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Constructing China and America’s New Type of Major Power Relations: Opportunities and Challenges

Shao Yuqun, Ph.D.¹

On June 7 and 8, 2013, President Xi Jinping and President Barack Obama held meetings at the Annenberg Estate in California. This meeting was Xi Jinping’s first visit to the U.S. since assuming the position of President; it was also Obama’s first meeting with a Chinese leader since beginning his second term. Even more importantly, the two sides altered the original schedule. The Xi-Obama meeting, originally planned to take place at the G20 Leaders’ Summit in September, was moved forward to early June. This demonstrates that both sides had a desire to meet and communicate as early as possible. During the Xi-Obama summit, the proposition to construct a “new type of major power relations” between China and the U.S. again attracted global attention.

This essay attempts to sort out the origins and development of the idea of “new type of major power relations” between China and the U.S., and to use this as a foundation for analyzing the potential opportunities and challenges that confront the proposition’s success. Finally, the essay will evaluate the concept’s significance for China-U.S. relations on a policy level.

I. Proposing the Concept

In February 2012, then-Vice President Xi Jinping made an official visit to the U.S. During his trip, Xi said that “China and the United States have the wisdom, ability and means to maintain and develop their cooperative partnership... And by doing so, we’ll set an unprecedented and inspiring example.”² Xi further said, “China is the world’s largest developing country, while the United States is the largest developed country. To build a new type of cooperative partnership between two countries like ours is a pioneering endeavor with great and far-reaching significance. There is no precedent for us to follow and no ready experience for us to refer

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¹ Translation by Shannon Tiezzi, Research Associate, U.S.-China Policy Foundation
² The White House, Office of the Vice President, “Remarks by Vice President Biden and Chinese Vice President Xi at the State Department Luncheon”, February 14, 2013 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/02/14/remarks-vice-president-biden-and-chinese-vice-president-xi-state-departm>
to.” This was the first time a Chinese leader raised the idea that China and the U.S. should establish a new-type, unprecedented, cooperative partnership that would serve as a model for future generations.

On May 3, 2012, then-President Hu Jintao gave an opening speech titled “Advance Mutually Beneficial and Win-Win Cooperation; Develop New Type Major Power Relations” at the Fourth China-U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogue. In this speech, he put forth the five concepts of “creative thinking, mutual trust, equality and mutual understanding, active work, and nourishment of friendship.” These five points can be understood as the specific principles behind constructing a new-type major power relationship between China and the U.S.

The proposal from Chinese leaders received an energetic response from the U.S. government. On March 7, 2013, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made the following remarks at a U.S. Institute of Peace Conference honoring the 40th anniversary of Nixon’s trip to China: “[T]he U.S.-China project of 2012 is something altogether different; indeed, it is unprecedented in the history of nations...We are, together, building a model in which we strike a stable and mutually acceptable balance between cooperation and competition. This is uncharted territory.” This can be taken as an indirect, but positive, response from the U.S. government to the Chinese leaders’ concept of construction new type major power relations between America and China.

One year later, then-U.S. National Security Advisor Tom Donilon gave a speech at the Asia Society in which he gave a formal response to the Chinese proposal on behalf of Obama’s second term government. “I disagree with the premise put forward by some historians and theorists that a rising power and an established power are somehow destined for conflict... A better outcome is possible. But it falls to both sides—the United States

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3 Ibid.
and China—to build a new model of relations between an existing power and an emerging one. Xi Jinping and President Obama have both endorsed this goal.  

In early June 2013, President Xi and President Obama held the first “shirt sleeve summit” at Annenberg Estate in California. During the two days’ discussion, constructing new-type major power relations between the U.S. and China was one important subject among numerous issues. According to State Councilor Yang Jiechi’s remarks to the press, “Both sides agreed to work together to construct a new pattern of relationship between major powers on the basis of mutual respect, cooperation and win-win results for the benefit of the people of the two countries as well as the world.” National Security Advisor Tom Donilon told the press, “[T]he challenge that [President Obama] and President Xi face is to turn the aspiration of charting a new course here for our relationship into a reality, and to build out what President Xi and President Obama call the new model of relations between major powers.”

From the above outline, we see that since the Chinese side raised the suggestion of creating a “new type of major power relationship” between China and the U.S., the two sides have been energetically interacting on the government level. After a little more than a year, the top leaders of the two countries met at the Annenberg Estate and reached a basic consensus on this question.

II. The Two Sides’ Debate

After the proposal for constructing a “new type major power relationship” between America and China was put forth, it aroused an extensive debate in the international strategy and diplomatic policy research fields of China and the U.S. Scholars investigated this new idea from every corner, including the concept, the methods, the history, the theory, the strategy, and the policy aspect. Generally speaking, the relevant discussion mostly centered about those topics, which I will discuss in the following sections.

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The Concept

First, there was much debate over the concept of “new type major power relations.” On the question of what makes “new type major power relations” “new”, many American scholars worked from Western historical experience and the scholarly theories regarding international relations and government that have come from that historical foundation. These scholars believe that China is a rising power, and the U.S. is an established power. “New type” relations means the two sides can avoid the conflict between a rising power and an established power that has been repeated throughout history. However, many American scholars see two problems with China raising this new idea. First, they believe this is a “concept without content.” Second, they believe that the object of this idea is not clear; besides a new type major power relationship between China and the U.S., there is also the idea of new type relations between China and Russia, etc.9

The debates of Chinese scholars are even fiercer. There are differing opinions on whether or not “new type major power relations” only applies to China-U.S. relations. Yuan Peng believes that there are two meanings to the word “new.” In one sense, “new” points out that such a relationship would be different from the China-U.S. relations of 40, 20, or even 10 years ago. Second, “new” means that the new type of major power relationship between China and America should be distinct from all other major power relationships throughout history.10 However, Yang Jiemian believes that the meaning of China’s concept of new type major power relations is relatively broad and includes both moral standards and problem resolution. To China, the idea of “new type major power relations” begins with but is not limited to China-U.S. relations—it includes Europe, the U.S., Japan and other traditional


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powers, as well as the emerging powers represented by the BRICS nations.¹¹

The Background

Scholars have also explored the background behind Chinese leaders' proposition for constructing a new type major power relationship between China and America. On this issue, Yuan Peng provides the clearest analysis. According to Yuan, after Obama assumed office in 2009, China-U.S. relations “opened high and closed high”, but on each side there were strategic misjudgments leading to the dramatic ups-and-downs that the bilateral relationship experienced in 2010. It is difficult to argue that America’s China strategy underwent a fundamental change, and even more unlikely that China’s policies and principles with respect to America were significantly altered. However, the frequent interference of third-party factors and energetic media hype easily led people to conclude that China and America were beginning an overall strategic competition. Because of this, China and America both needed to conduct rational assessments of the situation as quickly as possible in order to tackle the root issues and reestablish trust. In January 2011, President Hu Jintao made a formal state visit to America precisely as such a political effort to warm up the China-U.S. relationship and get relations back on track. After this, China-U.S. relations quieted down again until November 2011. During that month, President Obama visited Asia to attend the East Asia Summit for the first time; Secretary of State Clinton visited Myanmar; America decided to deploy a rotating group of U.S. Marines at Australia’s base at Darwin; and the TPP was launched. The details of China and America’s coexistence in the Asia-Pacific again occupied a prominent place in all major media outlets, with a focus on America’s core strategy of pivoting to Asia.

China-U.S. relations once again degenerated into a tense situation. Against this background, in February 2012 Vice President Xi Jinping carried out his visit to the U.S. and further pushed forward the idea that China and America must construct an “an unprecedented and inspiring” new type of major power relations.¹²

¹²Yuan Peng, “Strategic Thoughts on Constructing a New Type China-US Major Power Relationship”
The Probability

Third, the probability of constructing a new type of major power relationship between China and America has been explored. According to Joseph Nye, people should not let historical experiences determine the path of our analysis. They should instead investigate “How China and the US can create a new major power relationship.” Power is not always a zero-sum game. China and America face common global problems, meaning that cooperation will be more profitable for both of them. However, this requires both sides to implement wise policies.\(^\text{13}\) Obviously, Nye believes that constructing a “new type major power relationship” between the U.S. and China is possible.

