” let alone express any kind of appreciation for the extensive set of deliberate U.S. policies since the early 1970s that have so obviously benefited Chinese economic development.

A single article that did this would stick out immediately.

Instead, a steady “diet” of open source books and articles has continued for at least a decade that the U.S. is seeking to encircle and to “check” or “contain” China’s rise. Apparently, only China’s wise policies, and U.S. weakness and incompetence, has prevented the realization of this sinister American goal! Ironically, then, U.S. aid to China’s growth has been “transformed” by Chinese authors into U.S. attempts to slow China’s growth. Evidence of change on this point would be revealing, and welcome.

CHINA’S REACTIONS TO THE TERRORIST ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The Chinese open sources in the past month have revealed three themes that had been present at least a decade.

- 1] A relative [not absolute] US decline in international power and influence is underway.
- 2] The US government practices deception and repeatedly lies about its intentions.
- 3] China must be vigilant about US actions against China, because the U.S. is making China its enemy.

All three themes were illustrated in a single article in the Chinese owned newspaper Ta Kung Pao on 13 September featured an interview in Beijing with two active duty Chinese colonels, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, who the newspaper called “military theorists who have drawn worldwide attention for their book "Unrestricted Warfare."

declined nearly 70 percent. The 1999 defense budget will be about 40 percent below its 1985 level in real terms, with only 3.1 percent of gross domestic product for defense, the smallest share since 1940.

The two colonels said:

“While the thousands of innocent people killed or injured in the attacks were victims of terrorism, they also were victims of US foreign policy. The day 11 September 2001 very likely is the beginning of the decline of the United States, a superpower. . . . The United States also should learn a lesson from the attacks. The United States has been too self-willed and conceited, likes to dominate others, and has made too many enemies that it has been unable to determine who the enemies were since the attacks occurred. The attacks demonstrated the United States' fragility and weakness and showed that essentially it is unable to stand attacks.”

These three themes date back many years in Chinese open sources about the U.S. For example, after the Kosovo conflict in spring 1999, a number of Chinese authors debated the length of time that the United States would be able to sustain its “unipolar” hegemonic domination and hold back the global trend toward multipolarity. However, agreement about the central trend was not reversed. The debate was only about the length of time it will take for these tendencies and trends to unfold. Some claim the U.S. has another twenty years or more; other estimate less time is left for U.S. “hegemony” to prevail. The Chinese term “*ba chuan*” which is rather politely and euphemistically translated as “hegemony.” However, a more literal interpretation of “*ba chuan*” can also be correctly translated as “despotic power.” What do the Chinese mean by this term?

Chinese national security specialists have been describing America’s role in the future security environment in the same way for a decade: dangerous but declining. In the picturesque terms of ancient Chinese statecraft, America is a decaying “hegemon.” The U.S. leadership is said to be pursuing several dangerous strategies, according to many authors, such as:

- ! Attempting to limit Russia’s recovery and access to resources
- ! Attempting to check or to contain China’s rising influence
- ! Using the Bosnia and Kosovo conflicts to maintain its domination of Europe
- ! Falsely spreading the China Threat Theory in ASEAN to keep U.S. access there
- ! Seeking military bases and new NATO allies in Central Asia
- ! Exploiting the September 11, 2001 terror attacks to continue encircling China
- ! Aiding separatist movements in Tibet, Taiwan, and Xinjiang.

CHINA’S OPEN SOURCES HAVE BEEN PREDICTING U.S. DECLINE

In fact, the idea that U.S. strength is weakening and that its policies will no longer be

effective throughout the world was not new, even in the 1990s. Using internal Chinese documents, Professor Robert S. Ross has shown it was alleged in the early 1980s. For example, U.S. concessions in what formed the August 17, 1982, communiqué between the United States and China were explained as due to U.S. “power decline.” Ross cites one analyst who argued at that time that the U.S. “position of strength is declining” and U.S. policy will “lead to failure everywhere.”⁷

According to official Chinese Marxism, a “capitalist” United States cannot avoid decline forever. Even in military strength and technology, including the development of the revolution in military affairs (RMA), areas where the United States currently is considered to hold the leading position, Chinese military experts claim that there are several reasons the United States is destined to fall behind other nations. This “inevitable” decline of the U.S. hegemon is a decisive feature of China’s assessment of the future. Without U.S. decline, there will be no multipolar structure in which a rising power can seek protection. Without the fading away of U.S. military alliances with Europe and Japan, a rising power will have no new partners with which to align. Additionally, without U.S. decline, Chinese Marxism would be proven false.

Since 1991, some Chinese military authors have described specific U.S. military weaknesses and forecasted that after two decades the superpower status of the United States will end. This report, which cites the views of 70 authors, divides its survey of U.S. decline into two subjects:

! Predictions of U.S. decline in the world.

! Assessments of U.S. military weaknesses

OVERALL U.S. DECLINE

The effect of U.S. military decline will reinforce the trend toward multipolarity and the end of America’s superpower status, because, according to Chinese assessments, U.S. military weaknesses are just one part of the overall fall in U.S. CNP. In fact, Chinese analysts see U.S. decline in virtually any arena. For example, in a discussion about how the newest and highest skyscrapers in the world are all being built in Asia, and many in China, one author writes, “As the 20th century fades, the United States seems to be ceding skyscraper supremacy to the East. Does that imply that the coming century and the coming millennium will belong to the Orient?”⁸ However, as was true of the debates on the period of transition to a multipolar world, Chinese

⁷Robert S. Ross, “China Learns to Compromise: Change in U.S.—China Relations, 1982-1984,” *China Quarterly* 28 (December 1991): 742-773.

⁸Li Haibo, “Heading for the 21st Century,” *Beijing Review* 37, no. 39 (September 26-October 2, 1994): 9.

authors do differ in their views on the extent and rate of U.S. decline. Some analysts focus on the concrete, specific aspects of American weaknesses, while others examine overall U.S. power and compare it with that of other nations.⁹

One of the authors of a major study on the changing world structure by the Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS) asserts that U.S. decline is relative. He explains, "Position of strength is a relative concept; whether a country's position of strength is high or low, strong or weak, can be shown only through a comparison with other countries. In general, the relative decline of America's position of strength is the contrast between the power of the United States and that of other major nations." The author goes on to state that at present, no country will increase its strength quickly enough to surpass the United States before the early 21st century. The rise of Japan, Germany, and other major European and Asian countries "subjected America's position of strength to new challenges, but they still do not constitute a major threat to America's superpower status. This situation will be maintained at least until the beginning of the next century."¹⁰ The former president of SIIS, Chen Qimao, points out that U.S. power can be declining compared to other countries even though its economy and science and technology are strong. "Overall, the U.S. position of strength will continue its relative decline, but in recent years, the U.S. economy has picked up, its economic structure has been adjusted, and, in areas such as the science and technology revolution that takes information as its core, it is at the forefront of the Western nations; therefore, the process of its relative decline will be convoluted, not direct."

