

Chinese air force officer discusses operations at Ansham Airfield, China

China's International Behavior Activism, Opportunism, and Diversification

By EVAN S. MEDEIROS

DOD (D. Myles Cullen)

China has arrived as a truly global actor. Its economic and political interests now span the globe, having gradually moved beyond the Asia-Pacific in the last decade. Beijing is active on issues and in regions previously peripheral to its diplomatic calculations. Its foreign policy decisions are influencing global perceptions, institutions, relationships, and processes. China's global activism is altering—but not transforming—the conduct of international relations at virtually all levels of the system. Within Asia, China has become a preeminent power, engaged in multiple dimensions of regional economic and security affairs. Indeed, it has become a fulcrum of change in the regional order, ensuring that its pivotal role will deepen in the coming years. Moreover, it is no longer appropriate to talk of drawing China into the existing international community of accepted norms, rules, and institutions. On balance, it is already there.

These trends beg questions: What is China up to in international affairs, and why? What are its aims as a regional power and as an emerging global actor? How is it pursuing them? Are its approaches consistent with America's current economic and security interests? What types of diplomatic challenges does China present to U.S. diplomatic and security interests?

To some extent, China's leaders have articulated answers to these questions. Its policymakers claim that they seek "to foster a stable and peaceful international environment that is conducive to building a well-off society in an all around way." They assert that the themes of "peace, development and cooperation" now define Chinese foreign policy in pursuit of building a "harmonious world" in international affairs. It is not that these claims are patently untrue or a clever strategic prevarication. Rather, they are simply insufficient to explain the multiplicity of diplomatic strat-

egies, interests, and actions. In other words, there is more to China's foreign policy. This article aims to fill these gaps.

To this end, this article examines China's current *international behavior*, which is a collective term encompassing both foreign relations (bilateral and multilateral) and the foreign policies used to pursue them. It argues that China's international behavior is best understood as being comprised of multiple layers, each adding to our understanding of the strategies, drivers, and tools informing China's diplomacy. The layers are the historically determined lenses through which Chinese policymakers view the world and think about Beijing's role in it; perceptions of the current international security environment; five core diplomatic objectives in regional and global affairs; specific

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foreign policy actions in pursuit of national objectives; and the multiple challenges facing China in achieving these objectives.

Each section of this article addresses one of these layers. The conclusion addresses the implications of China's international behavior for U.S. security interests, with a focus on the degree of convergence and divergence in U.S. and Chinese global interests in the coming two decades.

Foreign Policy Outlook

China's international behavior is influenced by at least three historically determined lenses that color the manner in which its policymakers and analysts look at the world and think about China's evolving role in international affairs.

First and foremost, there is a strong and pervasive belief within China that the nation is in the process of reclaiming its lost status as not only a major regional power but also, eventually, a global one. Policymakers, analysts, and media write about the rise as a "revitalization" (*fulxing*) or "rejuvenation" (*zhenxing*) of China's rightful place in the world as a great power. In Chinese eyes, their country is undergoing its *fourth* rise in the international system over the last 5,000 years.

A second and related view among strategists is the notion that China is a victim of "100 years of shame and humiliation" at the hands of foreign powers who sought to split and Westernize it. Beginning with the Opium War in the 1840s and not ending until Mao Zedong founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, China felt subjugated and violated by interventions from external powers, especially Japan. This victimization narrative has created an acute sensitivity to potential infringements on national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Third, China possesses a "defensive security outlook" in which its strategists are preoccupied with external threats and constraints on its actions. This mindset manifests itself in policies focused on maximizing security around China's periphery and maintaining its autonomy in international affairs. Fearful of the use of threats or actual use of military force to coerce Beijing into taking unwanted actions, Chinese leaders seek to secure their freedom from external restrictions on the protection of their vital security and economic interests. There is little talk about territorial aggrandizement or the need for external adventurism to facilitate national

rejuvenation, which is an important manifestation of this defensive security outlook.

China's international behavior is also informed by the three enduring diplomatic priorities of ensuring sovereignty and territorial integrity, economic development, and international respect and status. These have been collectively driving foreign and security policy since the founding of the PRC. Yet the policy manifestations of these three strategic priorities and the leadership's relative emphasis on them have varied in the last 25 years and will continue to do so. Most notably, the emphasis on development as a foreign policy priority has gained prominence since the initiation of reform and openness policies in the late 1970s.