XuJian believes that in the economic sphere there is hope that China and the U.S. can maintain long-term cooperation and positive competition. There is a fundamental difference between China-U.S. political relations and the antagonistic conflicts that marked political relations between the U.S. and the USSR. In the strategic realm, there has been no movement towards enmity. Because of this, Xu argues that the situation is different from the historical relationships between new and old major powers. The China-U.S. relationship has a new logic to its development, and has the conditions necessary to transcend history. By walking a path based on cooperation, common prosperity, and the principle of harmonious yet different parts, China and the U.S. can write a new chapter in the history of major power relations.\(^\text{14}\)

Robert Manning is not so certain that the two countries can peacefully handle the rapidly increasing mutual dependence and the diffusion of power. In Manning’s view, success hinges upon whether or not the two sides recognize their own weaknesses when faced with issues such as the economy, the internet, security, and climate change. Both countries must be willing to balance between their own basic interests and those of the other side. As for whether or not the two countries will be able to achieve these goals, the only answer is, “maybe.”\(^\text{15}\)

\(^{15}\) Robert Manning, “Beijing and Washington Share Indeterminate Future”
The Methods

Fourth, scholars have argued over the methods for constructing a “new type major power relationship” between China and the U.S. Robert Zoellick suggests that China and the U.S. can first investigate their respective plans for economic reform and find common interests. Besides relying on their mutual economic dependence, the countries can simultaneously consider how to connect economic and security issues under the current foreign policies. Looking at security issues, China and the U.S. have many common interests at the global level, but the truly contentious questions are all at the regional level, in East Asia. Therefore, the two countries should think about how to take the spirit of cooperation that exists on global issues and apply this attitude towards solving regional problems.16

In Yang Jiemian’s analysis, China and the U.S. must strengthen their mutual trust on the strategic level and use dialogue mechanisms to increase and expand mental interactions.17 Yuan Peng believes that the two sides should look for the convergence points between their interests in this new period, and should search for “common values” on the basis of their common interests. They should enrich the communication channels between the two countries and unleash the capabilities of cultural and local exchanges, as well as developing a unique efficiency in their military exchanges. On the foundation of deepening diplomacy and developing multilateral diplomacy, the countries should push forward trilateral diplomacy using the formula of “China-U.S.-X”. Furthermore, China should continue its strategy of “keeping a low profile” and persist in painstakingly improving its domestic situation.18

The Significance

The fifth topic of importance in analyzing the construction of “new type major power relations” between China and America is the significance it has for the development of modern China-U.S. relations. Although American scholars may have different views on

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16 吴心伯 (Wu Xinbo), “国家利益有时以体系利益的形式出现——罗伯特·佐利克访谈录” (“National Interests Sometimes Take the Form of Systemic Interests–An Interview with Robert Zoellick”) 《文汇报》 (Wenhui News), June 17, 2013。
18 袁鹏, “Strategic Thoughts on Constructing a New Type China-US Major Power Relationship”
the content and practical possibilities of this idea, they affirm that
the concept is significant for the development of China-U.S.
relations. In November 2012, while reporting on the 18th National
Party Congress’ work report and analyzing its implications for
foreign policy, M. Taylor Fravel wrote that the core of “new type
relations” is an admission of the security predicaments that stem
from a time of power transition in global politics and the necessity of
avoiding conflict during this time. Because the potential
consequences of a regional conflict between China and the U.S.
are obvious, Fravel calls this part of the work report both
“noteworthy and encouraging.”

David Shambaugh believes that historical experience and
political theory make it clear that a conflict between a rising power
and an established power will be difficult to avoid. Shambaugh finds
that the power gap between China and the U.S. is still fairly large,
and still far from reaching the conflict-inducing “power transition”
threshold. However, the current competitive trend of the
relationship is quite clear, and the two sides are full of mistrust on
both a political and a societal level. Because of these factors, it was
wise for China’s new leaders to raise the concept of constructing a
“new type major power relationship.” Chinese scholars also
affirmed the concept with respects to both strategy and policy.

III. Opportunities and Challenges

Based on the analysis above regarding “new type major power
relations” between China and the U.S., this author believes that
there are both opportunities and challenges in realizing this idea.
Only by working together, capturing opportunities, and facing
challenges can China and the U.S. finally avoid conflict and thus
make a necessary contribution not only to their peoples but also to
world peace.

Opportunities

Constructing a “new type major power relationship” between
China and the U.S. mainly involves the following opportunities.
First, the two countries have a good historical foundation. Since the
Nixon administration, each American administration has

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19 M. Taylor Fravel, “Foreign Policy under Xi Jinping”, The Diplomat, November 23, 2012,
<http://thediplomat.com/china-power/foreign-policy-under-xi-jinping/ >
type-of-major-power-relationship/ >
implemented a policy of “engagement” towards China with the purpose of integrating China into the international system. As China’s overall power has gradually developed, the U.S.’s China policy has undergone periodic revisions. The dualism is obvious, but the core of the policy has not changed. All along, the U.S. has believed that a strong, prosperous China fits with American interests. Since its “reform and opening up” policy, China has placed a high level of importance on China-U.S. relations, looking upon its U.S. policy as the most crucial part of China’s foreign policy. China has matured and strengthened within the U.S.-led international system, becoming a true beneficiary. China-U.S. relations “can only be so good, and can only be so bad”, and occasionally unexpected events interfere with the general trend. However, overall the peaceful development of the bilateral relationship over the last forty years has created a firm foundation for the further development of the relationship.

Second, the top leaders of both countries share the hope for “new type major power relations.” From the history of China-U.S. relations, we can see that the views of the highest leaders have an important influence of the development of the relationship. This influence is not only apparent in each country’s strategic direction, but is also revealed in the decision-making of the bureaucratic system and in the process of implementing policy. The concept of constructing a “new type of major power relations” came from Chinese leaders and reflected their personal views and strategic thoughts regarding the future of China-U.S. relations. The affirmative response that came later from the U.S. government revealed that American leaders view this idea positively. When the top leaders share this hope, the two sides will more easily be able to discuss and compromise on issues of common concern on a working level.

Third, the U.S. and Chinese economies are not only mutually dependent, but also are closely integrated into the web of global trade. For many years, economic relations have been seen as the “ballast” of China-U.S. relations and have been highly valued by both governments. Although the competitive nature of China-U.S. economic relations becomes more prominent with each passing day, the continued deepening of mutual dependence and broadening fields of cooperation is encouraging. According to the most recent research report of the China-U.S. Exchange Foundation, the relative advantage created by large gaps in development stages, resources, manpower, capital, and science
and technology establishes the foundation for China-U.S. cooperation and creates strong complementary attributes in the economic sphere. Furthermore, China-U.S. economic cooperation is not limited to the bilateral field. In our ever-more-interconnected world, China-U.S. economic cooperation plays an important role in the chain of global goods and services, the increasingly-connected global capital flow, and the exchange network for technology, human resources, and business opportunities.21

Fourth, the possibility of a direct security confrontation between China and the U.S. is very remote. In the near future, China will have neither the power nor the intention to challenge American dominance. Additionally, the U.S. is not a directly interested party on questions concerning China’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. Even the Taiwan question—the most sensitive, most complicated issue in China-U.S. relations—is no longer a potential fuse for the outbreak of a direct China-U.S. military conflict now that cross-strait relations have entered a period of peaceful development. Because of these factors, and under the conditions of nuclear deterrence, the possibility of a direct security confrontation between China and the U.S. is quite low.

Fifth, each country is an important external factor affecting the other’s domestic reforms. Here, “domestic reform” usually means “economic reform.” Since China’s “reform and opening”, the U.S., as the largest economy in the world, has constantly had an important influence on China’s economic development and structural reform. The U.S. policy of welcoming China into the World Trade Organization had an especially large impact on China’s economy. Currently, U.S. promotion of the “Trans-Pacific Partnership” (TPP) will have an historic influence on China’s economic reforms. For the past thirty years, China has had practically no impact on the planning and reform of U.S. domestic public policy. However, as China’s economic power rapidly rises and China-U.S. economic relations become ever more entwined, China is gradually becoming an important external factor in the structural revision of America’s economy. China now indirectly affects U.S. public policies such as immigration and education. This trend will strengthen in the future.