He goes on to claim that "Certain far-sighted intelligent U.S. personages have already clearly pointed out that in the new century the U.S. will be transformed from a superpower to a common power (*putong daguo*)."¹¹ He Fang, at the State Council International Studies Center, also believes that the United States will be a common power in the future; however, he provides a possible exemption for U.S. military strength. He writes, "The transition period will be America's evolution process from a superpower to a common power; its military force perhaps will not be included, but its military role is declining."¹²

Social issues are frequently cited by Chinese analysts as an area where the United States has serious troubles. Particularly when compared to other countries, the United States is depicted

⁹The Kosovo crisis and the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in spring 1999 led to a re-evaluation of previous assessments of the pace of the U.S. decline.

¹⁰Ding Xinghao, "Shijie geju zhuanxing qi zhong de Meiguo" (The United States during the transformation of the world structure), in *Kua shiji de shijie geju da zhuanhuan* (Major changes in the world structure at the turn of the century), ed. Chen Qimao (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), 118.

¹¹Chen Qimao, "Qianyan" (Introduction), in *Kua shiji de shijie geju da zhuanhuan*, 8.

¹²He Fang, "Guodu shiqi de guoji xingshi" (The international situation during the transition period), in *2000: Shijie xiang hechu qu?* (2000: where is the world going?), ed. Yang Zheng (Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 1996), 319.

as leading the world in social problems.¹³ For example, one author referred to America as the “Drug Superpower.”¹⁴ A book entitled *American Social Diseases* conveys the impression that pure economic decline would be the least of the problems Americans will face in the future. The author forecasts American weakness based on:

- ! “The great disparity between rich and poor”
- ! “The homeless”
- ! “Wide racial gaps”
- ! “Right-wing extremist groups (militias and white supremacist groups)”
- ! “Destruction of the family and the problems of children and women”
- ! “Crime and drug use”
- ! “Generation gaps”
- ! “Spiritual and moral crisis (‘spiritual deficit’ and ‘moral extinction,’ ‘excessive sexual indulgence’)”
- ! “Crisis of political confidence (lack of trust in the government and congress, disappointment and dissatisfaction with both parties, ‘lost faith’ in the current political mechanism).”¹⁵

The author concludes that U.S. decline is both relative and actual:

America’s international position and influence continue to relatively weaken . . . due to the quickening development of the world’s multipolar trend, so that internationally, the U.S. is subject to greater challenges and restrictions; on the other hand. . . America’s own deep social problems and crises are becoming more and more revealed to the world, so that U.S. international influence is naturally declining.¹⁶

LOSS OF ALLIES

What are the long-term consequences of the United States declining while others rise? Chinese authors assert that as Japan and Western European nations gain more and more power, they will seek influence in international affairs commensurate with their strength and demand equality in their relationships with the United States. In keeping with the

¹³See, Wang Houkang, “Lengzhan hou Ouzhou geju de bianhua” (Post-Cold War changes in Europe’s structure), in *Kua shiji de shijie geju da zhuanhuan*, 153-154.

¹⁴Yang Zheng, ed., *2000: Shijie xiang hechu qu?*, 110.

¹⁵Wan Guang, *Meiguo de shehui bing* (American social diseases)(Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1997), 1-5.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 311.

world's transition toward multipolarity, the decreasing gap between U.S. CNP and that of Japan and Europe means America's allies will be asserting themselves as poles, unwilling to remain the subordinate partners of the United States and submit to its "Unipolar World Strategy."¹⁷

An article by four analysts at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) states, "As a result of their economic growth, more and more countries now dare to say 'no' to the United States. Gone are the days when one or two powers could sit upon high and dominate."¹⁸ Yuan Peng, also of CICIR, agrees, "It is proved in practice that, although the absolute strength of the United States has almost peaked, its international influences and its capability of dominating global affairs have not synchronously increased. On the contrary, they are noticeably not as good as in the past. The multipolar system proposed by China, Russia, France, and other countries has posed a direct challenge to the unipolar strategy of the United States. . . . Of more concern to the United States is the fact that its traditional European allies, Japan, etc., are also gradually drifting away and are hardly of one heart and one mind with the United States on major issues."¹⁹

For its part, the United States, with its "global domination mentality," is expected to fight to hold on to its position of world leadership and supremacy, leading to direct conflicts and struggles with Japan and Europe.²⁰ Although America will be able to maintain its alliances in the short term, Chinese analysts foresee that in the long run:

- ! The United States will lose its global prominence.
- ! The United States will gradually lose its powerful alliances with Europe and Japan as the three powers descend into fierce economic and political rivalries.
- ! As their conflicts with the United States increase, Japan and Europe will

¹⁷Wang Naicheng, "Beiyue dongkuo dui Mei-E-Ou guanxi de yingxiang" (The impact of NATO's eastward expansion on relations between the United States, Russia and Europe), *Guoji zhanlue yanjiu* (International Strategic Studies) 46, no. 4 (October 1997): 18.

¹⁸Yan Xiangjun, Yang Bojiang, Chu Shulong and Dao Shulin, "A Survey of Current Asian Pacific Security," *Contemporary International Relations* 8, no. 7 (July 1994): 1, 2.

¹⁹Yuan Peng, "An Arrogant and Lonely Superpower—The Tradition and History of Hegemony," *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*, May 26, 1999, 3, in FBIS-CHI-1999-0609, June 10, 1999. Yuan is at CICIR.

²⁰Yan Tao, "U.S. Determination on Use of Force and Its 'Global Domination' Mentality," Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service, February 15, 1998, in FBIS-CHI-98-046, February 20, 1998.

work to improve their relations with China.

