

IS THE RISE OF CHINA A SECURITY THREAT?

Bertrand ATEBA

*Ph.D. Candidate,
School of International Studies, Peking University*

The end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Empire have undermined much of the global power structure that has characterized international politics for several decades. The international system is no longer bipolar. Instead, one superpower is predominant, with a number of regional powers becoming increasingly important. Enjoying a relatively stable international environment and with the implementation of the open-door policy, China has recorded remarkable economic performances. The modernization drive has brought about tremendous changes in the standard of living of a huge and relatively poor population. Military capabilities are growing, raising fears of a more assertive China that is likely to upset the established security order of East Asia. In a word, China is widely perceived as an ascending power.

The continuing growth of China's economy and the current modernization and build-up of its military have become a source of open concern for some scholars and statesmen both in the West and in the regions adjacent to the PRC. The increasing influence of China in international affairs and her gradual move towards great power status have caused anxiety to the extent that, how to deal with China is the puzzle of this new millennium. Not long ago, a certain "China threat" theory appeared in international politics, and after all these years, the controversy is still going on. Many predictions have been made about China, but so far, none of them has ever materialized. The communists leaders are still ruling the country, the economy is still growing, no neighboring country has been invaded, The Asia Pacific region is still far from being destabilized by an aggressive China. All these unmaterialized forecasts emphasize the precariousness of the best thinking in the field of international politics, and the necessity of their continuous revision as well as the refusal to get locked in unshakable truths. It is once again demonstrated that the analysis of world politics should be freed from dogma.

A threat is defined as a warning that one is going to hurt or punish. Another definition considers a threat to be a sign of possible danger. These definitions fit well with the different considerations stemming from the abundant literature on the China Threat

theory. Every aspect of the existence of the PRC as a political entity is seen as a possible danger. Because of the defense modernization, the increase of the defense budget and the recent Taiwan Straits crisis, for some, China is a military threat. Because China has adopted a political system different from the liberal democracy existing in the West, some have concluded that China is a political threat.

The emergence of Chinese nationalism is also seen as advocating international aggression. In his 1993 assessment of the emerging international order, Kenneth Waltz wrote that " economic competition is often as keen as military competition, and since nuclear weapons limit the use of force among great powers at the strategic level, we may expect economic and technological competition among them to become more intense" (WALTZ, 1993: 45-73). Samuel Huntington similarly claimed that " in the coming years, the principal conflicts of interests involving the United States and the major powers are likely to be over economic issues"(HUNTINGTON, 1993: 68-83). From these two views, there is a coming economic conflict with China. From a theoretical base, and especially the theory of power transition developed by Organski (ORGANSKI: 1958), some are quick to admit that with the rise of China, there is an impending power transition in favor of an undemocratic challenger and that is likely to induce a belligerent response from the democratic leader and its associates.

There are other arguments that China is still a weak and poor country facing serious internal challenges that might jeopardize her move towards superpower status. For the proponents of this view, the China Threat is unlikely to materialize. China seems locked in a kind of vicious circle as both its rise and collapse are a matter of anxiety for regional and global security.

This article intends to demonstrate that China is hunger for power, more for historical reasons than for hegemonic ambitions. Any attempt by any country, whether big or small, weak or powerful to block the way leading China to superpower status, will be considered by the Chinese government and people as a new kind of humiliation inflicted upon their country. The consequence will then be a strong nationalism advocating xenophobia, aggression and revenge. Without denying the existence of a China Threat, I argue that the international community has more to fear for regional and global security from a weak and disintegrating China, than from a strong and powerful one. This article finds that, instead of demonizing China, the international society in order to eliminate the looming threat from China should rather help and assist it to rise to power. For China is a dissatisfied power seeking a " place at the table"(BERNSTEIN and MUNRO, 1997), containing and blocking China's rise will do no good to regional and world stability. As long as China does not regain its lost prestige of old, and feels weak and vulnerable, the international community should not expect a good citizen China. This article begins with an evaluation of the different arguments developed in respect with the China Threat theory. It goes on to discuss these various arguments, and

later draws conclusions stressing the necessity for the international community to integrate, accommodate and understand a country in search of its glorious past.

THE PROPONENTS OF THE CHINA THREAT THEORY

The China Threat theory appeared for the first time at the beginnings of the 1990s, when China's economy and comprehensive national strength experienced unprecedented fast growth. In August 1990, a Japanese professor wrote an article describing China as a potential adversary in view of its comprehensive national strength and sustained development (MURAI, 1990). In 1992, the China economic threat theory also emerged following the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's tour of South China which provided the launch for the known economic growth. Western countries, while generally showing appreciation of China's economic achievements, also worried that it would become a competitor for world markets, funds and resources, and even worse, provide more resources for China's military expansion. This economic threat theory was first raised by South Korea and was echoed by Japan and the United States.