International Security Environment

Assessments of the current international security environment are the building blocks of Chinese foreign policy. These perceptions are the basis on which leaders determine

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foreign policy interests and policy objectives. A defining element of current perceptions is the pervasive uncertainty about the range and severity of threats to national interests. For some, China has never been as secure in the last 200 years as now, when its global power and influence are rising. For others, the security threats facing the nation are acute and growing, and this situation is exacerbated by internal challenges that divert attention from the former. There are six major perceptions that inform foreign and security policies.

No Major Power War. A consistent feature of Chinese assessments of the current global security environment is the low probability of war among major powers. This judgment is key because it reinforces the political rationale for pursuit of a foreign policy that continues integration with the international community. As a reflection of this, Jiang Zemin declared in 2002 that the next 20 years was a period of "strategic opportunity" (*zhanlue jiyuqi*) to reach a new level of national development.

Globalization. Chinese policymakers regularly highlight that globalization has redefined interstate economic and political interactions since the Cold War, resulting in

both opportunities and constraints. China believes that it has benefited from globalization on balance. Globalization has enhanced interdependence among states and increased the relevance of economic power, positive-sum interactions, and soft power in international affairs, all of which Beijing seeks to leverage in its diplomacy.

The Global Power Balance. Following the Cold War, most Chinese analysts predicted a swift evolution from the bipolar international system to one initially dominated by U.S. power and, eventually, to a multipolar system. Such a multipolar configuration has evolved far more slowly than most Chinese expected. Policymakers have been surprised by the U.S. ability to maintain its position of unipolar dominance. In particular, they are concerned with the perceived U.S. willingness to circumvent international organizations and use military force to resolve diplomatic problems. Among Chinese policymakers, the U.S. unipolar position in international affairs



Varyag aircraft carrier purchased from Russia at Dalian Shipyard, China

(especially its perceived preference for unilateral force) is a source of enduring dissatisfaction. Deeper concerns stem from the fact that many fear that the United States, in one form or another, seeks to constrain China's rise.

Nontraditional Security Challenges. Within the last 5 years and especially after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Chinese officials and analysts have begun to highlight the threats to their interests posed by nontraditional security challenges, including terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, narcotics and human trafficking, environmental degradation, the spread of infectious diseases, and natural disasters. Policymakers and analysts view these emerging threats as increasingly important and as demanding more governmental attention.

Energy Insecurity. Beijing's concerns about energy security have emerged as a new and influential factor affecting how it views its international security environment. For China, *energy security* is defined in terms of two issues, price volatility and security of delivery, and it sees itself as vulnerable on both fronts. These concerns increasingly influence its pursuit of new sources of energy in the Middle East and Africa.

China's Rise. Chinese statements and analyses regularly tout the "rise of China" as an influential factor in global economic and security affairs. These claims underscore China's nascent confidence in its growing influence in bilateral and multilateral relations, particularly within Asia. In this context, Chinese analysts and policymakers highlight Beijing's desire to use its status and influence to shape the rules and norms of multilateral organizations in ways consistent with national interests.

Foreign Policy Objectives

The lenses through which China looks at the world, its long-term diplomatic priorities, and its perceptions of its external security environment are collectively reflected in five specific foreign policy objectives. Some are government articulated priorities, while others are analytical extrapolations from Chinese analyses and government actions.

The first foreign policy objective is *maintaining a favorable and stable inter-*

national environment in order to facilitate continued economic reform, development, and modernization within the country. China seeks to minimize security threats on its periphery that would divert resources from domestic priorities. This guiding principle has been the core foreign policy objective during the reform era beginning in the late 1970s. Yet in recent years, Chinese leaders have become acutely aware of the growing linkages between

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domestic affairs and international behavior. As its 2006 Defense White Paper stated, "Never before has China been so closely bound up with the rest of the world as it is today." A related dimension of the domestic-external linkage is that China needs to expand access to trade, investment, and technology to keep its economy growing; therefore, it must build and maintain bilateral relationships that will ensure continued access to these critical inputs to national development.