Jin Dexiang, a senior analyst at CICIR, believes, “Changes in the relative economic status of the United States, Japan, and Germany have exerted a far-reaching impact not only on their external and internal policies but also on world economics, world politics, and international relations.”²¹ Jin argues that while the U.S. economic growth rate and share of world trade declined greatly from its post-World War II levels, due in large part to its arms race with the Soviet Union, the economies of Japan and Germany grew. Subsequently, Japan and Germany were no longer satisfied with economic power but desired influence in other realms as well. “Bulging money bags have whetted the appetite of both Tokyo and Bonn for a larger global role in the political arena.” According to Jin, Japan therefore is “beefing up its military muscle” and “filling up the vacuum left behind by U.S.-Soviet military retrenchment” in the Asia-Pacific region. Germany, too, is seeking a major political role through several tactics. It is striving for a Bonn-centered European Economic Zone while “trying its best to overtake Japan and catch up with the United States in the 21st century.” Jin believes, “The scramble for the political leading role already exists among America, Europe, and Japan,” concluding that “rivalry and contention among the three economic power centers of America, Europe, and Japan promise to replace U.S.-Soviet contention and the arms race as an all-important world issue.”²²

While Jin argues that simply the economic power of Germany has provided it with the foundation to assert itself on the world stage, other authors point to the fact that the joint economic strength of the EU is even greater than that of the United States according to some indicators. When discussing the economic contention and friction that exist between the EU and United States, for example, Yang Dazhou of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) writes, “Europe already possesses the economic strength to contend with the United States; the GNP of the European Union nations already exceeds America’s.”²³

²¹Jin Dexiang, “America vs. Japan and Germany: Why are There Growth Imbalances? What is Next?,” *Contemporary International Relations* 2, no. 5 (May 1992): 8; other quotes in this paragraph are from 10-12. When he wrote this article Jin was Vice President of CICIR.

²²*Ibid.*

²³Yang Dazhou, “1997 nian guoji zhengzhi xingshi de tedian” (The characteristics of the 1997 international political situation), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Politics and Economics) 209, no. 1 (January 1998): 6.

A comparison of how the United States stands up to the European Union (EU) in social issues, economics, science and technology, and military affairs comes from an SIIS study:

“In the future world structure, Europe and Japan are the only forces that have the qualifications to struggle with the United States for the leading world position, as will be compared below. Europe has more advantageous conditions than Japan; Japan’s weak points are Europe’s strong points. . . . The population of the EU is more than half that of the United States, its GNP [gross national product] surpasses Japan’s and is comparable to America’s. The EU share of world trade has already exceeded America’s. The European savings rate is equal to that of Japan and long ago greatly outstripped that of the United States. Europe’s science and technology have very strong competitive power, based on Japanese statistics; in the world’s 110 important technology areas, Europe is in the leading position in 34. Europe’s reliance on the world is not as great as Japan’s, it has comparatively vast territory, the trade among the countries of Europe is very vigorous, and natural resources can be obtained through many channels. . . . In Europe, on the basis of sovereign nations, each country already has suitable military force; if in the future after they establish a common military structure, if they further engage in arms expansion, it will not, like Japan, give rise to contrary political consequences. When comparing internal conditions, Europe surpasses the United States in numerous areas. The standard of living of the people in Western and Northern Europe is not poorer than in the United States and there are far fewer city evils than in the United States. There are not as many racial and national problems as in the United States. The slums often seen in the United States almost cannot be found in Western and Northern Europe. According to statistics, of American children, 22 percent live in poverty, but in Germany it is only 5 percent. The quality of Europe’s middle and elementary school education is higher than America’s, and the crime rate and number of drug users are less than in the United States. Western and Northern Europe, in the social welfare areas of medical insurance, old-age pensions and unemployment subsidies also are better than the United States.”

In addition to economic considerations, another major factor cited by many authors that has contributed to the increasing rivalry between the United States and Japan and Europe is the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. To quote Jin Dexiang, the end of the Cold War resulted

in the “removal of the glue cementing Western unity.”²⁴ Sa Benwang, a Senior Researcher at the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), agrees. He believes “the demise of the ‘common threat’ and ‘common enemy,’ and the subsequent demise of the ‘common target’ of the U.S.-European-Japanese ‘Cold War alliance,’” reduced the possibility of coordination and compromise, so that “‘west-west’ contradictions between the United States and Europe and Japan will be on the rise.”²⁵ Three CICIR analysts claim that the combination of “eroded alliance cohesion” and the growth of the EU means

a transformation process has been underway to turn the transatlantic partners into strategic rivals. . . . This results in transatlantic bickering and quarrels in political, security, economic and trade fields. Bilateral tensions grew over Bosnia, NATO, trade and other issues with never-ending disputes. Thus the demise of a common strategic goal had put the alliance built up in the Cold War in jeopardy and pushed it close to the verge of collapse.²⁶

Several analysts at CICIR argue that the United States realizes its “leadership capacity and cohesive force” are weakening and therefore it has to “cotton up” to its allies by supporting Germany and Japan to become permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, allowing Europe to build a certain amount of self-defense strength and encouraging Japan to play a greater role in Asia. They explain that the United States does this “to achieve ‘soft control’ over these countries.”²⁷ Most authors, however, believe that the United States will be more active in its efforts to maintain power. For example, Yang Shuheng at the Center for Peace and Development, argues that the United States intends to establish its dominant position.²⁸ According to Qi Deguang of CICIR, the United States “purposefully took an attitude of aloofness” toward the Bosnia crisis to “wait to see the fun when they failed.”²⁹ After the European effort to reduce the crisis failed, the

²⁴Jin Dexiang, “America vs. Japan and Germany, 12.

²⁵Sa Benwang, “Perspectives of International Strategic Patterns in the 21st Century,” *Liaowang*, no. 37 (September 14, 1998): 41-42, in FBIS-CHI-98-268, September 29, 1998.

²⁶Yang Mingjie, Gan Ailan, and Cao Xia, “Groping for a New Trans-Atlantic Partnership,” *Contemporary International Relations* 6, no. 4 (April 1996): 4. The authors are Assistant Research Professors at CICIR.

²⁷Xu Zhixian, Zhang Minqian, and Hong Jianjun, “On the Foreign Strategy and Trends of China Policy of the U.S., Western Europe and Japan at the Turn of the Century,” *Contemporary International Relations* 8, no. 3 (March 1998): 12-14.

²⁸Yang Shuheng, “Ou, Mei, E zai Bohei de juezhu” (The rivalry among Europe, the United States, and Russia in Bosnia), *Heping yu fazhan* (Peace and Development) 49, no. 3 (August 1994): 29-32.