Sixth, people-to-people exchanges between China and the U.S. are flourishing. No matter how officials at the government level rack their brains to find words to define the relationship, people-to-people exchanges have never really been influenced. Instead, they have continued to develop for many years. In recent years, the total number of people traveling back and forth between China and the U.S. topped 3,000,000, with an average of over 9,000 people making the roundtrip across the Pacific each day. China and the U.S. have already established 36 “sister provinces” and 161 “sister cities.” Currently there are about 130,000 Chinese students studying abroad in the U.S., and over 2,000 American students studying in China. In China, about three hundred million people are studying English, while the number of people studying Chinese in the U.S. has already reached over 200,000.22 This sort of close people-to-people exchange has never before been seen between China and any other major power. While American impressions of China and Chinese impressions of America might vacillate due to specific events, overall the robust development of people-to-people exchanges is a firm foundation for the development of the relationship.

**Challenges**

Although there are many opportunities for constructing a “new type major power relationship” between China and the U.S. as outlined above, there are also challenges that will be difficult to avoid. First, there is still the possibility of strategic misjudgments. Recently, China and the U.S. have both realized that the lack of strategic trust is an important issue for developing the bilateral relationship. This issue aroused even more attention after Kenneth Lieberthal and Wang Jisi released their research report.23 Of course, the lack of strategic trust is a serious problem. However, considering that China and the U.S. have already either consciously or unconsciously entered the mental frameworks of a rising power and an established power, and that there are large gaps between the two in terms of ideology, developmental stage, and strategic culture, it is not realistic to demand that China and the U.S. reach a state of complete strategic trust. Under these circumstances, it is better to say that the challenge is preventing strategic misjudgment rather than overcoming strategic mistrust.

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From Yuan Peng’s analysis of the background for the Chinese decision to broach the topic of “new type major power relations,” we can see that strategic misjudgments by both China and the U.S. led to problems in the bilateral relationship in the latter half of Obama’s first term. The possibility exists for strategic misjudgments by both sides, and furthermore the impact of these misjudgments is not limited to the bilateral relationship, but also reaches the regional and global levels. There are many factors behind strategic misjudgment. Some are limited to information and communication factors, which are easily dealt with. However, some factors stem from thought patterns and strategic culture and are difficult to eradicate. This is a major reason that the new Chinese leadership and Obama’s second-term administration intensely hoped to hold the “shirtsleeve summit” early. By introducing and communicating about each other’s goals, policies, and policy positions on hot topics in the bilateral relationship as early as possible, the governments hoped to prevent strategic misjudgments.

In the future, the task of preventing strategic misjudgments will still be immensely difficult. Besides strategic dialogues between the highest government leaders, the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue is also an important platform. Using both of these platforms well to prevent strategic misjudgments by China or the U.S. is very important.

The second challenge facing the construction of “new type major power relations” between China and the U.S. is how to simultaneously practice “opportunity management” and “crisis management”. In the past, most scholarly discussion focused on crisis management, emphasizing the need to prevent the negative effects of a crisis from spilling over into the whole bilateral relationship. However, to successfully construct a “new type major power relationship” between China and the U.S., it is not enough to only discuss “crisis management.” At the same time, the countries must use “opportunity management.” In a way, “opportunity management” and “crisis management” reflect the two sides of China-U.S. relations. On one hand, the two countries are continuously expanding their common interests and cooperation. On the other hand, they are constantly controlling the tendency for disputes to evolve into crises.

Of course, crisis management is extremely important. It is a crucial safeguard preventing China-U.S. relations from sinking into
an overall crisis, and currently China-U.S. cooperation on this aspect still has much room for growth. However, as the bilateral relationship develops, outside parties, especially the media, are more likely to pay attention to a crisis, and will avidly report on a crisis. There is always the possibility that related reports will exaggerate the influence of a crisis on the bilateral relationship, as well as the possibility that policymakers, scholars, and the Chinese and American peoples will be misled by such reports. Compared with crises, opportunities are not easily noticed by the media.

The phrase “opportunity management” means that China and the U.S. will maintain a heightened sensitivity towards the convergence of their interests, and will continuously seek out opportunities for cooperation in political, economic, security, and cultural fields. Also, the two countries will use communication and negotiation at the policy level to take advantage of opportunities, constantly producing new gains in China-U.S. cooperation and creating a positive atmosphere for the development of the bilateral relationship. “Opportunity management” is not as eye-catching as “crisis management”, but its positive affects must not be underestimated. To practice it well is relatively difficult. Because of the significance of opportunity management, as well as its difficulty, we must emphasize it along side crisis management.

The third challenge is how China and the U.S. can promote a smooth transition in the security mechanisms of the Asia-Pacific region. The Asia-Pacific region is where China and the U.S.’s interests converge most closely. It is also a key region in testing whether or not a “new type major power relationship” can succeed. Within the region, the China-U.S. security relationship is more difficult to manage than the economic relationship. Currently, the U.S. is still the main provider of the common good of regional security. Although China has reiterated that its strategy of “peaceful development” has not changed, because China is a large country and its economic development has outpaced the predictions of its neighbors, there is still a market for the “China threat theory” among countries in the region. Some countries have repeatedly asked the U.S. to “return to the Asia-Pacific” in order to provide a safeguard.

After deciding that it needed a strategic “pivot to Asia”, the U.S. still relied upon the system of alliances established in the Asia-Pacific after World War II. However, this system was gradually showing a few problems. One, there was no way to effectively
adapt the system to face the hot topics in regional security. Two, the system took China as a potential adversary, which was not good for increasing strategic trust in U.S.-China military affairs. Three, the worsening of relations between the alliance countries and the weakening power of some of the countries involved directly affected the deterrence provided by this network.

Currently, the Asia-Pacific region also has some multilateral security mechanisms in use, including inter-governmental dialogue and consultation mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Six Party Talks, and the ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). Besides these platforms, “Track 1.5” and “Track II” dialogue mechanisms are also a good supplement to inter-governmental dialogues. However, even though there are many multilateral security mechanisms, it seems as if the Asia-Pacific region still has not broken away from the “security dilemma.” Countries in the region are now actively discussing the basic concepts, regulations, and principles in an attempt to construct a security order that meets the interests of regional security.

During this process of construction, China has suggested establishing a cooperative security mechanism based on “new security thinking” while the U.S. leans towards multilateral mechanisms that are mainly based on the U.S. alliance system. The two countries should approach the problem with the goal of effectively facing regional security issues, and push forward a smooth transition whereby the regional security mechanism evolves in a way that is acceptable to both parties. If China and the U.S. can do this, then both countries will benefit.

The fourth challenge is how China and the U.S. can effectively strengthen domestic coordination in order to create truly meaningful “new type major power relations interactions.” Because there are many issues in U.S.-China relations, and the impact of the relationship is felt outside the bilateral sphere, policy decisions and implementation usually cross departments, and thus need coordination and integration among different offices. This poses a huge challenge for both governments. For China, the challenge lies in establishing a “greater diplomacy” decision-making and policy implementation mechanism, making it possible for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be able to coordinate the interests of domestic
departments and push forward policies that fit with China’s national interests while maintaining efficiency. As an example, China could avoid the situation of “having too many cooks in the kitchen” on maritime issues. The U.S. faces a similar challenge. After the Obama administration announced the “pivot to Asia” strategy, the Department of Defense acted the most quickly. This gave countries in the Asia-Pacific the impression that the main purpose of the “pivot to Asia” was for America to contain China on a military and security level. After the Obama administration realized the problem, they had to explain that the “pivot to Asia” isn’t solely a military strategy; the strategy also focuses on economic and diplomatic aspects. This example illustrates that U.S. government departments also face the problems with inter-departmental coordination.

A major power’s foreign policy is sure to be closely connected to domestic issues and domestic policy. In both the Chinese and the U.S. governments, there is a large difference between the political system and the foreign policy-making apparatus. In managing the day-to-day bilateral relationship, especially when issues involve third-party factors, it will be helpful to raise the level of each country’s inter-departmental coordination. This will make it easier to give clear signals to the other country, thereby avoiding strategic misjudgments. After the top leaders send policy down, fostering interactions on the working level is a serious challenge. As the saying goes, “the devil is in the details.”

In July 2013 the U.S. will host the China-U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogue. This meeting will be an important test of whether or not the two countries can implement effective communication and cooperation on the working level. Many departments from both countries will attend the S&ED, and will be the direct implementers of relevant policies after the dialogue. While everyone spends much time and energy on preparing for the S&ED, perhaps more focus should be shifted to the S&ED follow-up, namely the process of implementing policy. Thorough evaluation of the coordination and communication abilities of both governments’ departments should be carried out. This is the Fifth Round of the S&ED; there is certainly a need for both sides to analyze its effectiveness in order to make better use of this important communication platform in the future.