A second foreign policy objective is *reassurance*. Policymakers are aware of the concerns among China's neighbors that its consistent economic growth and military

modernization may threaten their economic and security interests. In response, Beijing has adopted a regional strategy that seeks to reassure Asian states that it would not undermine their economic and security interests and would even seek to bolster them. Beijing is pursuing this strategy by spreading the benefits of economic growth and negotiating resolutions to longstanding regional disputes. This strategy is encapsulated, in part, in a diplomatic policy of "peaceful rise/development."¹

A third objective can be called *countercontainment*. It encompasses policies that seek to reduce the ability or willingness of other nations to contain, constrain, or otherwise hinder China's rise. Concerns about U.S. policy toward China and Asia motivate this objective. Beijing's diplomacy in Central, East, and Southeast Asia seeks to forge relationships and create a political environment in which the United States can never work in concert with other Asian states to balance or contain Chinese power. Specifically, Beijing's foreign policy seeks to build bilateral relationships in Asia in which regional policymakers are sensitive to China's perspective on the Taiwan question and are unwilling to assist the United States in a cross-strait military conflict. To be sure, this objective is not necessarily the driving force in Chinese regional policy or global diplomacy. A core dimension of the countercontainment strategy is that Beijing seeks to take such steps in a manner that avoids confrontation with Washington.

A fourth and relatively new objective for China's foreign policy is *diversifying its access to energy and other natural resources*. China is now the world's second largest consumer of oil and third largest oil importer. Resource access has assumed a greater priority in recent years and increasingly influences China's diplomacy in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Energy security encompasses diversifying both suppliers and supply routes.²

A final objective is *reducing Taiwan's international space*. China seeks to limit the ability of other nations to confer status on Taiwan. This objective is longstanding and is part and parcel of an incessant effort to prevent Taiwan's independence and, ultimately, to foster reunification. China's desire to eliminate Taiwan's international space is evident in both its multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, and that has been the case for decades. This objective is most relevant to Chinese action in Latin America, Africa, and the South Pacific.



Secretary of Defense meets PLA deputy chief of staff in Singapore

DOD (Cherie A. Thurby)

Foreign Policy Actions

China has adopted numerous specific policy actions in pursuit of its five objectives. Many of these have registered substantial success. Beijing has sought to expand the quality and quantity of its *bilateral* relationships in regions far from Asia. This has been accomplished by establishing “strategic partnerships” with developed and developing countries as well as with entire regions, such as Africa (see table 1). China has also initiated senior-level “strategic dialogues” with many of these nations to further deepen political relationships in order to generate influence and leverage. For China, these partnerships are not quasimilitary alliances that involve extensive security cooperation, as implied by the term *strategic*. Rather, in the Chinese lexicon, a partnership is strategic by dint of two dimensions: it is comprehensive, including all aspects of bilateral relations (for example, economic, cultural, political, security); and both countries agree to make a long-term commitment to bilateral relations, in which problems and tensions are evaluated in that context.

Beijing has embraced multilateral organizations in numerous regions and on several functional issues. In the last decade, its diplomacy has shifted 180 degrees, from reviling multilateral organizations to embracing them, especially in Asia. China now uses these forums to reassure regional nations about its intentions and to grow its access and influence. In Africa and the Middle East, membership in regional organizations has become a staple of outreach to regions that were traditionally peripheral to Chinese interests. Beijing has even created a few multilateral arrangements of its own, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (see tables 2 and 3).

One of the most striking features of China’s international behavior in the past decade has been the growing number of diplomatic tools that it has operationalized in pursuit of its foreign policy objectives. At least three new (or newly enhanced) categories of such tools can be identified: economic, military, and leadership. Beijing’s economic diplomacy is robust and multifaceted, including not only trade but also outward direct investment, foreign assistance (development and humanitarian), and free-trade agreements. Chinese leaders are seeking to share the largesse of their growing economy as a means of generating political influence. Their military diplomacy is far more robust and systematic than in past years; it now includes

participation in United Nations (UN) peace-keeping activities and international exchanges including joint military exercises and various types of intelligence exchanges. China’s top leaders now travel abroad far more frequently and in strategic pursuit of their country’s proliferating global interests. In sum, Chinese foreign policy in the last 5 to 10 years has developed and deployed an abundance of new and effective means to shape its external environment in pursuit of its five core foreign policy objectives.

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Challenges Facing Diplomacy

Beijing confronts several challenges to its pursuit of effective diplomacy. Some stem from domestic circumstances that impact its foreign policy, and others from regional reactions to its growing power:

- Leaders will likely confront the problem of rising expectations. As Beijing positions itself as central to Asian economic and security affairs, it is not clear that China has the intention or capacity to consistently meet external expectations of its self-proclaimed status as “a responsible major power”—or that its expectations of its role will match those of its neighbors.

- An occasionally coercive approach toward other states about their Taiwan policy reveals the limits of Beijing’s effort to appear as a moderate, benign, and unique rising power. Its actions on Taiwan occasionally remind Asian states of the uglier side of Chinese diplomacy.