²⁹Qi Deguang, “The Bosnian Civil War: Retrospect and Prospect,” *Contemporary International Relations* 4, no. 8 (August 1994): 10-11. Qi is an Associate Research Professor at CICIR.

United States started to proclaim that it must play the leading role and bombed the Bosnian-Serb position to show that the United States was seizing overall control.

Another analyst suggests that a key factor causing the United States to enlarge NATO is that “the United States finds its national power weakened, . . . [and] it seeks to rely on NATO to continue its leading role in the world.”³⁰ According to Chinese analysts, America’s goal through the NATO eastward expansion is both to weaken and encircle Russia, and to provide itself with a means of consolidating and furthering its leadership position in Europe. Zhang Liangneng, an analyst at CICIR, states “NATO eastward expansion is a vital strategic step for the United States to control Europe and contain Russia.” However, Zhang asserts that the United States may not be able to realize its aspirations where Europe is concerned, because

The Western European countries, particularly France and Germany, have already realized that the era when they had to rely purely on the United States to maintain regional security in Europe is gone. Only by promoting economic and political integration, enhancing military and defense cooperation, establishing united defense institutions and military forces and forging a solid “European pillar,” can Europe’s security and stability, as well as other interests, be truly protected.³¹

Zhang’s argument is supported by another CICIR analyst, who believes that European nations not only intend to create a more unified military force independent of the United States, but also plan to utilize NATO to do so: “Although both the United States and Western Europe advocate NATO eastward expansion, they are not entirely the same in regard to the concrete objective, style and pace of the extension. While the United States attempts to make use of the NATO move to maintain its own leading position in European affairs, Western Europe wants to build up its own ‘defense pillar’ through NATO expansion so as to get rid of American control.”³² A Senior Research Fellow at CIISS, Wang Naicheng, expects that this “U.S.-European contradiction of control and counter-control” will become more and more acute, because each side will intensify its efforts to establish its position. “Europe is striving to change its role during the Cold War period as the little partner utterly controlled by and dependent upon America. It is demanding that power be shared in order to establish an equal, true partnership with the United States, but the United States refuses to concede and instead is becoming even more domineering, trying

³⁰Wan Shirong, “Shi ren zhumu de beiyue zuzhi dongkuo wenti” (NATO’s eastward expansion, an issue attracting world attention), *Guoji wenti yanjiu* (International Studies) 59, no. 1 (January 1996): 12-17.

³¹Zhang Liangneng, “Western Europe and NATO Enlargement,” *Contemporary International Relations* 7, no. 5 (May 1997): 19. Zhang is an Associate Research Professor at CICIR.

³²Feng Yujun, “Moscow vs. NATO: Compromise Will Not Dispel Apprehensions,” *Contemporary International Relations* 7, no. 5 (May 1997): 13. Feng is an Assistant Research Professor at CICIR.

vigorously to consolidate its position as the overlord in NATO.”³³

Europe is not the only place where Chinese authors predict a U.S.-EU struggle for leadership; they also foresee conflicts between the two Cold War allies around the globe as Europe moves to expand its influence. Asia in particular is pointed to by Chinese as an area where European nations are striving to establish closer ties. An article by three CICIR analysts’ states,

Euro-American contention will be even more fierce in areas beyond the transatlantic region, especially in the Asia-Pacific. The European Union has initiated an omni directional strategy for expanding its foreign relations through thrusting southward to the Mediterranean Sea and North Africa, advancing eastward to Eastern and Central Europe and Russia, and designating Asia as the key area for contention with the United States.³⁴

The first Asia-Europe Summit Conference in Thailand (March 1996) was considered by the authors to be a symbol of greater closeness between the two regions, presaging further decline in U.S. global influence. They write that in addition to seeking “stability and equilibrium in world political and economic order,” one of the main goals of the summit was to “further weaken U.S. dominance in the global economy and international relations and frustrate U.S. attempts to seek post-Cold War global hegemony.”³⁵ Chen Feng, a Senior Research Fellow at CISS, pointed out that the Asia-Europe summit meant that “for the first time the United States, as the only superpower in the world, was unable to take part in this significant international conference.”³⁶

As the desire to be independent poles grows among European nations and in Japan, Chinese analysts predict that they will work to improve their relations with China. Three CICIR analysts conclude that the result of the power struggles among the Cold War allies will be that America, Western Europe, and Japan will “attach more importance to the China factor in their foreign strategies” because of the “enhancement of China’s Comprehensive National Power and the extension of China’s international influence.”³⁷ Li Zhongcheng, also at CICIR, agrees that China will become a new focus in international relations because of its increased strength, but argues that China’s growing importance may actually be one of the factors that come between the allies. “With the improvement of its political big power status, Japan will gain more independence in dealing with regional and international affairs. Therefore, even though more stress has been

³³Wang Naicheng, “Beiyue dongkuo dui Mei-E-Ou guanxi de yingxiang,” 18, 20.

³⁴Yang Mingjie, Gan Ailan, and Cao Xia, “Groping for a New Transatlantic Partnership,” 8.

³⁵Ibid., 8.

³⁶Cheng Feng, “Retrospects and Prospects of the International Strategic Situation,” 12.

³⁷Xu Zhixian, Zhang Minqian, and Hong Jianjun, “On the Foreign Strategy and Trends of China Policy,” 12-14.

laid on keeping vigilance over China within the U.S.-Japanese alliance, it will be very difficult for Japan and the United States to act synchronously and speak in one voice on their China policy. Worse still, they could even become major rivals to each other in vying for economic dominance in the Asia-Pacific.”³⁸ Gao Heng of CASS asserts that Japan is not only working on its relations with China, but is also focusing on Russia. “Under pressure from the United States, Japan accepted the new policy of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. However, for its own interests (to serve as a world level power), Japan could not but try its best to improve its relations with Russia and China.”³⁹