The idea of constructing a “new type major power relationship” provides an excellent opportunity for the positive development of
China-U.S. relations. China and the U.S. must use the specific results of their cooperation to flesh out the substance of this concept in order to prevent it from becoming an empty slogan. At the same time, both sides must take a long-term strategic view and realize that the positive development of China-U.S. relations is crucial to furthering both countries' domestic reforms, stabilizing of regional security, developing the regional economy, and controlling global issues. China and the U.S. must respect each other interests and consider issues from each other’s perspective when interacting. Through practice, both countries must feel out a feasible path for constructing a “new type major power relationship.”
Nothing New, Nothing Great: Exploring “New Type of Great Power Relations”

Peter Mattis

Introduction

In February 2012, then-Vice President Xi Jinping visited the United States, meeting a broad range of the senior-most officials ahead of his anticipated succession of Hu Jintao at the 18th Party Congress. Xi also delivered a speech on U.S.-China relations at a luncheon, suggesting a “new type of relationship between major countries in the 21st Century.” Xi stated this relationship should be characterized by “steadily increasing mutual understanding and strategic trust,” “respecting each other’s core interests,” “mutual beneficial cooperation,” and “enhancing cooperation and coordination in international affairs.” 

Then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton took up the call less than a month later when speaking at a special event at the U.S. Institute of Peace: “We are now trying to find an answer, a new answer to the ancient question of what happens when an established power and a rising power meet.” These two statements opened the door for further discussion of how to overcome the historical challenges created by the international structure surrounding U.S.-China relations.

In principle, both sides have agreed that a new kind of relationship is necessary to overcome the challenges in U.S.-China relations. Better choices on the part of leadership, according to U.S. National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, can ameliorate the risk of such conflict: “I disagree with the premise put forward by some historians and theorists that a rising power and an established power are somehow destined for conflict. There is nothing preordained about such an outcome.” These sentiments, however...

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sensible and laudable, do little to update the underlying principles of rapprochement established 41 years ago. The most severe problems of the U.S.-China relationship, however, are of a practical nature—not problems with the principle that both sides should try to avoid armed conflict. To the extent that principles are at stake and interests conflict, the “New Type of Great Power Relations” framework offers only one solution: U.S. acceptance of China’s “core interests.”

Barring further elaboration of a “New Type of Great Power Relations” at an official level, the concept and its underlying principles do not open any new avenues or options to strengthen U.S.-China relations. This is a way for China to pursue its interests in a rhetorically-friendly framework; however, the associated concepts fit squarely within Beijing’s existing stated policy of “peaceful coexistence” and do not represent a departure from past practice. China has provided little in the way of reciprocity. The explanations of a “New Type of Great Power Relations” fail to address how long-held U.S. foreign policies and principles might be impacted by Washington’s acceptance of Beijing’s proposal. It would indeed be a “new type” of relationship if a great power acceded to every interest described by an emerging power, especially when the latter challenged at least some aspects of the former’s international system. The Chinese emphasis on “new” probably is not helpful, because, in some Americans’ eyes, the repackaging of old concepts as if they were new may suggest one of two possibilities. The first is that China is not serious. The second is that Beijing may hold malicious, or at least suspicious, intentions. Neither possibility is firm ground on which to engage the United States. Although concerns about growing strategic mistrust and intensifying competition increase the need for a new framework for U.S.-China relations, “New Type of Great Power Relations” offers little in this regard and, ultimately, may prove counterproductive.

This essay proceeds in five main parts. The first explains how Chinese voices have explained a “New Type of Great Power Relations” and the second examines how it became a “New Type of International Relations” earlier this year. The third part addresses...
how these ostensibly new concepts fit within Beijing’s existing peaceful coexistence policy that has its origins in the Bandung Conference of 1955. The fourth examines what, if any, meaningful policy developments may have come out of China’s pledge. The final section explores the policy implications of these ideas in the context of U.S.-China relations.

**Explaining “New Type of Great Power Relations”**

The clearest and most authoritative elaboration of the “New Type of Great Power Relations” concept appeared on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) website in July 2012 in an essay—published in both English and Chinese—authored by then-Vice Minister Cui Tiankai and Pang Hanzhao. Building off of Xi’s February remarks, the two coauthors placed the concept squarely within the existing framework of Sino-American relations and explicitly recognized the challenge of then-Secretary Clinton’s calls for a “new answer.” The essay explains the “new type” as consisting of five basic propositions that should govern U.S. and Chinese efforts to address five issue areas where U.S.-China relations could be derailed.⁶

If Beijing and Washington are to achieve this new relationship that avoids the problems of past great power transitions, then it must be built upon five foundational elements that emphasize mutual benefit and win-win relations. Under the framework of “New Type Great Power Relations,” the United States and China would define the interests of their relationship in terms of their interactions, e.g. people and trade, rather than national security interests. The five basic elements, according Cui and Pang, are as follows:

- **Mutual Benefit as the Foundation for Relations:** Cui and Pang described a commitment to mutual benefit as an implicit but still strategic agreement in U.S.-China relations, writing, “The two countries have realized that win-win cooperation is the most common denominator for them to handle relations with each other under the new historic circumstances.”

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• *Intertwined National Interests Built on Commerce*: At the time of the essay, China and the United States had become each other’s second-largest trading partners with more than $1 billion in daily commerce of goods and services. The value of this trade in terms of jobs domestically and the importance of the U.S.-China relations brings the two countries “unshakably and irreversibly” closer. Although the authors do not explicitly acknowledge it, this characterization of interests also suggests Beijing and Washington have shared interests in trade internationally.

• *Institutionalization of Contacts and Communication*: The conduct of U.S.-China relations has expanded well beyond high-level meetings, now including more than 90 dialogue and consultation mechanisms apart from ad hoc visits or communications—up from the 60 identified by Cui and Pang in the original essay one year ago. This built upon the relatively high intensity of presidential communication—including meetings, phone calls, and letters—established during the Obama administration. Cui and Pang note, “All these frequent, diversified and institutionalized high-level exchanges,” serve to build understanding and expand cooperation. Separately, President Xi joined his diplomats to advocate for making “full use of our channels of communication...including military-to-military relations” to supplement diplomatic channels.

• *People-to-People Relations as a Driving Force*: Cui and Pang stated, “Our two peoples have long cherished friendly sentiments toward each other and wish to see the two countries becoming friends, not enemies...To build a new-type relationship between major countries conforms to the people’s will [sic].” They highlight the high degree of interaction—students, businessmen, tourists, etc.—and thousands of people learning the other’s language as evidence of this intent that should guide U.S. and Chinese policymakers.

• *Expand International Coordination and Cooperation*: As the largest developed and largest developing country, as well as two members of the UN Security Council, China and the

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Nothing New, Nothing Great

United States share a unique burden in upholding international peace and stability. Cui and Pang argue both sides should expand on existing cooperation in addressing global challenges and non-traditional security threats, such as climate change and piracy, respectively. The two also invoke Dai Bingguo, the former state councilor and CCP office director for foreign affairs, in noting that such “cooperation is indispensable,” even if it cannot solve all of the world’s problems.

While the five points above address what a “New Type of Great Power Relations” would look like, Cui and Pang identified five sets of problems that obstructed this stronger foundation for U.S.-China relations. This familiar problem set has been expressed in various ways, but the fundamental theme remains the same: Washington fails to meet Beijing on equal terms. The five barriers to a better U.S.-China relationship are largely the results of U.S. intransigence and diminution of China’s international status. They are as follows:

- **“Lack of Strategic Mutual Trust”:** The two MFA officials point out that “without trust, state-to-state relations cannot go smoothly.” The United States and China, however, have been moving steadily apart: “there have been signs in the United States to blame China for American domestic problems. Instead of trying to resolve specific problems between the United States and China simply as they stand, they tend to magnify the problems out of proportion by seeing them through the lens of competition for domination between major powers.”

- **“The Bottleneck of Core Interests”:** Although the two authors believe U.S. and Chinese interests converge across a wide range of areas, Washington allegedly interferes with a set of Chinese core interests—something Beijing has never done to the U.S. Most notable among these are the failure of Washington to live up to its commitments on Taiwan and its willingness to criticize publicly China’s right to choose the political system most appropriate for its national circumstances.