- Numerous governance challenges directly and indirectly affect external perceptions of China and of Beijing’s ability to carry out effective diplomacy.³ These challenges frustrate the government’s ability to manage internal problems (such as environmental pollution) that often spill over to neighbors and also hinder the government’s ability to comply fully with its bilateral and multilateral trade and security commitments. This fosters external perceptions of an unreliable partner and a source of regional instability. Poor management of the Severe Acute Respiratory

Syndrome outbreak in 2003 offers a prominent example of this challenge.

- As China “goes global” with outward investment and acquisition of foreign natural resources, Beijing runs the risk of being seen as an extractive economy that takes much from developing nations but contributes little to their economic development. Thus, it may face a limited backlash in the coming years about its foreign investment practices. Recent anti-China riots at a copper mine in Zambia could be a harbinger of a broader trend.

Understanding the Totality

Given these multiple layers to China’s international behavior, what does all of this mean for our understanding of Beijing’s current and future role in global politics?

From the vantage point of 2007, China is not ideologically driven in a manner that motivates a revolutionary foreign policy that seeks to acquire territory, forge anti-U.S. balancing coalitions, or otherwise dismantle the core elements of the current international system. While China is dissatisfied with certain attributes of the status quo (for example, the standing of Taiwan and perceived American unilateralism), it is benefiting from and leveraging numerous dimensions of the current system to pursue its core goal of national revitalization through the accumulation of “comprehensive national power.”

Diversification is one concept that nicely encompasses multiple implications of China’s current international behavior. This is a strategy partly by design and partly by default:

- China is diversifying the sources of economic inputs, including access to foreign markets, investment, technology, and strategic resources. For example, economic interactions with the European Union and Africa have consistently and substantially grown in the last decade. The result is reduced reliance on one or a small number of economies, while at the same time there is a growing overall reliance on external sources of economic goods.

- Sources of security are being diversified by developing or improving relations with a variety of power centers and international institutions. This approach creates multiple types of leverage for China and minimizes its reliance on stable and positive relations with a single major power for its security, namely the United States.

- Sources of international status and legitimacy are being diversified. For decades

Table 1. China's Strategic Partnerships

Country	Formulation	Date/Venue	Joint Military Exercises	Recognize China as a "Market Economy"
 RUSSIA	Strategic Cooperative Partnership/ Treaty on Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation	1996/2001 Jiang Zemin-Boris Yelstin summit	"Peace Mission 2005"	September 2004
 FRANCE	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	1997	Joint maritime search and rescue exercise	
 ITALY	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	2004 Wen Jiabao visit		
 UNITED KINGDOM	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	2004 Wen Jiabao visit	Joint maritime search and rescue exercise	
 CANADA	Strategic Partnership	2005 Hu Jintao visit		
 PORTUGAL	All Around Strategic Partnership	2005 Hu Jintao visit		
 SPAIN	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	November 2005 Hu Jintao visit		
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES				
 BRAZIL	Long-term and Stable Strategic Partnership	1996 Jiang Zemin visit		November 2004
 MEXICO	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	2003		
 ARGENTINA	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	2005 Hu Jintao visit		November 2004
 VENEZUELA	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	2005 Wen Jiabao visit		December 2004
 INDIA	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	2005 Wen Jiabao visit	Joint maritime search and rescue exercise	
 KAZAKHSTAN	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	2005 Hu Jintao visit	Joint counterterrorism exercise with Shanghai Cooperation Organization states	
 INDONESIA	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	2005 Hu Jintao visit		
 SOUTH AFRICA	Strategic Partnership	2004 Zeng Qinhong visit; expanded June 2006		Yes (date unknown)
 NIGERIA	Strategic Partnership	2005 Nigerian President Obasanjo's visit to China		
 ALGERIA	Strategic Partnership	2004 Hu Jintao visit		
MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS/REGIONS				
 AFRICAN UNION	Strategic Partnership for Sustainable Development in the 21 st Century	2000 First China- Africa Cooperation Forum in Beijing		Congo, Togo, Benin, South Africa, Nigeria, Djibouti, and Suriname
 EUROPEAN UNION	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	2003 during Sixth EU summit		None
 ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS	Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity	2003 during Ninth ASEAN+1 meeting in Bali, Indonesia		All ASEAN countries have recognized such status

Source: Multiple English news reports based on searches in Lexis-Nexis news database and Chinese media sources. The Chinese search terms were "zhanlue" (strategic), "tuoban" (partner), and "guanxi" (relations).