According to Gao, Germany is also focusing on improving its relations with Russia in order to expand its influence, even though it is “America’s ‘leading partner’ in Europe.”⁴⁰ Gao, like other authors, mentions the developing closeness in German-French-Russian relations and the recent creation of a large triangular relationship among the three. Wu Guoqing of CASS explains that “political triangles” such as the German-French-Russian one “constitute new geopolitical centers” that alter Europe’s geopolitical structure.⁴¹ Hu Ning of the Center for Peace and Development argues that Germany, France, and other Western European nations are seeking to improve relations with Russia at the same time that NATO is pursuing its eastward expansion, because Russia can serve as a counter to the United States. Europe “needs to draw support from Russia’s power to oppose the U.S. domination of European security affairs, with the aim of building a U.S.-Russian-Western European ‘multipolar restrict and balance’ situation.”⁴² Chinese authors quote Yeltsin as stating that if he had to choose, he would side with Europe over the United States: “President Yeltsin . . . said during the Denver Summit, ‘If conflicts occur somewhere between Europe and the United States, Russia will favor the position of Europe, sharing weal and woe together.’”⁴³

Despite the extensive writing by Chinese analysts about the trends of growing rivalries and conflicts between America and Japan and Europe, most expect the alliances to endure in the

³⁸Li Zhongcheng, “The Role of an Emerging China in World Politics,” *Contemporary International Relations* 8, no. 2 (February 1998): 13. Li is a Research Professor in the Division for China and World Studies.

³⁹Gao Heng, “Shijie daguo guanxi de xin tedian” (New characteristics of the relations between the world’s major nations), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and Politics) 209, no. 1 (January 1998): 8.

⁴⁰Ibid., 8.

⁴¹Wu Guoqing, “Xi Ou lianhe you you xin jin zhang, duli zizhu jinyibu zengqiang” (There is new progress in the unification of Western Europe, and its independence and initiative is further strengthened), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and Politics) 209, no.1 (January 1998): 17.

⁴²Hu Ning, “Beiyue dongkuang xianxi” (A brief analysis of NATO eastward expansion), *Heping yu fazhan* (Peace and Development) 64, no. 2 (May 1998): 31.

⁴³Quoted in Wang Naicheng, “Beiyue dongkuo dui Mei-E-Ou guanxi de yingxiang,” 20.

short term. Regarding the United States and Europe, for example, Wang Naicheng of CISS writes that, although “their contradiction has intensified,” he believes that “in the foreseeable future . . . coordination and cooperation will remain the central point in their relations.” Because of Russia’s existence as a common potential threat and Europe’s continued, though decreasing, dependence on the United States in security affairs, and because of economic interdependence, “it is difficult to change in a short time the feature of the relationship where the United States is the principal and Europe is the subordinate. . . . Nevertheless, the cohesive force linking America and Europe in NATO from the beginning of the post-Cold War era has weakened with each passing day, and the contradiction, quite intense at times, has been developing continuously.” He believes that as EU integration continues, the pattern of the U.S.-EU relationship will change. “With the progress in EU political, economic and defense cooperation, certainly Western European countries will pose even graver challenges to U.S. hegemony.”⁴⁴

Wang’s views are shared by Sa Benwang of CIIS, who sees the weakening of the alliances between America and Japan and Europe as inevitable but believes that they will not abruptly end: “The centrifugal trend of Europe and Japan away from the United States as head of the alliance will further increase, and the tendency of the alliance to weaken will be hard to stop. Of course, this will also be a tortuous and complex process; it is expected that alliance relations will be maintained up to 2015.”⁴⁵ Views similar to those held by the above two analysts are presented more strongly by three CICIR analysts who predict that major U.S.-EU confrontations only await the growth of EU unified CNP:

There simply does not exist any room for fundamentally harmonizing such mutually contradictory strategic goals. This divergence can be covered up at a time when Europe still falls short of U.S. strength. However, once Western Europe succeeds in catching up in strength with the United States, serious conflicts will flare up between the two sides over their strategic goals.⁴⁶

OTHER PROPHECIES OF FUTURE U.S. DECLINE

Chinese analysts quote American authors out of context to suggest that distinguished Americans agree with China’s assessment. It is true that American authors frequently predict drastic decline for their country, but these warnings are always linked to a set of recommendations that, if followed, will save the day and avert the fall. Chinese authors omit these linked recommendations, thereby giving their readers the impression that many sage

⁴⁴Ibid., 20.

⁴⁵Sa Benwang, “Perspectives of International Strategic Patterns in the 21st Century,” 41-42.

⁴⁶Yang Mingjie, Gan Ailan, and Cao Xia, “Groping for a New Transatlantic Partnership,” 6.

Americans predict their nation's own inevitable weakening.⁴⁷

Henry Kissinger has been quoted as stating that America will now be only a “beggar policeman,” because the United States sought coalition funding for the Gulf War. A glowing review of a book by Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Out of Control*, in China's most prestigious military journal subtly distorted a key point of the book. Brzezinski suggests that the United States will risk losing its global leadership role if it does not improve its materialistic values and present a more attractive model civilization than it does at present. According to Colonel Pan Jiabin of the Academy of Military Science, the book “is certainly representative of Western thought, especially that of high-level U.S. Government views.” Pan then misquotes Brzezinski: “The U.S. position as a global power is in imminent danger.”⁴⁸ Pan omits Brzezinski's recommendations, which, if followed, would assure America's superpower status. Colonel Zhang Zhaohong, of NDU, cites Samuel Huntington on American weaknesses. He writes, “This U.S. leadership group lacks the ability to sit in a tent and devise successful strategies. Huntington's latest book, *The Lonely Superpower*, includes some views with which I rather agree. The book points out that when the power of the sole superpower reaches a considerable degree, it has too much trust in its own strength, does not take a broad view of anything, and is prone to make many mistaken policy decisions.”⁴⁹

Paul Kennedy's book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, is another example of American writing frequently cited by Chinese analysts. Kennedy argues that high military spending leads to the weakening of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, while low military spending allowed Germany and Japan to rise. CICIR analyst Jin Dexiang, quotes Kennedy on the link between large defense budgets and the decline of a country's economy and overall national power. “If . . . too large a proportion of the state's resources is diverted from wealth creation and allocated instead to military purposes, then that is likely to lead to a weakening of national power over the longer term. In the same way if a state overextends itself strategically . . . it runs the risk that the potential benefits from external expansion may be outweighed by the great expense of it all—a dilemma which becomes acute if the nation concerned has entered a period of relative economic decline.” Jin then puts forward his own belief that the United States is already entrapped in the danger zone predicted by Kennedy. “As a matter of fact,” he writes,

⁴⁷Chinese analysts do this for other countries, as well as for Taiwan. See Tai Baolin, *Taiwan shehui qiwen daguan* (The unheard of magnificent spectacle of Taiwan society) (Beijing: Hongqi chubanshe, 1992).