- **The Principle of Mutual Equality:** Cui and Pang describe mutual equality as “an inherent element in democracy in international relations” wherein both states “accommodate the other’s concerns in a reciprocal manner and handle bilateral relations in accordance with the Charter of the
United Nations and other universally-accepted norms.” Relatedly, both parties should not try to manipulate this system for parochial national interests, nor should they accuse each other of being “selective stakeholders” or being on “the wrong side of history.”

- **Restrictions on Trade:** China’s development will soon make it the world’s largest market in terms of purchasing power. U.S. restrictions on trade, however, are a sign of bad faith and inhibit the growth of the commercial ties noted above, limiting the prospects of a “New Type of Great Power Relations.”

- **“Ensuring Healthy Interactions in the Asia-Pacific”:** In phrasing that by June 2013 now seems overly familiar, Xi Jinping told his U.S. interlocutors during his February 2012 trip that “the vast Pacific Ocean has ample space for China and the United States.” Although the coauthors did not go so far as to suggest Beijing and Washington divide the Pacific, they did indicate the geography gave the two countries different interests and militated against core interests overlapping.

The five issue sets—lack of strategic trust, conflicting core interests, mutual equality, restrictions on trade, and smooth interactions in the Asia-Pacific—should sound familiar as they have been part of a growing refrain from Beijing about the problems in U.S.-China relations. For example, the problem of strategic trust, or the lack thereof, entered the regular lexicon of U.S.-China relations in 2009, following a speech by then-Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg at a Washington, DC conference. Steinberg spoke of the need to reduce Sino-American mistrust through “strategic reassurance.”\(^9\) The Chinese responses consistently noted it was Beijing, not Washington, which required such reassurance. In an article in the *Global Times* entitled “Strategic Reassurance? Yes, Please,” the editorial staff wrote “Steinberg took the words out of our mouth. On China’s core security concerns, China actually needs strategic reassurance from the [United States].”\(^10\) Other authors, such as rising Chinese America specialist Da Wei, expressed similar concerns: “From a Chinese perspective,

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however, the US view of strategic reassurance remains disturbingly one-sided. The [United States] has not been prepared to assure China that it recognizes and accepts a basic and core Chinese interest: the integrity of Chinese territory and Chinese sovereignty.” 11 In a very different vein, senior scholars and government advisors Kenneth Lieberthal of the Brookings Institution and Wang Jisi of Beijing University noted that the relatively new prioritization of this issue stems from how corrosive distrust can be, as it feeds off of itself over time, further damaging the long-term viability of U.S.-China relations. Lieberthal and Wang illustrated that Washington’s concern primarily relates to the long-term Chinese intentions, whereas Beijing’s concern primarily relates to U.S. intentions in the conduct of their ongoing interaction.12

In sum, “New Type of Great Power Relations” is supposed to reflect a commitment to create a positive vision for U.S.-China relations that overcomes the problems that have plagued the relationship. Shortly after becoming ambassador to the United States, Cui Tiankai told Foreign Affairs that the concept reflected a Chinese commitment to a better relationship that rose above historical simplifications about contests between established and rising powers:

“In the past, when one big country developed very fast and gained international influence, it was seen as being in a kind of a zero-sum game vis-à-vis the existing powers. This often led to conflict or even war. Now, there is a determination both in China and in the United States to not allow history to repeat itself. We’ll have to find a new way for a developing power and an existing power to work with each other, not against each other.”13

From Great Powers to All Powers

The framework for a “new type of great power relations,” however, has failed to ameliorate some of the bilateral tensions in

U.S.-China relations and has failed to offer the kind of leverage on Washington for which Chinese policymakers probably hoped originally. Because some of the irritants in U.S.-China relations appear unresolvable at a bilateral level, “New Type of Great Power Relations” seems to have morphed into a “New Type of International Relations” (xinxingguojiguanxi, 新型国际关系). The discourse and over-analysis of the “New Type of Great Power Relations” over the last year probably also contributed to the introduction of “New Type of International Relations.” U.S. observers immediately raised the question of whether China was now a “great power”—a label Chinese interlocutors have long avoided. Moreover, Chinese officials have carefully avoided comparing Sino-American relations to historical great power competition. The label of “great power relations” seems to draw analysts naturally back toward Athens-Sparta, England-Germany, and United State-Soviet Union comparisons, which the Chinese wish to avoid because of the implication of irreconcilable differences.

Just as with “New Type of Great Power Relations,” Xi Jinping appears to be the originating force. During Xi’s first trip as China’s president that took place in April, he gave a speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations that emphasized a “New Type of International Relations,” reiterating Beijing’s commitment to win-win cooperation and common development. Security, according to Xi, is not something that states should pursue unilaterally. Instead, states should rely upon “cooperative security, collective security, and common security” (hezuoanquan, jitianquan, gongtonganquan; 合作安全，集体安全，共同安全) to resolve their security challenges. President Xi stated, “Countries should...jointly promote the new type of international relations as the core, so that people in all countries should work together to safeguard world peace and promote common development.”

14 The authors of the Brookings report on U.S.-China mistrust note, “This history and these extensive activities have not, however, produced trust regarding long-term intentions on either side.” See Lieberthal and Wang, Addressing U.S.-China Strategic Mistrust, p. vi.
16 “建立以合作共赢为核心的新型国际关系 [jianliyihezuogongyingweihexin de xinxingguojiguanxi, Constructing a new type of international relations with cooperation and win-win at the core],” People’s Daily, March 24, 2013
Based on the reported contents of Xi’s speech, the “New Type of International Relations” has several principles related to the goals and conduct of inter-state relations. The approach described by Xi would allow states to avoid each other as security concerns, while working in concert to resolve non-traditional security issues, such as pirates, extremists, and separatists. They are as follows:

- Each nation should be allowed to choose its own development path, because “only the people of a country are most qualified to speak [on its behalf].”
- The complicated international security threats that the world faces cannot be resolved unilaterally as the “fate of the world must be mastered by the fate of people of all countries.” The international community should handle its issues according to democratic principles and through cooperative security.
- Countries’ internal affairs are for that country and its people to decide, as Xi said, “Matters within the scope of sovereignty are only by their governments and people to manage.”
- China itself is committed to peace and “to pursuing the road of peaceful development” as part of achieving “the China dream.” Other states should join Beijing in the pursuit of peaceful development.17

An unsigned editorial in the China Daily also explained Xi’s speeches as describing a new concept of international relations in which states took a broader view of their security interests, prioritizing global and regional security over state-centric stability. When a state’s interests are defined in terms of the state rather than international order and equality in sovereignty, the results are disruptive to the conduct of diplomacy and peaceful development. As the paper editorialized:

“This new concept of shared security is in stark contrast to the parochial approach, which tends to view security based on one’s own interests and needs. Driven by such an undesirable approach, a country will always calculate its own gains first whenever there is a regional or global security crisis. From the Syria crisis to maritime territorial disputes in


17 Ibid.
the East and South China seas, in the final analysis many of the world’s security woes today can, one way or another, be traced back to the pursuit of selfish gains in disregard of regional and global security needs.”

The People’s Daily’s editorial voice on foreign affairs, Zhongseng (a homophone for “Voice of China”), amplified this point. Quoting from Xi’s speech in Moscow, the editorial noted that, in an interdependent global village, security comes from cooperative measures and allowing other states space for their security, rather than unilateral measures. Separately, another official paper highlighted a new framework “Three Shares” (san gegongxiang, 三个共享), that Xi raised in his speech. These were described as the “shared right to dignity,” “shared right to enjoy the fruits of development,” and “shared enjoyment of security” to help bring about a “New Type of International Relations.”

Shortly after Xi delivered his speech in Moscow, Qu Xing— director of the MFA-administered China Institute for International Studies—entertained an interview with the International Herald Leader (GuojiXianquDaobao) that was also carried in Reference News (CankaoXiaoxi) to discuss the “New Type of International Relations.” According to Qu, this new concept should not be interpreted separately from the “New Type of Great Power Relations,” which should be considered a subset of the Xi’s model of international relations. Without wanting to devalue the importance of great power relations among countries like the United States and Russia, Xi needed to address the importance of “all-weather friends and good partners, including developing countries” in China’s foreign relations.