Table 2. China's Membership in Regional Organizations

Regional Organization	Level of Participation	Date	Other Members
 ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS + 1	Member	December 1997	ASEAN + China
 ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS + 3	Member	December 1997	ASEAN + China, Japan, South Korea
 ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS REGIONAL FORUM	Member	July 1994	10 ASEAN members, 11 "Dialogue Partners" (Australia, Canada, China, European Union, India, Japan, New Zealand, North Korea, Russia, South Korea, United States), Papua New Guinea, Mongolia
 ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION	Member	November 1991	Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, United States, Vietnam
 EAST ASIA COMMUNITY	Member	December 2005	10 ASEAN members, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia, New Zealand, Russia
 ASIAN COOPERATION DIALOGUE	Founding Member	June 2002	Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burma, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam
SOUTH ASIA			
 SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION	Observer	November 2005	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan
CENTRAL ASIA			
 SHANGHAI COOPERATION ASSOCIATION	Founding Member	June 2001	People's Republic of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
LATIN AMERICA			
 ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES	Observer	May 2004	35 independent nations of the Americas
AFRICA			
 CHINA-AFRICA COOPERATION FORUM	Founding Member	October 2000	45 African countries attended the first forum
MIDDLE EAST			
 GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL	Cooperative partner, FTA agreement under negotiation	July 2004	Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates
 CHINA-ARAB COOPERATION FORUM	Founding Member	September 2004	China and 22 countries of the Arab League

Source: Multiple English news reports based on searches in Lexis-Nexis news database and Chinese media sources. The Chinese search terms were "zhanlue" (strategic), "huoban" (partner), and "guanxi" (relations).

Table 3. Regional Organizations Established by China

Organization	Start Date	Ministerial/Summit Meetings	Members
 SHANGHAI COOPERATION ASSOCIATION	April 1996 (Shanghai 5), June 2001 (SCO)	Six summit meetings as of June 2006, and many other ministerial meetings	People's Republic of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
 CHINA-AFRICA COOPERATION FORUM	October 2000	Two minister-level conferences held October 2000 and December 2003; first summit-level meeting November 2006	45 African countries attended the first Ministerial Conference
 CHINA-ARAB COOPERATION FORUM	September 2004	Two ministerial conferences held September 2004, May 2006	22 countries of the Arab League
 BOAO FORUM FOR ASIA	February 2001	Five annual conferences held	25 countries in Asia, and Australia attended inaugural conference

Source: Multiple English news reports based on searches in Lexis-Nexis news database and Chinese media sources. The Chinese search terms were "zhanlue" (strategic), "huoban" (partner), and "guanxi" (relations).

China grounded its status as a major power on a narrow set of national attributes that included UN Security Council membership, possession of nuclear weapons, large size and population, and historical legacy as a great Asian power. It has begun to broaden the base of its global status by highlighting its developmental successes over the last 25 years and its willingness to share these with other states. In addition, Beijing is redefining its international profile away from viewing global affairs as a “struggle” in which it must oppose “hegemony and power politics.” It is now promoting more positive concepts such as “development,” “cooperation,” and fostering a “harmonious world” as the basis of its foreign policy.

as China's global interests expand and its identity as an international actor evolves, the possibilities of greater U.S.-China cooperation may grow as well

Overall, China's twin goals of maintaining economic growth and domestic stability (and thus the continued rule of the Chinese Communist Party) remain the prevailing drivers of its external behavior. Its foreign policy seeks primarily to reduce vulnerabilities to various external threats while maximizing its influence, leverage, and freedom of action in order to acquire the inputs for continued economic growth and, ultimately, to secure its reemergence as a great power. Chinese international behavior over the last two and a half decades has also demonstrated a willingness (at times a reluctant and coerced variety) to abide by the major attributes of the prevailing international norms, rules, and institutions in pursuit of these two core goals.

To be sure, China increasingly wants a seat at the table to play a greater role in modifying and shaping global rules and institutions. This is already evident in its multilateral diplomacy, which involves creating multilateral organizations as well as expanding its participation in existing ones. China's role as an agenda- and rule-setter will become a more prominent feature of its diplomacy in the coming years.

Moreover, China's international behavior is a deeply transitional phenomenon. It is neither fixed nor certain. Beijing's interests, goals, and self-image as a global actor are



continually evolving. While policymakers clearly have strategic objectives in mind, they are feeling their way forward with a foreign policy that is increasingly affected by domestic imperatives (which both shape and are shaped by China's international behavior) and a highly dynamic international security environment. Chinese foreign policy reflects a continual balancing of competing internal and external demands, which are growing in number and variety.