⁴⁸Pan Jiabin, “‘Shiqu kongzhi: 21 shiji qianye de quanqiu hunluan’—Burejisiji dui guoji geju yanbian de fenxi yu renshi” (Out of control: global turmoil on the eve of the 21st century—Brzezinski's analysis and understanding of the evolution of the international structure), *Zhongguo junshi kexue* (China Military Science) 30, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 158, 160. Pan is at the Foreign Military Studies Department of AMS.

⁴⁹Ma Ling, “The Attempt Behind the ‘Bombing in Error’—Interview with Renowned Military Commentator Zhang Zhaohong,” *Ta Kung Pao* (Hong Kong), May 17, 1999, A4, in FBIS-CHI-1999-1518, May 19, 1999. Zhang is Director of the Science and Technology Teaching and Research Section of NDU.

“Washington today does not merely ‘run the risk’ of weakening national power, it is actually bogged down in the quagmire of relative decline. Relentless expansion of war industry has entailed . . . disastrous consequences on the long-term development of the U.S. economy.”⁵⁰

U.S. AND NAZI’S - LORD OF THE EARTH

Chinese authors have repeatedly pointed out that one important cause of America’s future decline is its conscious choice of a mistaken foreign policy. After the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, the depiction of America’s foreign policy in the official Communist Party newspaper became particularly vivid. For example, the United States was likened to Nazi Germany in eight specific ways in a long article that concluded that the pursuit of such Nazi-like policies would end in “complete failure.”⁵¹

In lieu of excerpting many other articles that also describe U.S. foreign policy as a search for world domination, this one will be quoted in sufficient detail to reveal the Chinese assessment of American goals clearly. It begins by responding to the rhetorical question of how the United States today and Nazi Germany are alike:

! “First, their self-centeredness and ambition to seek hegemony are exactly the same. In his notorious book, *Mein Kampf*, Hitler advocated ‘ethnic superiority’ and ‘living space,’ maintaining that human society was one that observed the law of the jungle, and that ethnic Germans should expand and become the ‘lord of the earth.’ If we ask which country in the world wants to be the ‘lord of the earth’ like Nazi Germany did in the past, there is only one answer, namely the United States, which upholds hegemonism.”

! “Second, the United States has outdone Nazi Germany with respect to increasing military budgets and expanding its armament. Although the United States has yet to launch a new world war, the size of its armament expansion and the frequency of its use of military strength overseas have far exceeded those of Nazi Germany in the past.”

! “Third. . . . When Hitler came to power, he made anti-Communism both his strategic goal and tactical means for realizing his ambitions of engaging in arms expansion and war preparations and of contending for world hegemony. . . . It was also precisely under the guise of possessing ‘common values’ that the United States and Japan have reinforced their military alliance, so that the latter will play the role of the ‘NATO of the Far East.’ What substantive differences are there between this kind of expansionist tactic and the Nazism of the past?”

! “Fourth, the trend toward replacing global international organizations with military

⁵⁰Jin Dexiang, “America vs. Japan and Germany,” 3.

⁵¹Observer, “We Urge Hegemonism Today To Take a Look at the Mirror of History,” *People’s Daily*, June 22, 1999, in FBIS-CHI-1999-0622.

alliances is not without precedent. After World War I, on the proposal of then-U.S. President Wilson, 44 countries formed the League of Nations in 1920. . . . Germany was a permanent member of the league's executive council. It withdrew from the league in October 1933 due to restrictions on its program of arms expansion and war preparations. . . . Of course, the United States and its allies will not withdraw from the United Nations. But is not the way they have repeatedly bypassed the United Nations and wantonly intervened in other countries through their military alliance or bloc very similar to the Fascist way of Germany?"

! "Fifth, the strategic priorities and directions of global expansion are basically similar. Hitler made Europe a strategic priority. . . . Today, Europe is also the U.S. global strategic priority . . . the United States has reinforced its military alliance with Japan in Asia, making Japan an important accomplice in its armed intervention against other Asian countries. This is also an attempt to gain control of the European and Asian continents from the Western and Eastern fronts, with the ultimate goal of fulfilling its strategy of dominating the world."

! "Sixth, the methods they employed in dismembering other countries' territories and encroaching upon their sovereignty through exploiting their ethnic contradictions were very similar. Hitler, to secure the passageway for taking over the Balkans, plotted in June 1937 the 'Green Project' of annexing Czechoslovakia by employing its ethnic issues. Czechoslovakia was a multiethnic country and its Sudetenland was inhabited by some Germans. Gorpel [name as transliterated] clamored that 3.5 million Germans in Sudetenland were 'tortured' and Germany could not afford to 'watch as an onlooker'. . . . In less than five months, Nazi Germany took over the entire Czechoslovakia. Today, the U.S.-led NATO is attempting to dismember and control the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by taking advantage of its ethnic problems. . . . Is it not exceedingly clear from what the United States and NATO did during the Kosovo crisis who was acting like Nazi Germany?"

! "Seventh, utilization of advanced technology to slaughter peaceful citizens is by no means less barbaric. . . . Hitler not only used in war what were considered to be the most advanced weapons of the time, such as airplanes, tanks, and long-range artillery, to massacre peaceful citizens in anti-Fascist countries, but also built concentration camps in Auschwitz and in other areas to slaughter Jews and prisoners of war with 'advanced' technology. Executioners drove hundreds and thousands of people into gas chambers and poured cyanide through air holes in the roof, killing them all. Today, the U.S. hegemonists used high-tech weapons to attack FRY civilian facilities several hundred miles away from the battlefield, or, with laser and global position systems several thousand meters above the sky, treated innocent and peaceful citizens as live targets. The flagrant use of missiles by the U.S.-led NATO to attack the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia was a barbaric atrocity that the then-Nazi Germany had not dared to commit."

! "Eighth, there is no difference between brazen undermining of international law

and aggressive acts. What is the difference between the modern-day hegemonists who willfully undermine international law and the erstwhile Nazi Germany?"

! "When we read world history, we know that many empires that had dominated for some time finally ended in decline. Particularly in this century, the worldwide colonial system that the Western powers built for several hundreds of years has collapsed. They employ the wishful thinking that fortune is now on their side and that it seems to be the turn of the United States—the sole superpower in the world—to dominate the world and to become 'the master of the globe'. . . . Even though they may run rampant for a while, they will eventually end in complete failure."