The principles for the “New Type of International Relations” come out of the 18th Party Congress Work Report, according to Qu. The report presented three principles for the conduct of international relations: equality and mutual trust (pingdenghuxin, 平等互信), inclusiveness and mutual learning (baoronghujian, 包容互鉴) and win-win cooperation (hezuogongying, 合作共赢). Qu noted Xi’s invocation of these principles to achieve a “New Type of International Relations” was designed to overcome the curse of rising and status quo powers falling into conflict.22

**Peaceful Coexistence with Chinese Characteristics**

Few if any of the aforementioned catchphrases, such as mutual equality and respect for sovereignty, should be unfamiliar to the experienced China watcher. This familiarity suggests that, even if the overarching name has evolved into the two “New Type” concepts, the actual policies and conduct of Chinese foreign policy remain the same. This consistency undermines Chinese claims that the “New Type” concepts are a response to concerns about conflicts between rising and established powers.

This strategy of coexistence has three elements, based on Liselotte Odgaard's detailed study of Chinese foreign policy. The first element is that China perceives its policy choices in terms of shaping a state’s behavior or the context for its behavior—the latter being preferable. The second element relates to China’s focus on the developing world. Rather than viewing globalization as force that breaks down state barriers or encourages supra-national integration, Beijing sees the process as building economic power outside the direct control of countries, such as the United States. Put another way, globalization has a democratizing effect on the international system, diminishing the standing and moral authority of the traditional powers to pass judgment. The third and final element is the reliance on political and diplomatic instruments to a greater extent than economic and military tools. The former involve acts of persuasion—and often relate to the context of decision making—while the latter are necessarily coercive and provocative.23

22Ibid.
One of the best hints that China’s peaceful coexistence strategy remains the operative concept behind Beijing’s foreign policy is that Chinese leaders continue to frame their foreign relations this way. In Xi Jinping’s still unreleased speech of January 28, 2013, he makes reference to the strategic decision to “follow the path of peaceful development,” which, “per long-term practice,” means adhering to the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.” President Xi, Premier Li Keqiang, and Vice President Li Yuanchao met with foreign envoys and representatives of international organizations in early April. During the reception held in the Great Hall of the People, these Chinese leaders emphasized China’s adherence to the path of peaceful development and to the “Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence.” Moreover, taking their lead from the leadership, Chinese scholars continue to reiterate the same lines. In a commentary following Xi’s visit to Russia. Yu Sui, an expert on Russian and Sino-Russian relations, made the following judgment about the content of Xi’s speech and meetings in Russia:

“Taking the ‘Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence’ as the basis of their relations, they will not enter into an alliance, confront one another, or aim at any third country. On the contrary, they will remain good neighbors, friends and partners, and treat each other equally with mutual trust. They will respect each other’s development path, and prevent ideology from interfering with the normal development of state relations clear.”

Chinese discussion of the “New Type” concepts also follow Odgaard’s point about emphasizing the democratization of international relations, where globalization is redistributing power. In this vein, Lu Fengding, a member of the Foreign Ministry’s advisory group, noted, “In this modern technological era, the world has

become more interdependent and a single country or a small group of countries in the world cannot survive or prosper unilaterally.”

Cui and Pang wrote: “It requires China to stick to its set path, commit to peace and cooperation and blaze a new path to revitalization of a big nation like none in the past.”

The “New Type” concepts certainly fit within the coexistence strategy’s emphasis on context. Statements of principles almost by definition are efforts to shape the context for behavior. U.S. official after U.S. official has expressed the sentiment that the United States does not seek to contain or constrain China’s rise and intends to pursue a durable U.S.-China relationship. The “New Type” concepts respond to these expressions by giving clear statements about how such a productive relationship can be developed, despite the potential for antagonism. By focusing on principles rather than specific policy steps, Chinese officials from President Xi to Ambassador Cui are trying to induce U.S. agreement to a rule set that shapes the patterns of interaction. In normal diplomatic practice, China begins with principles as a means to govern how inevitable and specific disputes are resolved, whether it is lines in a trade agreement, a joint statement, or the agenda for a presidential meeting. The principles are the context for any negotiation; once agreed upon, the behavior of the other side changes. If behavior does not, then the Chinese interlocutors can use the failure to adhere to the principles to demonstrate bad faith. If the other side fails to engage on the principles or rules (probably out of preference for the technical aspects of the engagement or negotiation), then the Chinese side gains important leverage.

This issue of principle in negotiation illuminates the importance of the movement from a “New Type of Great Power Relations” to the “New Type of International Relations.” The more limited, former concept suggests the principles should be decided by and applicable to major powers, such as China, the United States, and Russia. The latter’s broader applicability, however, enables Beijing to pursue other countries, often less powerful and influential, for the purposes of international coalition building. With

only a small number of major powers, the first of the “New Type” ideas was inherently limited, especially since many of those countries share U.S. political-economic values. By taking the “New Type of International Relations” and its principle of mutual equality—the international equivalent of “one person, one vote”—to countries such as Mexico and Trinidad & Tobago, Beijing probably has a better chance of building numerical support for its vision of international order.

The Chinese vision of international order, however, does not force states to make choices between participating in the U.S.-led international order and Beijing’s vision. As the content of the “New Type” concepts indicates, Xi has proposed a set of principles that are not mutually exclusive with how Washington has led the international system. The choice is between supporting China’s view or not—not between China and the United States or China and the existing international system, even if adopting the Chinese perspective may limit the scope of U.S. action. This misinterpretation of peaceful coexistence is the mistake most analysts make when evaluating whether China is a revisionist or a status quo power. For these reasons, Xi’s “New Type” concepts are derivative ideas that recast the principles of Chinese diplomacy for the modern context.

The “New Type” of Practice

Foreign policy, however, is more than just the ideas and rhetoric of leaders and government-sponsored scholars. Just because the rhetoric has little to no novelty does not mean Beijing has not adopted different foreign policy measures. Even if observers have little reason to expect a related change to China’s diplomatic practice because of the “New Type” concepts, the potential for new policy initiatives should not be rejected summarily. The weight of the evidence to date, however, does not invite confidence that there is any specific policy substance to the “New Type” relationships that changes Beijing’s approach to foreign policy.

Two areas of ostensible Chinese policy change relate to North Korea and climate change. On the former, Xi Jinping emerged from the Sunnylands summit with a clear statement about the need for Pyongyang to de-nuclearize and to reengage with the Six Party Talks mechanism. The Chinese president also reiterated these priorities in separate meetings with the South and North Koreans. Xi urged, “Relevant parties should all adhere to the goal of denuclearization of the peninsula, persist in safeguarding its peace and stability, and stick to solving problems through dialogue and consultation.”31 For all the attention given to Chinese noises about a North Korean policy change, Xi’s exhortations do not actually introduce any new initiatives as they only restate existing Chinese policy. Nor should the new explosion of debate earlier this year, including a widely-read essay in the Financial Times, be seen as a harbinger.32 The Chinese debate on North Korea has been almost constant since at least late 2005 when Pyongyang walked away from an agreement Beijing brokered. Despite the persistence of such debate, Chinese policy has not changed, even in the last year with Xi’s claimed interest in a “New Type of Great Power Relations.”33

With respect to climate change, Beijing has been reluctant to engage internationally and, at the time of this writing, continues to focus on domestic measures to slow the growth of emissions. Last year was the lowest increase in recent years for China’s carbon emissions, at 300 million tons.34 China has not yet found a way to curb its need for coal, so continuing emission growth is inevitable as cadre choose growth targets over the lower-rated pollution controls. This makes much of the problem a purely domestic matter, unresolvable by technical fixes.35 Although China is opening

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35 Kevin JianjunTu, “China’s Botched Coal Statistics,” China Brief, Vol. 6, No. 21, October 25, 2006 <http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=32168#.Ud
up slowly to international discussions as demonstrated by the U.S.-China Joint Statement on Climate Change in April and willingness to include the topic within the Strategic and Economic Dialogue, no evidence can link Beijing’s change to the “New Type” concepts. The more likely reason for change is that environmental concerns have become the leading cause of the roughly 180,000 incidents of unrest each year, potentially threatening the party’s leadership.36

The most notable absence from any of the “New Type of Great Power Relations” discussion is the lack of analysis of U.S. core interests and any recognition that China also may need to compromise. In an essay entitled “How to Build a New Type of Great Power Relationship,” Tao Wenzhao of the China Academy of Social Sciences addressed the problems of the relationship from only one side, suggesting China had not contributed to the problems. Tao wrote “China has complained about the problems. The United States has promised change but has not gone into action.”37 U.S. complaints about China, however, go unmentioned, from intellectual property theft to assertive claims of sovereignty in China’s exclusive economic zones.