Implications for the United States

These trends raise several issues for U.S. policymakers and analysts. First, Chinese diplomacy is not focused on directly competing with or challenging the current U.S. position of predominance in global affairs. To be sure, Beijing is trying to reduce the U.S. ability to constrain Chinese choices, especially in Asia where its interests are greatest. It is normal and expected for competition to be a dimension of U.S.-China relations—or U.S. relations with other major powers. The issue is the *nature* and

scope of that competition. To date, the evidence suggests that adversarial security competition is limited, and Beijing wants to keep it that way for at least the next two decades. Taiwan, however, is the obvious exception.

Second, as China's global interests grow, U.S. and Chinese interests and practices will inevitably bump up against one another, regardless of whether it is Beijing's intention to confront Washington. This is beginning to occur in Africa and within UN deliberations. In such instances, the conceptual and policy differences on foreign policy between the United States and China, such as over Chinese views on human rights and local governance practices, will come into starker relief. Yet as China's global interests expand and its identity as an international actor evolves, the possibilities for greater U.S.-China cooperation on common security challenges may grow as well. Climate change and energy security are two prominent examples of cooperation with strategic implications.



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Third, as China diversifies along the three vectors noted above, its foreign policy will likely become increasingly dependent on amicable relations with the United States. Beijing may feel less need to accommodate U.S. concerns and better able to resist American pressure as it pursues its global interests. This will complicate Washington's ability to shape Chinese policy preferences and could add to the competitive aspects of bilateral relations.

Lastly, the highly transitional nature of Beijing's international behavior still provides the United States with additional opportunities to jumpstart debates within China about how it defines its global interests and its rights and responsibilities as a global actor. China is debating what it means to be a great power in the 21st century at the very time the international community wants to know how China will use its growing power and status. Thus, there is time and space for the United States and the international community to influence Chinese answers to these critical questions.

These considerations raise additional issues about the future direction of Chinese foreign policy and the future of U.S.-China security relations:

- Can China really avoid the mistakes of other rising powers and short-circuit the emergence of an intense security competition with the United States? Is it inevitable that Washington and Beijing become rivals?

- What steps can China take to reassure U.S. policymakers that it does not seek to push the United States out of Asia or undermine American influence in other parts of the world?

- If China has adopted a national strategy of "peaceful development/rise," why did it conduct an antisatellite missile test in early 2007, and why is it accelerating its military modernization? Also, how much influence does the People's Liberation Army have in foreign policy?

- Why is China so willing to provide aid and investment to governments that are highly undemocratic, corrupt, and exploitative of

their people? Why does it appear to be the defender of countries that have poor relations with the United States, such as Iran, Venezuela, Sudan, and Zimbabwe?

- How does the foreign policy decision-making process affect China's actual international behavior?

- What actions can the United States take to accommodate some Chinese interests—while not appeasing China? Can Beijing and Washington reach some modus operandi in which China can expand its rights and responsibilities in international affairs without disadvantaging U.S. economic and security interests?

The answers to these and other questions will go far in determining the position of China in the emerging world security environment and its standing vis-à-vis the United States and the global community at large. **JFQ**

NOTES

¹ Chinese leaders and government officials now use the term *peaceful development*. The government rejected *peaceful rise* as an official term because it was deemed inaccurate and potentially provocative. However, both terms have the same conceptual content. See Bonnie Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, "The Ecology of Foreign Policy Decision-making in China: The Ascension and Demise of Peaceful Rise," *The China Quarterly* 190 (June 2007).

² There is a great deal of overstatement in the international media about China's energy needs. While China's domestic demand for oil is clearly growing, the Chinese economy is not highly dependent on it. China is about 90 percent energy independent given its coal-based economy and large coal reserves. China depends on imported oil to meet about 12 percent of its total national energy needs. By contrast, U.S. dependence on imported oil is over 50 percent. In 2006, China's top oil suppliers were (in order): Saudi Arabia, Angola, Iran, and Russia. About 45 percent of China's oil imports come from the Persian Gulf, the region of greatest Chinese oil dependence.

³ China's numerous governance challenges include bureaucratic fragmentation, corruption, social instability, poor internal transparency, weak environmental controls, a decaying health care system, and growing nationalism. See C. Fred Bergsten et al., *China: The Balance Sheet: What the World Needs to Know Now about the Emerging Superpower* (New York: Public Affairs Books, 2006).