The National People's Congress adopted on February 25th 1992, the Law on the Territorial Sea of the PRC, confirming a claim of sovereignty over some islands in the South and East China Seas. Many interpreted this as a sign that China was pushing for military expansionism and attempting to become a regional hegemon. The Japanese media claimed that the modernization process of the Chinese navy revealed China's marine hegemonism strategy in the twenty first century. The US media also carried stories declaring that China was expanding outside its territory, its military might was growing fast, and that China aimed to dominate East Asia.

In 1993, a Harvard University professor (HUNTINGTON, 1993) published an article in which he argued that the fundamental source of conflict in this post-cold war era will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. He goes on to conclude that, the primary adversary of Western civilization was Islam and Confucianism, which joined hands to challenge Western values and power. For Huntington, centrally important to the development of counter-West military capabilities is the sustained expansion of China's military power and its means to create military power. Almost without exception, Western countries are reducing their military power; under Yeltsin's leadership, so also is Russia. China, North Korea and several Middle Eastern countries however, are significantly expanding their military capabilities... China is increasing its military spending, developing long-range missiles and power-projection capabilities, and trying to purchase an aircraft

carrier. China is also exporting arms and weapons technology to countries such as Iraq, Libya, Iran and Pakistan. A Confucian-Islamic military connection has thus come into being, designed to promote acquisition by its members of the weapons and weapons technologies needed to counter the military power of the West. In order to deter the Confucian-Islamic coalition, Huntington proposes the West to limit the expansion of the military strength of Confucian and Islamic states; to moderate the reduction of Western military capabilities and maintain military superiority in East and Southwest Asia; to exploit differences and conflicts among Confucian and Islamic states; to support in other civilizations groups sympathetic to the Western values and interests; to strengthen international institutions that reflect and legitimate Western interests and values, and to promote the involvement of non-Western states in those institutions.

In another development, the Wen Ho Lee spy case at the Los Alamos National Laboratory is another accusation that China is posing an "acute intelligence threat" to the US government's nuclear weapons laboratories. A secret report to top Clinton administration officials in November 1998 said that "China is an advanced nuclear power yet its nuclear stockpile is deteriorating. As such, China has specifically targeted US labs for the collection of technical intelligence related to the design of nuclear weapons" ¹ the report concludes, "this effort has been very successful and Beijing's exploitation of US national laboratories has substantially aided its nuclear weapons program".

With the latest rise of Chinese nationalism, some US media claim an anti-Western stance is the primary characteristic of the national identity of China, which is especially strong when faced with any suggestion of an external threat. China new nationalism emerged in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protest. Beijing launched a relentless campaign against "counter-revolutionary rebellion". The campaign quickly widened to target the countries that were isolating Beijing for its bloody crushing of the pro-democracy protests, especially the US. The China nationalism threat emerged from these considerations ².

Other threat theories include arguments on China's food crisis, rural crisis, population crisis, resources crisis and environment crisis. These various crisis, it is said, will make the country a heavy burden to the entire world. The logic is that Chinese people should never climb out of poverty and become rich. If they do so, the world would experience shortages of food, resources and damage to the environment.

Many of the sentiments of the various threats are contained in a book published in 1997 under the provocative title "The Coming Conflict With China"(BERSTEIN and MUNRO, 1997). The authors' thesis is that if the United States, the only political,

economic, military and cultural power in the post-cold war period, wants to maintain and develop these superiorities in the next century, it must get a clear understanding of the various challenges it faces and defeat them. One of these challenges comes from the European Union, but this is mainly economic, and is not so threatening because the E.U. and the United States have similar historical and cultural traditions, life-styles and value concepts. The second challenge comes from Japan, and is also mainly economic. In addition, Japan will compromise under American pressure because it needs US military protection and because of its vast domestic market. Only China poses a genuinely serious threat because it differs greatly from the United States in cultural traditions, life-style and value concepts. For Bernstein and Munro, war is inevitable between China and the US. China's goal of achieving paramount status in Asia conflicts with an established American objective: preventing any single country from gaining overwhelming power in Asia. The United States, after all, has been in major wars in Asia three times in the past half century, always to prevent a single power from gaining ascendancy, although at a cost of declining American military prestige. Given the fact that over the next decade or two China will become the dominant power in Asia, conflict with the US could occur over a number of issues, headed by a Chinese attempt to seize Taiwan by force or to resolve by military means its territorial claims in the South China sea. China's technological and political help to the Islamic countries of Central Asia and North Africa, and its looming dominance in East Asia put it at the center of an informal network of states, many of which have goals and philosophies inimical to the United States, and many of which share China's sense of grievance at the long global domination of the West.