Although this article is harsher in tone and more intemperate than others, it does not deviate much in substance from Chinese authors who also condemn the "hegemonic" goals of the United States. Some authors seem to hold out hope that Washington will someday change its foreign policy goals, but this debate is muted at present. PLA authors assert that the United States will do well in the RMA only in its initial period of a decade or so, then other nations like Russia and Japan will surpass America in developing future RMA-type forces.⁵² Failure with the RMA will affect victory in future war, because "Non-RMA troops will not possess the qualifications for future high-technology warfare."⁵³

The assessment of U.S. military decline is reinforced by Chinese civilian authors. Authoritative civilian analysts forecast a decline in America's diplomatic role in the 21st century, as multipolarity opens up the potential for new alignments and "partnerships," and Japan and Europe seek to improve their relations with China. According to the ancient statecraft of the Warring States era, a too-powerful hegemon could easily destroy a rising rival. However, a coalition or a series of "strategic partnerships" could save a rising power from such destruction if the hegemon were declining. Chinese authors claim, "Today the trend toward multipolarization in the world is quickening, which prevents the United States from achieving world dominance. In fact the United States is declining relatively in the world. The gap between insufficient power and overly lofty goals fundamentally frustrates its scheme to create a single-pole world."⁵⁴

FUTURE MILITARY WEAKNESSES

⁵²For a discussion of the implementation of the RMA in Russia, Germany, France, England and Japan, see Li Qinggong, "1997 nian di guoji junshi anquan xingshi" (The international military security situation in 1997), *Guoji zhanlue yanjiu* (International Strategic Studies) 47, no. 1 (January 1998): 10-11.

⁵³Su Zhisong, *Kua shiji de junshi xin guandian* (New military points of view at the turn of the century) (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1997), 14.

⁵⁴Zhang Linhong, "U.S. Global Strategy Seeks World Domination," *Zhenli de zhuiqiu*, no. 9 (September 11, 1997): 2-4, in FBIS-CHI-97-350, December 18, 1997.

Some Chinese authors have treated the question of America's future extensively as they analyze the future security environment, so it is important to know the baseline of how China assesses the United States today. In general, Chinese authors assert the following points about current U.S. military weakness:

- ! The United States barely won the Gulf War.
- ! Saddam could have won with a better strategy.
- ! The United States today cannot "contain" Chinese power.
- ! The United States is unable to execute its military strategy of two major regional contingencies.
- ! U.S. munitions cannot damage deep underground bunkers (like those in China).

Chinese books on the U.S. military are plentiful and largely descriptive.⁵⁵ Some Chinese military textbooks about the U.S. Armed Forces begin with a sentence that declares U.S. military technology is the best in the world,⁵⁶ but this apparent praise is misleading. The main point of all writings about U.S. forces is to emphasize their weak points and their vulnerability to defeat by China. Not one of the more than 200 books reviewed for this study admitted that the United States could defeat China by force in any scenario—but many techniques can supposedly defeat

⁵⁵Relevant books include: Chen Haihong, *Meiguo junshi liliang de jueqi* (The rise of American military strength)(Huhehaote: Nei Menggu daxue chubanshe, 1995); Cui Shizeng and Wang Yongnan, *Meijun lianhe zuozhan* (U.S. military joint operations)(Beijing: Guofang daxue chubanshe, 1995); Hu Siyuan and Chen Hu, *Meijun hangtian zhan* (U.S. military space warfare) (Beijing: Guofang daxue chubanshe, 1995); Pan Xiangting and Sun Zhanping, eds., *Gao jishu tiaojian xia Meijun jubu zhanzheng* (American military local warfare under high-technology conditions)(Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1994); Wang Fang and others, *Shiji chao ba—Meilijian* (The century's ultra-tyrant—America)(Beijing: Shishi chubanshe, 1997); Wang Guoqiang, *Meiguo youxian zhanzheng lilun yu shijian* (U.S. limited warfare theory and practice)(Beijing: Guofang daxue chubanshe, 1995); Wang Zhuo, *Xiandai Meijun houqin* (Modern U.S. logistics)(Beijing: Guofang daxue chubanshe, 1995); Yin Chengkui, Gao Guixiu, Li Ligang and Su Yusheng, *Meijun gao jishu wuqi zhuangbei yingyong yu fazhan* (Use and development of U.S. high-technology weaponry)(Beijing: Guofang daxue chubanshe, 1995).

⁵⁶See the 10-book Modern U.S. Military Studies Series (*Xiandai Meijun yanjiu congshu*) published by authors from China's National Defense University in 1995. Hu Siyuan and Dai Jinyu, *Xiandai Meiguo kongjun* (The modern U.S. Air Force)(Beijing: Guofang daxue chubanshe, 1995), 1, state, "The U.S. Air Force is the most modern Air Force in the world today." Similarly, Wang Zhongchun, Zhao Ziyu, and Zhou Bailin, *Xiandai Meiguo lujun* (The modern U.S. Army)(Beijing: Guofang daxue chubanshe, 1995), write, "The U.S. Army is the army with the highest level of modernized equipment in the world today." Yin Gu, Li Jie, and Lei Xiangping, *Xiandai Meiguo haijun* (The modern U.S. Navy)(Beijing: Guofang daxue chubanshe, 1995), 1, state, "The United States is currently the world's only maritime superpower." Finally, Wang Baofu, *Meiguo tezhong zuozhan budui yu tezhong zuozhan* (U.S. Special forces and special warfare)(Beijing: Guofang daxue chubanshe, 1995), 1, states, "The U.S. Special Combat Units have the best equipment and the largest scope of any special combat force in the world."

U.S. forces.⁵⁷ There are frequent references to China's "defeat" of U.S. forces in both Korea and Vietnam. The United States is said likely to fall behind others in the RMA. It is said that even Japan is developing better military technology than the United States in several areas and that the United States is "dependent" on Japan for military technology.⁵⁸

The devaluing of U.S. military power is accompanied by frequent references in military books and the prestigious journal, *China Military Science*, to the importance of ancient Chinese statecraft, especially to the early centuries of Chinese history, when several warring states adroitly manipulated a balance of power until one state achieved primacy and assumed the name "China." Both the challenge of new military technology and the need to use traditional Chinese statecraft figure in this story of the founding of China; both are also often mentioned when Chinese authors address the 21st century.