Even if these two issues did not qualify as core interests—despite their delineation among the treaties and customs associated with the U.S.-led order—there are other areas where the U.S. interest is clear and unequivocal. For example, any analysis of U.S. diplomatic history would be hard-pressed to conclude that freedom of navigation was anything but a core interest for which Washington would be willing to fight. U.S. “freedom of navigation” exercises—when U.S. ships and aircraft conduct patrols or pass through China’s maritime exclusive economic zone—are one area where Beijing wants compromise as part of a new kind of relationship. Yet, the U.S. position on freedom of navigation has been consistent policy for over two hundred years and the source of one of the United States’ first international uses of force, involving the protection of U.S. shipping from the Barbary pirates.


On the positive side of what the “New Type of International Relations” does include—rather than what it does not—a core component of the concept seems to be moving contentious bilateral issues into a multilateral, or at least internationally-oriented, framework. In May, former MFA vice minister and current Deputy Director of the State Council’s Overseas Chinese Affairs Office He Yafei authored an essay in *Foreign Policy* that reinforced Xi’s broadening of the “new type of great power relations” concept. Although He echoed the original lines of now-Ambassador Cui, He also wrote the following:

“We believe both countries need to rise above our bilateral relationship, that China-U.S. relations probably need to be ‘de-China-U.S.-ified.’ Instead, they should focus more on global issues and on making global governance work as the world enters a new era of reform and rejuvenation.”

He identified cyberattacks as the “prime example” of an area where China and the United States need to internationalize the bilateral discussion. According to He, “Cyberattacks take place everywhere every day, and it is a mounting challenge for all countries, including China and the United States. In other words, China and the United States are both victims, and there is no point in accusing each other.” Washington, however, has never denied that China was a victim of such attacks and, indeed, the available reporting indicates the United States is probably one of the perpetrators.

The Chinese complaint sidesteps—quite possibly deliberately—the U.S. side’s issue, which relates to the contrast between the two political-economic systems. China’s state capitalism encourages an active government role in promoting industrial interests, up to and including state-sponsored espionage. The U.S. objection primarily stems from the fact that Washington has not developed a politically-tenable solution to using

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39 Ibid.


national intelligence resources for economic espionage and eschews such activity. The corollary is that U.S. companies face the market on their own and China’s support and condoning of economic espionage undermines U.S. companies’ competitiveness and, more generally, the U.S. political-economic system.\(^42\) From Beijing’s vantage point, the logic of the U.S. complaint about cyber security suggests Washington is passing judgment on the China model, which includes the dominant economic role of the state—a point that, despite the post-1979 economic reforms, remains a key, self-identified feature.\(^43\) Such judgments are not in line with the mutual respect and tolerance of the “New Type” concepts. Moving the issue to multilateral forums serves two purposes by diluting the strength of the U.S. position with additional actors and allowing China to shift the debate toward tolerance of different value systems under mutual equality.

As is noticeable in the cyber example above, the “New Type of International Relations” broadens what Beijing initially framed as a conversation among China, the United States, and other major countries. Instead of conversation among “major countries” or “great powers”—concepts that are problematic and uncomfortable for a Chinese government that describes China as a developing country (fa\(_zh\)anzhongguo\(j\)i\(a\)—Xi’s Moscow speech signaled Beijing’s embrace of the democratization of international relations. It was not “New Type of Great Power Relations” that Xi endorsed in Mexico and Trinidad & Tobago, but rather this new model of international relations. Thus, the thought of U.S. policymakers that the “New Type of Great Power Relations” offers a valuable framework for conducting the U.S.-China relationship may already be outdated.

To the extent that U.S. analysts have really assessed the content of Beijing’s statements about the “New Type of Great Power Relations,” this absence of Chinese consideration for U.S. interests has led to a generally critical reception. As Michael Chase, a professor at the U.S. Naval War College, wrote last year, “The most problematic aspect of Beijing’s vision of a ‘new type’ of U.S.-


China relationship is that it appears to require Washington to accommodate China’s interests and to do so largely on Beijing’s terms—apparently without reciprocal adjustments.”

Ely Ratner, a fellow with the Center for a New American Security, went further in his criticism of how the concept affects U.S.-China relations. Because he was working at the U.S. State Department as a Council on Foreign Relations’ International Affairs Fellow when Xi Jinping first elaborated on this concept, his evaluation is worth quoting at some length:

“In its entirety, however, the concept is a poison pill for the United States because of China’s view of how best to meet these shared goals...Chinese officials do not see this as a reciprocal process, but rather one in which the United States—perceived as the primary source of mistrust and conflict—must unilaterally meet China’s demands...Even if one considers this list more aspirational than expected, the United States has no other readily available alternative set of bargaining chips that could serve the same function of assuaging China’s insecurities. Most of these are enduring elements of U.S. national security strategy that are unlikely to change solely to accommodate China’s anxieties. Furthermore, there is little evidence that China would do anything more than pocket U.S. concessions and continue to press for further advantage.”

Accepting the arguments of Chase and Ratner adds a healthy dose of skepticism to evaluating the kinds of openness over the last year that observers might be tempted to associate with the “New Type of Great Power Relations.” If these two analysts are right, as this paper’s earlier analysis suggests, then Beijing’s cooperation and better behavior is rooted in a clear-eyed assessment of China’s interests in cooperation with the United States irrespective of the buzzwords of U.S.-China relations or the principles of the relationship. Indeed, Cui and Pang foreshadowed such interest-based cooperation when they wrote, “Neither [China or the United States] will give up its faith, value, and social system

44 Chase, “China’s Search for a ‘New Type of Great Power Relationship’.”
deeply rooted in its history, culture, and tradition. Both will firmly maintain their own interests.”

**Conclusion and Implications**

The most obvious conclusion to make about Xi Jinping’s two new models for interstate relations is that they are new rhetorical facades on established Chinese policy. They can probably be best described as a way for Xi to put his stamp on Beijing’s foreign policy in terms that are clearly associated with his leadership. He was the first to describe these concepts and, to the extent that foreign policymakers echo his lines, Xi gets credit for building China’s international role and prestige. Given China’s growing discussion about how to build international cultural influence and “right to speak” (*huayuquan*), Xi’s ability to shape how other countries approach diplomacy and global governance is important. Even if the content lacks novelty, reframing China’s traditional diplomacy in a way that speaks to the concerns of the 21st Century and the problems China faces as a rising power in the face of U.S. primacy is no mean feat.

Most Western observers have failed to realize this essential continuity and only cursorily evaluated the articles and speeches surveyed above, leading to a mistaken perspective that the “New Type of Great Power Relations” is an inchoate, unformed idea. For example, Johns Hopkins University’s David Lampton, writing about the search for durability in the U.S.-China relationship earlier this year, noted, “Over the last year, this vague but potentially useful concept has been generally endorsed by leaders in Washington.” Michael Swaine, a scholar with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, along with a junior colleague wrote, “Beijing has called for the development of a ‘new type of great power relationship’ with Washington, based on ‘mutual trust, equality, inclusiveness, mutual learning, and win-win cooperation.’ Although Washington has cautiously endorsed this concept, it remains

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largely undefined, a general catch-all notion for trust-building actions on both sides.”49 These scholars seem to be holding out in the hope that the “New Type” concepts are but the opening position in a negotiation over the future of U.S.-China relations, even after Beijing has squandered a year by not elaborating on the principles espoused in the Cui and Pang essay.