For some, the United States is declining while China is in the process of catching up. This view fuels speculation about power transition, which is supposed to increase the danger of war. This danger has been hypothesized to be especially great when the challenger is an undemocratic or illiberal state (SHWELLER, 1992: 235-269). According to this formulation, democracies are generally satisfied powers, which are unlikely to challenge the international status quo. Because other democracies are presumed to also support this order, changes in relative power among democracies are not seen to be especially alarming. A power transition in favor of an undemocratic challenger, however, is likely to be treated as more threatening to this order. In theory Organski (ORGANSKI, 1958) shows that, wars occur when a great power in a secondary position challenges the top nation and its allies for control. Thus the usual major conflict is between the top nation (and its allies) and the challenger that is about to catch up with it in power. Peace is only possible when those possessing preponderant power are in firm control and are satisfied with the status quo. Peace is

threatened whenever a powerful nation is dissatisfied with the status quo and is powerful enough to attempt to change things in the face of opposition from those who control the existing international order. Degree of power and degree of satisfaction, then, become important national characteristics to be considered when trying to locate the nations that are most likely to disturb world peace.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE CHINA THREAT THEORY

For Denny Roy (ROY, 1998: 218-219), it must be recognized before we go any further that China faces immense internal challenges on the road to superpower status. These include environmental degradation, continued population growth and loss of arable land, rising crime and civil disorder, discontent among peasant who remain in the fields, a wave of uncontrolled migration of other peasants into the cities, widespread corruption among officials, high inflation, the reluctant privatization of unprofitable state-owned industries, separatist pressures in Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang, and regionalism in the other provinces. Political instability, an economic slowdown or a devolution of central control into some type of federalism or even a commonwealth of autonomous states might preclude the possibility of a strong China capable of coercing its neighbors. The basis of a China Threat might therefore never materialize. To take another perspective, China could be a threat to East Asian security without being a military superpower. A country does not have to be dominant to commit acts that are destabilizing. Even relatively weak countries can be troublemakers if they choose to be.

For Samuel Kim (SAMUEL, 1992), just as Japan is seen as a wallet in search of a global role, China has become an empty seat on the United Nations Security Council searching for a new national identity. Suddenly, Beijing is unsure of its place in a world no longer dominated by superpower rivalry and the country is in the grip of an unprecedented legitimacy-identity crisis. If China is to become a global power, it must beef up its national power, especially in high technology industries. China is extremely weak in this area. The post-Tiananmen government is paralyzed by megacrisis, multiple and interlocking crises of authority, identity, motivation, and ideology. These have converged at a time when the center is fractured by another round of a deadly intraelite power struggle and is also facing challenges from an assertive civil society, peripheral but booming southern coastal provinces, and ethno nationalistic movements of non-Han minority peoples in the strategic borderlands of Tibet, Xinjiang, and Mongolia. Against such trends and pressures Chinese State sovereignty is a paper tiger. China is a weak, if not yet disintegrating state. How can the wobbly edifice of the Chinese State survive the multiple threats from within? Can a

weak, oppressive state be expected to act as a responsible and peace-loving regional power? The once widely shared image of a China in disintegration and of a dragon rampant in Japan and Southeast Asia seems to be moving perilously close to reality.

For Michael Yahuda (YAHUDA, 1999), The PRC has made great strides to join the modern world since beginning the process of reform and opening-up. Moreover, the Chinese leaders have gone a long way to establish a peaceful international environment within the region, which is conducive to China's main task of developing its economy. But China's approach to its maritime territories is still unnerving to the extent that the neighbors seek the assurance of support from the US. China has not yet reached the point of sufficient transparency at home to allow it to be truly integrated into the international community. In addition China is still in the middle of a vast transformation that has a long way to go before it can be said to have run its course. Hence in its foreign relations, as well as in its domestic affairs, it is true to say that despite the enormous progress that has been registered, many deep-seated problems remain and for the time being, the region and the wider world have more to fear from a China that can act as a " spoiler " than from any leadership that a still relatively weak China could possibly hope to provide.