In general, most Chinese analysts since 1991 have acknowledged that the United States is the "sole military superpower" and has the most technologically advanced army, navy and air force in the world. Somewhat humorously, one analyst writes, "In the last 20 years, people have turned pale at the mere mention of U.S. military strength."⁵⁹ However, they suggest that this characterization of narrow technological superiority would mean very little in a U.S. conflict with China. Chinese authors repeatedly emphasize that major, fatal weaknesses characterize the American Armed Forces. Almost all universally cite Chairman Mao's requirement that the dialectical aspect of Chinese military science requires assessment of weakness as well as strength. The Chinese view is that the United States suffers from fundamental logistical weaknesses, and from several operational weaknesses. Chinese authors believe Saddam Hussein, using Chinese-style strategy, could have exploited these weaknesses in order to defeat the United States..

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EVEN NORTH KOREA CAN DEFEAT AMERICA

Chinese military authors also appear to devalue the effectiveness of U.S. forces in a future Korean scenario. According to a colonel at AMS, several factors ensure U.S. defeat "if in the next few

⁵⁷In January 1998, a weekly column entitled "Future Warfare" began to appear in the *Liberation Army Daily* that included advice on how an "inferior" national force can defeat a "superior" force.

⁵⁸Riben: Junshi jishu lingxian Meiguo" (Japan: leading the U.S. in military technology), *Junshi wenchai* (Military Digest) 4, no. 2 (1996): 18. This article asserts that Japan has modified its fighter aircraft to exceed the turn rate of U.S. fighters; that F-117 exteriors and 95 per cent of U.S. military electronics depend on Japan and that Japan could shift the Russian-American balance of power in missile accuracy if it sold the same electronics to Russia that it does to the United States.

⁵⁹Wu Chi, "Gulf War Reveals U.S. Weak Points," *Hong Kong Ta Kung Pao*, March 20, 1991, 3, in FBIS-CHI-91-058, March 26, 1991, 2.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 2.

years a Korean War erupted.” His main points are:

! The United States will not have 6 months to deploy and train forces. Instead, “the Korean People’s Army will surprise attack South Korean air bases, ports and communication lines.”

! “U.S. casualties will not be as low as in the Gulf War. . . . On the Korean peninsula, the population is dense, with river networks and mountains, roads are few, unsuitable to armor . . . casualties will be extremely high.”

! “North Korea’s mountains are wrapped in clouds and mist; it will be difficult for the U.S. Air Force and high-technology weaponry to give full play to their vast superiority.”

! Temperatures of negative 40 degrees centigrade “provide excellent conditions” for guerrilla warfare.

! North Korea will not allow the United States to land in the rear.

! U.S. forces lack numerical strength. During the Korean War, U.S. troops reached over 400,000, but the result was not victory. In the 1960s and 1970s, in the Vietnam War American forces were 663,000 and had great technical superiority, but the result also was defeat. U.S. forces in year 2000 will be 70 percent of today.⁶¹

WEAKNESSES IN THE GULF WAR

The Chinese perception of American strategic weakness based on logistics is further compounded by the assertions of many Chinese military authors that American operational weaknesses could one day make U.S. forces extremely vulnerable to a Chinese-style strategy. An overall assessment of the war comes from the Vice President of AMS, Li Jijun, who writes that during the Gulf War,

U.S. Armed Forces revealed many weak points. For example, the combat consumption was too great, and it could not last long. There was great reliance on the allied countries. The high-tech equipment was intensive and its key links were rather weak; once they were damaged, combat effectiveness was greatly reduced. Also if the adversary of the United States was not Iraq, if the battle was not fought on the flat desert, if the Iraq Armed Forces struck first during the phase when U.S. Armed Forces were still assembling, or if Iraq Armed Forces withdrew suddenly before the U.S. Armed Forces struck, then the outcome of the war might have been quite different.⁶²

⁶¹Zhen Xi, *Kelindun junshi zhanlue yu di er ci Chaoxian zhanzheng shexiang*, 66-68.

⁶²Li Jijun, *Junshi lilun yu zhanzheng shijian* (Notes on military theory and military strategy) (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1994), in Pillsbury, 227.

FUTURE USE OF CHINESE OPEN SOURCES

Most of the themes in China's perceptions described in this report to the U.S.- China Commission were noted in both David Shambaugh's book about Chinese open sources that were published in the 1980s and my own book that covered Chinese open sources published in the 1990s.

What about the future? Are Chinese views of the USA changing? If so, which authors are leading the way?

At least three key questions ought to be addressed in future translations of these open sources.

First, Are There Changes in the Chinese Prediction of Inevitable US Decline?

Differing only in their views of exactly how fast and in what ways America's powers will decline, Chinese analysts have agreed for at least thirty years in asserting that the U.S. is losing economic, political, and military influence around the world, and therein, its status as a superpower.

Second, Is There Any Shift Away from the View of the U.S. as a Weak Military Power?

Chinese assessments for the past three decades do not treat the United States as "weak" in any absolute sense, only "relative" to specific situations such as the defense of Taiwan. For example, a series of books on the U.S. Armed Forces asserts U.S. technological superiority in practically every field, despite U.S. reductions since 1991.⁶³

U.S. military vulnerabilities are only one contributing factor in the overall process of U.S. decline depicted by Chinese analysts. While some authors focus on specific areas where America is weakening, such as in military affairs or domestic social problems, other analysts argue that the country's decline is relative, that it is only declining compared to other nations whose power is increasing. One predicted outgrowth of this trend of falling national strength is that the U.S. is expected to lose its allies. As the power of Europe and Japan increases, and they no longer must depend upon America either militarily or economically, they are expected to come into greater conflict with the U.S. Consequently, rivalries and struggles are expected to gradually cause the alliances to weaken and fade. Moreover, at the same time that their relationships are deteriorating with the U.S., Chinese analysts predict that Japan and Europe will be striving to improve their ties

⁶³The United States has cut defense personnel by 40 percent, to the smallest level since 1950. Weapon purchases have declined nearly 70 percent. The 1999 defense budget will be about 40 percent below its 1985 level in real terms, with only 3.1 percent of gross domestic product for defense, the smallest share since 1940.

to China.

Third, Is There Any Evidence of Chinese Appreciation for the U.S. Role in Building a Prosperous and Strong China?

This question is self-explanatory. Single article in a Party-controlled journal would be most welcome.

Report prepared by: Dr. Michael Pillsbury
October 19, 2001