THERE IS NO POWER TRANSITION

China's capabilities have indeed increased recently and at a rather fast pace. These increases, however, reflect expansion from relatively modest bases, and become comparatively small when considered in per capita terms. Moreover, whether considered in terms of their economic, technological, or military dimensions, these capabilities tend to be more impressive quantitatively than qualitatively. Although China's economy has been growing rapidly, it is still a developing country. According to Scalapino (SCALAPINO, 1993: 219), even assuming China achieves its economic goal, its per capita income in the year 2000 will only be about U.S. \$900. China still lacks significant capabilities to project its forces abroad. Its military technologies lag seriously behind those of the U.S and Japan. Therefore, China is not about to overtake the U.S in either economic or military terms. The impending power transition is illusory. Here is a numerical comparison³:

- ? US strategic nuclear weapons capable of hitting China: 6000
- ? Chinese strategic nuclear weapons capable of hitting the U.S.: About 20
- ? Total U.S nuclear weapons (deployment, reserve or awaiting dismantlement): 12070
- ? Total Chinese nuclear weapons: 400
- ? US ICBM's: 550

- ? Chinese ICBM's: 18-24
- ? U.S long-range strategic bombers: 174
- ? Chinese long-range strategic bombers: 0
- ? U.S ballistic missile submarines: 18
- ? Chinese ballistic missile submarine: 1
- ? U.S Gross domestic Product: \$ 8.1 trillion
- ? Chinese gross Domestic Product: \$ 639 billion
- ? U.S military budget: \$ 270 billion
- ? Chinese military budget: \$ 36.6 billion
- ? U.S aircraft carriers: 11 (plus one in refit)
- ? Chinese aircraft carriers: 0

In addition to this military superiority, the U.S has a well-established network of military alliances throughout Asia Pacific and has stationed troops and equipment ready for a quick deployment if necessary. In order for China to become a threat to the regional balance of power, it would have to develop the military strength to contend with the other great powers and the power projection capabilities to influence developments across the open seas. The Chinese government is aware that "...a wise challenger, growing in power through internal development, would hold back from threatening the existing international order until it had reached a point where it was as powerful as the dominant nation and its allies, for surely it would seem foolish to attack while weaker than the enemy"(ORGANSKI, 1958).

THERE ARE REASONS FOR CHINA'S MILITARY BUILD UP AND SEARCH FOR POWER.

China has a history as one of the oldest, most sophisticated, and most powerful countries in the world. Four thousand years ago, under the semi legendary Emperor Yu of the Hsia dynasty, the Chinese built irrigation channels, domesticated animals, engaged in cultivation, and established a written language. Through fourteen Chinese dynasties, China built a civilization marked by great cultural and engineering feats, The Great Wall of China, the only human creation visible from space was begun in about 210 B.C. The great philosophy of Confucianism was soon thereafter established. China also exercised wide political influence, holding sway over a considerable regional area. The technical innovations China gave the world not only included printing, paper, the magnetic compass and

gunpowder, but also among other things, the modern horse collar, the watertight ship compartment, canal locks, suspension and segmented bridges.

By the mid-nineteenth century, a decaying China was ripe for invasion, exploitation and the carving up into spheres of influence by the European powers. Huge tracts of the Chinese territory were seized by the Russians, the island of Formosa was taken by Japan in 1945, and various European countries and Japan came close to making China a colony dividing it up into zones of interest that they dominated. China underwent what was to the Chinese, a hundred years of humiliation. Following the Qing dynasty's collapse in 1911, China was torn apart by fighting between rival warlords ruling different areas of the country. By the 1930s, China had become a poor, underdeveloped country. Under Kuomintang (Nationalist) rule from 1927, the country was largely reunified, but there was a persistent civil war waged for most of the following two decades with the emerging communists, aggravated by Japanese invasion, that resulted in virtual economic collapse. The humiliation inflicted on the Chinese by this fall from previous greatness combined with the century of confusion and despair, rankles to this day in the national psyche. It is the constant theme of speeches by the present leadership, along with reminders that it was only under Communist Party leadership that the Chinese people were, in the words of Chairman Mao able to "stand up" ⁴ and become masters of their own house again.

Since the founding of the PRC, China's foreign policy has always attached primary importance to safeguarding state sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and security, and has been working hard for a peaceful international and a favorable peripheral environment for China's socialist modernization drive. It is clear that China is a dissatisfied power. It has a number of outstanding territorial claims that it wants recognized by its neighbors, and it seeks veto over Taiwan's international activities. It exerts less influence than it wants in the regional balance of power and in the international nonproliferation trade, and human rights regimes. The PRC's security remains hostage to the behavior of potential adversaries and unreliable neighbors hosting foreign troops or with alliances with the remaining superpower. To the Chinese leadership, hegemonism and power politics still exist and are developing further in the international political, economic, and security spheres. Certain big powers are pursuing "neo-interventionism", "neo-gunboat policy", and neo-economic colonialism, which are seriously damaging the sovereignty, independence and developmental interests of many countries, and threatening world peace and security ⁵.

The military modernization and the search for power embody the Chinese historical awareness that, weakness, disunity, and disorder at home would invite foreign aggression and result in the loss of Chinese identity, as China's century-long humiliation and suffering demonstrated. In theory it is said that, "if a state seems weak, it could invite attack" (KELLER and KLEIN, 1999: 178). The development and powerfulness of China should be

seen as an effort trying to catch up and as an attempt to bring its historical search for security to a satisfactory conclusion. International politics has been called "politics in the absence of government" (FOX, 1959: 35). In theory, and as demonstrated by Waltz,⁶ to achieve their objectives and maintain their security, units in a condition of anarchy, be they people, corporations, states, or whatever must rely on the means they can generate and the arrangements they can make for themselves. Self-help is necessarily the principle of action in an anarchic order. A self-help system is one in which those who do not help themselves, or who do so less effectively than others, will fail to prosper, will lay themselves open to dangers, will suffer. Fear of such unwanted consequences stimulates states to behave in ways that tend toward the creation of balances of power.

There is a regional phenomenon in which the fastest-growing economies are busily buying weapons. Most countries in East Asia, including Japan and Taiwan have been acquiring advanced weapons. Why should China refrain from doing the same if it can now afford sophisticated weapons? Why is the Chinese military modernization so alarming? China does not station troops or set up military bases in any foreign country. China does not seek alliance with any country or bloc of countries, nor does it participate in any military bloc. China stresses self-reliance as the basis for safeguarding state security, and insists on making national defense policies and development strategies independently⁷.

Analysts who see China as a present or future threat to its neighbors often, and mistakenly, assume a direct connection between capabilities and intentions, and between hardware numbers and fighting capabilities. A growing military budget, improvements in weapons produced or purchased, and increasing numbers of ships and planes may be explained in several ways besides a menacing intention: as a consequence of bureaucratic competition and influence; as a "natural" outgrowth of increased national prosperity; as a response to perceived external threat to or rivalry with China; and as a normal step in modernizing weapons and equipment. Analysts need to be cautious about attributing malevolence to one country's military build up without at least considering the same about other countries. It would be interesting to know why the same people who believe China with its weak defense industrial base, poor-quality weapons, and low military spending, is a threat to the international order, whereas the United States and Japan, with huge military expenditures relative to China and enormous defense industrial base and in the case of the US, a doctrinal commitment to global order and military bases and forces worldwide; and in Japan's case, the largest economic stake in Asia of any country, a history of aggression in Asia, are not.

Under the disguise of "humanitarianism" and "human rights", some countries are frequently resorting to the use or threat of force, in flagrant violation of the UN charter and all established international norms governing international relations. The NATO, in total

ignorance of the UN Security Council principles, launched military attacks against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

CHINA IS ALSO THREATENED

With the collapse of the USSR, the United States is the only foreign power capable of directly threatening China's security, blocking the PRC 's projection of its power, preventing unification with Taiwan, and even undermining the edifice of Chinese socialism from within just as Soviet revisionism once was perceived as attempting to do. Only the United States has the network of forward-deployed military forces, alliances, and weapons recipients in East Asia that can contain China; the information and financial resources with which to press its human-rights agenda on China; the ability to impose major sanctions on China; and the worldwide influence to whip up a " China threat " fever. The United States and Japan find it necessary to find some kind of common enemy to maintain stability in their relations. The security alliance is the foundation for US-Japanese relations and a major adhesive for bolstering that alliance is a common enemy. The collapse of the Soviet Union eroded that foundation, and China is therefore the logical candidate to cement the Japano-American security alliance. For the Chinese, the US has also tried to make the reunification of China an unfulfilled dream, and impose its value concepts on China for dramatic changes in the country, just like those in Eastern Europe. Through what is known as "peaceful evolution", America is slowly introducing its values into China, with the intention to destabilize China from within in the long run. To erode the legitimacy of the Communist Party, to encourage activities aiming at splitting China, and backing Taiwan's independence, are part of a broad US strategy to contain and keep China down. A fundamental reason for the constant tensions in US-China relations is structural: an established power is attempting to induce a rising power to comply with its preferred norms.

The rising nationalism in vogue in China, should not therefore come as a surprise, as we can see from this quotation: "Developing countries in particular, faced with threats and aggression from large powers, must embrace patriotism to resist any pressure from outside... Given recent US-led attempts to westernize and split China by some Western countries, China needs more than ever to unite and promote patriotism... The more patriotism is promoted, the faster China can develop; and the more closely the Chinese people are united, the more likely attempts to contain China will fail" (MING, 1996: 8). Chinese nationalism, far from being threatening, is just an indispensable way for the Chinese people to hold their nation together, protect their identity and advance their interests in a turbulent modern world.

China is not as secure as we think, without aircraft carriers, Chinese battleships and patrol boats operating beyond coastal waters are easy targets for the land-based aircraft of local powers, including Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore, and the carrier-based aircraft of the United States. Since China will likely not possess its first limited-capability aircraft carrier until 2010, it is hard to imagine that the United States could lose its naval supremacy in the western Pacific within even a quarter century, even if it stood still while China advanced, unless it choose to withdraw from the region.

THE REAL CHINA THREAT

By many standards, China is already a great power. Its vast landmass, large population, wealth of natural resources, large industrial base, and strategic location give it the raw materials from which national power has traditionally been constructed. China possesses a large standing army, armed with nuclear weapons, whose projection capabilities will probably increase in the years ahead. In a cultural sense, there is a greater China that includes the powerful overseas Chinese communities throughout Southeast Asia and Oceania. Economically, there is a greater China that includes Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. Greater China is implicitly acknowledged by China's smaller neighbors. While these states will like the US to remain engaged in the affairs of the region as a counterbalance to China, they have chosen to treat China as it is perceived: the most important modernizing phenomenon in East Asia. Although it is not a global superpower, China has great influence outside Asia. Primarily through participation in the international arms market. As a large developing country, China can claim common identity with much of the third world⁸, and as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Peking is guaranteed a place in deliberations of major international issues, as well as a veto over the Council's decisions. China's quest to become a great China has its roots in poverty, insecurity and disunity.

The greater China described above, is not the China that is threatening regional and global peace. In the contrary, it is a China that is aware of its responsibility to bring its contribution in shaping a free, stable and equal New World. China does not seek regional domination. What China wants is recognition as an important power with regional interests to protect and the capability to influence international politics. In a multipolar world that is increasingly being shaped by interdependent forces and multilateral institutions, the objective of international politics must be to establish lasting conditions of common security for all countries, rather than to promote one country's or bloc's security at the expense of another's. China's rise to power is an irreversible process and as noted by a former US Secretary of State, "no force could hold back the

rise of a new power" (KISSINGER, 1996). No matter how the United States treats China, it can never stop the more and more important role of the country in future international affairs. When will the US and its allies understand that containing and blocking Chinese power increase the risk of war? The more China will feel excluded from the shaping of the international order, greater is the risk of the collapse of such an order if China decides to act as a " spoiler ". There are issues over which China will never offer any room for concessions and will never rule out the use of military force to assert its interests. China will continue to mould the People's Liberation Army into a highly effective force capable of making its presence felt in the surrounding region if need be.

According to the theory of power transition, as long as a challenger of an existing international order, remains outside that dominant international order, and has hopes of overturning it or taking over its leadership through combat, such a nation is a serious threat to world peace. It is the powerful and dissatisfied nations that start world wars. China has already put forth its own ideas about a new international order. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are proposed as its " foundation ". The continuing refusal of the West to integrate these principles in the new international order is not a very good option. The United States and other countries such as Japan need to accept China's insistence on equality and respect for sovereignty, which underlie its claims to senior status in the post-cold war Asia Pacific order. It is imperative for China, the United States and Japan to establish a security relationship of mutual trust and stability. As demonstrated in the past, such a relationship serves the peace, stability and prosperity of the Asia Pacific region. When the Japan and US joined forces in the confrontation with China, the region witnessed two large-scale wars in Korea and Indochina. When the United States and Japan opted to cooperate with China, however, peace and prosperity dawned, which eventually nourished an economic miracle: the rise of East Asia. A constructive and cooperative relationship among the three nations, therefore is a public asset contributing to the region's stability and prosperity. For the sake of peace, the West should let China rise and fulfill its secular ambition to stand on its own feet and win the respect that its growing power entitles it.

WHY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD HELP CHINA TO BECOME STRONG

It is my conviction that a disintegrating China poses the greatest risk to regional and global security. China is still in the middle of a long modernization process. The success of

this process still depend on forces of global and regional economic integration and on foreign assistance. China's prosperity is actually very fragile, as there are a lot of internal problems that need cooperation and assistance from foreign countries. China's booming economy upon which the legitimacy and stability of the central government increasingly rest, relies on close economic, managerial, and technological connections to the outside world, especially to the US and Asia. Continued high economic growth rates and contacts with the outside world are essential to the success of China's military modernization effort, which stands at the center of its comprehensive strategy for coping with the post-cold war security environment and will likely have major implications for Asia's future peace and stability. The economic reforms underway, have created a long list of actually or potentially destabilizing conditions within China. These include the decentralization of economic decision-making power to the provinces and lower levels, exacerbating long-standing central-local tensions over revenue sharing and local nationalism; the unequal development of China's regions, with resulting large income, technology, and growth gaps; social problems brought on or enlarged by contradictions between central planning and the market, such as double-digit inflation and unemployed urban workers in debt-ridden state-run enterprises; large-scale environmental problems ; and increasing corruption, crime, and social disorder. Ultimately if not immediately, all these problems have broad political implications for the stability of China's party-state system.

Beijing's fears over social unrest stalled attempts at deepening economic reforms during most of 1999. The leadership is on the horns of a dilemma. It must slow down any economic reform that radically worsens unemployment. Yet if it slows down economic growth the leadership may be destroying one of the pillars of its own legitimacy. Any degree of fragmentation or instability in China caused by economic difficulties will affect the region. It is in the interests of China's neighbors to provide the capital and expertise as well as lend any cooperation they can as China finally begins to tackle its fundamental economic challenges. In the long term, China's entry into the WTO will serve as a catalyst for state own enterprises (SOE) reform by forcing China's SOEs to speed up reform for their survival in market competition. In the short term, however, WTO entry may be more harmful than helpful in that many SOEs will be unable to compete against high quality foreign products. This will likely result in additional bankruptcies and even more unemployment. China has made significant contributions to regional security by playing a positive role in maintaining peace on the Korean Peninsula, preventing regional nuclear proliferation, and establishing confidence-building measures. China could also have major negative effects on the security of the region through massive migration, a rise in drug trafficking and increased pollution. The degree of domestic stability or instability is directly linked with these negative factors. If China's SOEs reform does not succeed, further workers will be laid off, regionalism (in

China) would rise, and separatist movements in some areas would escalate. Thus the success or failure of SOE reform is an important factor in affecting the domestic stability and Asian-Pacific security. Because China faces so many internal problems and many nations in the Asia-Pacific region and in the West have experience in managing similar problems, there is ample opportunity for other countries to share their expertise with China. Such cooperation may create an atmosphere that could be extended to more sensitive realms of security as nuclear non-proliferation and border disputes. Some possible suggestions for cooperation with China on SOE reform include: increased foreign investment in SOEs as allowed by new regulations; sharing modern management techniques to establish SOEs along corporate lines; and assistance in the establishment of a new social security net in China.

Those analysts who really worry about regional and global order that a greater China is supposed to upset should rather think about how to help the Chinese communist government to keep control over the country by reinforcing its legitimacy, deterring separatist activities, controlling China's borders and raising the standards of living of a huge population. A threat from a powerful China is less worrying than a threat from a weak and disintegrating one.

WHAT CHINA SHOULD ALSO KNOW

Ethnicities more powerful than indigenous peoples are demanding greater participation in governmental decision making within existing states. Others are fighting for states of their own. The break-up of the Soviet Union provides a compelling precedent. Virtually every country in the world is experiencing some form of increased political pressure from its underrepresented groups; examples include French-speaking people in Canada, Scots in the United Kingdom, Tibetans in China, Kashmiri Muslims in India, Latinos in the United States, and Muslims in Norway. More demanding nationalists in some ethnic groups are using violence to achieve their own state; such as Kurds in Turkey, Basques in Spain, Chechins in Russia, Tamils in Sri-Lanka, Hutus in Burundi, and Abkhazis in Georgia. Lists could go on and on of examples in both categories of ethnic group assertiveness; that is those wanting sovereignty, and those wanting more power within existing states. For states to remain viable, they will have to establish more effective political processes for accommodating the interests of their less powerful ethnic groups. If they cannot, then various forms of autonomy will be invented or more parts of the world will fragment into ministates⁹.

According to the " Security Dilemma " theory, governments have to decide how much military power is enough to deter potential aggressors. If they increase their force capability too much, it will threaten other states in the region that, in turn, may well build up their own military forces. The result is the same or less security than existed originally. Any expansion in military forces can be seen as an aggressive act by a potential enemy. In a context of distrust and conflicting interests, it can produce an arms race and destabilize the existing balance of power. Instability emphasizes mutual fears and hostile perceptions, which become reinforced by a cycle of actions and reactions. Chinese decision-makers who would pursue PRC interests by engaging in threatening and destabilizing behavior, even toward " Chinese " territory, need to be restrained. Thus, with respect to Taiwan, the PRC has every right to demand that foreign countries stop antagonizing a delicate situation by selling advanced weapons to Taiwan. Chinese leaders also must come to accept, however, that Taiwan, while not a sovereign state, has international standing and is entitled to a greater measure of international recognition. Taiwan as a part of China, might be admitted to membership in the ASEAN Regional Forum and become a dialogue partner of China and ASEAN in the search for a new *modus vivendi* based on " One China" and the non-use of force.

Today China still needs to learn the advanced technologies and economic management experience with a different aim of peaceful coexistence and equality with the West. Only by insisting on rational, not blind, nationalism and through contacts with and learning from the West can China accelerate its steps towards prosperity with a low cost. And this requires all Chinese to view the policies towards China of the West headed by the US with reason and try to avoid blind opposition to everything foreign. After all, " weak Chinese leadership and institutions will continue to plague international cooperation on a wide range of issues " said Nathan and Ross (ANDREW and ROBERT, 1997: 231).

The Chinese leadership should learn as we have seen in Korea and Taiwan, that as the purchasing power of the people rises, they tend to demand more political freedom. Psychologists have demonstrated that satisfaction implies more want. After more than two decades of economic reforms, it is now high time to think of political reforms. People are getting more and more interested to know how public affairs are managed within the communist party. They want to participate in the decision-making process and want the leaders to be accountable to them.

By ending its isolation and joining the community of states, China was ready to accept the rules and feel the influence of that community. The introduction of foreign values in the Chinese society is unstoppable. Even without a " black hand " behind, globalization, the Internet phenomenon, the presence of large numbers of foreigners in China, are all

introducing a new culture into China's old traditions. Economic dependence on foreign markets, capital, and technologies carried the danger of political interference.

CONCLUSION:

The world needs a strong, confident, proud, secure and stable China to help shape the 21st century to productive and humane ends. With China as an adversary, achieving this objective is less likely. To ensure regional and global peace, let us have a competitive, caring and confident country in which poverty will have been eliminated. China would be fully integrated into the world economy as a customer, supplier and investor, and with a greater weight and voice in international institutions. This would be built on its own existing growing strengths: a high rate of savings, its pragmatic reforms, a disciplined and relatively well-educated work-force, and the rich overseas Chinese eager to invest in the country of their ethnic and cultural origin. The international community should give Beijing the voice it seeks in drawing up the rules of the emerging post-cold war international order, always remember the historical and current forces that have and are shaping modern China. A strong China has shown its commitment to regional peace by solving different border disputes with neighboring countries, participating in the regional institutions for confidence-building measures. China has participated in the UN peacekeeping activities, it has compromised on many issues in US-China relations to diminish the potential for costly conflict with the United States.

A China with weakening central authority, unable to control its borders or its economy and possibly beset by civil war, presents the greatest insecurity to the rest of Asia. In that case, huge problems of out-migration, security of investments, and ethnic-nationalist border wars would have to be anticipated, the Asia-Pacific region will have to deal with refugees and displaced people. To avoid this sad scenario to turn into reality, the international community and especially China's neighbors have great interest in helping China to get stronger and powerful. The rise of China is not a threat, but its disintegration or the attempt by the international community to block its rise or keep it down, will bring nothing but disorder and instability.

¹ *The Cox Commission Report*, November 1998.

² For some studies of Chinese nationalism, see: Suisheng Zhao, " Chinese Nationalism And Its International Orientations ". *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 115, No.1 Spring 2000; Allen Whitting, " Assertive Nationalism in Chinese Foreign Policy". *Asian Survey* August 23, 1983.

³ Source: *The Military Balance 1998/1999*; International Institute For Strategic Studies (IISS); *Nuclear Weapons Figures From Carnegie Endowment For International Peace*.

⁴ Used in his speech declaring the founding of the PRC on October 1, 1949.

⁵ See the White Paper on " China's National Defense in 2000 ", issued by the Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, October 2000. *Beijing Review*, October 23, 2000.

⁶ Kenneth N. Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. Mc Graw-Hill 1979, P. 101.

⁷ See the White Paper on China's National Defense in 2000.

⁸ Talking to visiting Maldives president Maumoon Abdul Gayoon in 1984, late leader Deng Xiaoping asserted: " China is one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. Its vote belongs firmly to the third world, to the underdeveloped countries. We have said more than once that China belongs to the third world. ".

⁹ For further analysis of post-cold war ethnic conflicts see: Michael E. Brown, ed., *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*. Princeton University Press 1993.

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