This leads to a second problem in the Western discussion: the confusion between U.S. hopes and what Beijing has said. In all of the Chinese statements and commentary outlined above, the concepts are not aspirations, but rather statements of principles that should govern the conduct of U.S.-China relations and international relations more broadly. Yet, Western commentators characterize the “New Type of Great Power Relations” as an ambition for Chinese foreign policy. For example, Paul Gewirtz, director of Yale Law School’s China Center, wrote “The aspiration reflects one of the stark lessons of history, going back to the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta, that an established power and a rising power typically end up in conflict and even war—and it reflects the Cold War struggle between the U.S. and U.S.S.R.”50 More importantly than any commentator, a White House official identified only as a “Senior Administration Official” responded to a reporter’s question about Xi’s concept with the following, “When the Chinese talk about this new model of great power relations, the focus is to avoid this so-called historic inevitability of conflict between the two.”51

Although it probably is too early to tell how the “New Type” concepts will play worldwide, Beijing already has scored a small victory in getting U.S. policymakers and pundits to incorporate Xi’s concept into their statements and commentary. In the run-up to the U.S.-China presidential summit in Sunnylands, California on June 7–8, the New York Times ran several articles using the “New Type of Great Power Relations” to frame the summit and the possible outcomes.52 From the White House, not only did outgoing National

Security Adviser Donilon endorse Xi’s concept in at least two Beijing meetings, but National Security Staff members followed his lead in background briefings for the press ahead of the summit.53

The goal of the “New Type” concepts may be to establish a more stable set of international relations, particularly between China and the United States; however, these U.S. misunderstanding of Xi’s concepts undermine those objectives. By repeating China’s words at the highest levels and reframing the Chinese position, U.S. officials are overpromising on changes to existing policy, which Washington almost certainly has no intention of stopping without certain Chinese reciprocity. Such reciprocity, however, has not been promised by Chinese officials when discussing the “New Type” concepts. U.S. officials may defend such statements as offering face to President Xi and their other Chinese interlocutors, but failing to deliver on such implicit and explicit promises has caused a great deal of frustration in U.S.-China relations. The meetings may go more smoothly, but the interpersonal trust is damaged and further damage is done when future U.S. officials inevitably challenge such a one-sided framework that does little to further U.S. interests and encourage Chinese reciprocity. Even if Ratner’s charge that the “New Type of Great Power Relations” concept is “a poison pill for the United States” could be considered overwrought, what should be clear is that the “New Type” concepts are poison pills for the U.S.-China relationship for which both sides share responsibility.


Israel in China’s Middle East Strategy
A New Quartet of U.S., China, Israel and Taiwan?

Christina Lin

Introduction

From May 5-10, 2013, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Beijing at the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, the first Israeli Prime Minister to visit in six years. At the same time, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas was in China at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping and received the full treatment of a head of state while in Beijing, something not often extended in the West to Palestinian representatives.1 By receiving leaders of both countries, Xi Jinping’s new government demonstrated its attention to the peace process and the Middle East, and signaled a new era of China’s proactive Middle East policy in view of the Arab Spring aftermath and America’s Asia Pivot.2

As China recalibrates its Middle Eastern strategy and power balance with the U.S., the Sino-Israel relationship is gaining prominence. Upgrading Sino-Israel ties will thus have important implications for U.S.-Israel relations, which needs to be viewed within the broader context of U.S.-China relations. As a corollary, China and Israel will have to address the Taiwan question and the Taiwan Relations Act3—the cause of previous breakdown of their relations.

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3 The 1979 Taiwan Relations Act provides the legal basis for the unofficial relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan and enshrines the U.S. commitment to assisting Taiwan in maintaining its defensive capability. In application, the U.S. has applied a policy of strategic ambiguity and often keeps the two sides guessing at its willingness to intervene in a conflict, and if so, in what capacity.
bilateral relations due to U.S. pressure over the Phalcon and Harpy arms deals. As Ambassador Chas Freeman, former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Deputy Chief of Mission to China, warned, “Taiwan long presented the only conceivable casus belli in Sino-American relations.” As such, “The Sino-Israel relationship cannot be viewed out of the context of a Sino-U.S. relationship” and a quadrilateral tug-of-war involving China, Taiwan, U.S. and Israel, observed Chen Yiyi, Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Shanghai Jiatong University.

Because the U.S.-China relationship is the most important bilateral relationship for the People’s Republic and rests on stability across the Taiwan Strait, Sino-Israel relations automatically brings in two other actors, the U.S. and Taiwan, in a quadrilateral dance of a new quartet in the Middle East.

Strategic Context of Current Sino-Israel Relations: Arab Spring and Asia Pivot

As the Arab Spring morphed into waves of anti-U.S. demonstrations and new Islamist regimes across the Middle East and North Africa, China has been quietly asserting its influence while U.S. presence begins to wane. The U.S. pivot towards the Asia Pacific reinforces this change after a decade of war in the Middle East. So paradoxically, while the U.S. is pivoting eastward to contain China in the Asia Pacific, the resurgent Middle Kingdom is pivoting westward on its new Silk Road across the Greater Middle East.

In view of the U.S. Pivot to Asia, Lee Smith, senior editor with the Weekly Standard and Fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, characterized the Obama administration’s Middle East Policy as one of “extrication” from the region, which would

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5 Chen Yiyi, “China’s Relationship with Israel, Opportunities and Challenges: Perspectives from China”, Israel Studies, Vol. 17, No.3, Fall 2012, pp. 1, 8.
create a vacuum that could be filled by unfriendly powers.\(^7\) In response, China is pivoting west to fill that vacuum. Indeed, Wang Jisi, professor at Beijing University who once taught at the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)’s influential Central Party School, observed in October 2012 that while the U.S. pivots east, China should have a strategic plan of “marching west,” which is a “strategic necessity for China’s involvement in great power cooperation, the improvement of the international environment and the strengthening of China’s competitive abilities.”\(^8\) In fact, back in 2004, People’s Liberation Army (PLA) General Liu Yazhou, an influential “princeling” and political commissar of the PLA’s National Defense University, was already proposing that China march westward to “seize for the center of the world (the Middle East).”\(^9\)

Vali Nasr, Dean of the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at the Johns Hopkins University, also underscored the strategic significance of the Middle East in his recent book, *The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat*. He argued that “The Middle East remains the single most important region in the world—not because it is rich in energy, or fraught with instability and pregnant with security threats, but because it is where the great power rivalry with China will play out and where its outcome will be decided.”\(^10\) Indeed, once China engages the region politically and strategically, the Middle Eastern geopolitical chessboard may never be the same again. And, in order to understand Israel’s importance to China’s calculus in the Middle East, it is important to first place it within the context of

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China’s broader interests in the Middle East, especially in the Levant.

**China’s Interests in the Middle East**

The globalization of China’s economy has brought the Middle East as a region—quite remote previously—much closer as it relates to China’s national interest. 

For Beijing, the Middle East is first and foremost a region of energy resources to feed China’s growing economy, which is vital for Chinese Communist Party (CCP) legitimacy and survival. It is also a market for Chinese labor export, a hub for Chinese export products going to Europe and Africa, and a forward front and key arena for China to protect its national unity, such as the ‘One China Policy’, and combat terrorism and East Turkistan separatist forces, or the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM).

The Arab Spring caught China by surprise and Beijing has not fared well in the aftermath. Lu Shaye, Director General of the Chinese Foreign Ministry’s African Affairs Department, expressed China’s fear that western military intervention in crucial energy markets could eventually restrict Beijing’s access to oil and gas. In a 2011 interview regarding Libya, he expressed concerns that European-led [NATO] intervention in Libya is a thinly veiled gambit to restore waning western influence in Africa. China had to evacuate 36,000 Chinese nationals and lost over $20 billion in investments when the Qaddafi regime was ousted. As such, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and Libya experiences, Beijing is primarily concerned about protecting its national interest and the security of Chinese citizens abroad.

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14Ibid.
Drivers of Policy Shift

Domestically, CCP legitimacy and regime survival rests on continued access to energy to fuel China’s economic growth, while hedging against U.S. naval interdiction of energy supplies over potential conflicts across the Taiwan Strait. Thus it is concerned about the territorial integrity of Muslim Xinjiang: which is 1/6 the size of China; borders eight countries; is a site of strategic mineral resources; and most importantly, is a key geographic bridge for China’s overland pipelines and transport corridors for its energy supplies from Central Asia, the Caspian Sea, and potentially Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. In short, Xinjiang is key to China’s hedging strategy of having an overland energy supply line in the event the U.S. Navy cuts off its maritime supply line due to a Taiwan scenario. As such, Uyghur separatists in Xinjiang directly threaten China’s energy security.

Internationally, China was caught off guard by the Arab Spring and saw their investments evaporate overnight when their partner regimes were replaced by new Islamist regimes that may be more sympathetic to the Muslim Uyghurs’ plight in Xinjiang. The 2009 Xinjiang Muslim uprising also underscored to China that Xinjiang’s stability hinges on support from the global Muslim community. When Turkey’s Erdogan labeled the CCP crackdown on Muslim Uyghurs as ‘genocide’, this further fueled Beijing’s fears that the global Muslim community would turn against China. Given this, since 2009 China has beefed up its domestic security, with the internal state security budget surpassing the defense budget every year since then, while internationally it has become more proactive in courting the Muslim world. Thus China sees the Middle East as the forward front for its national unity efforts, trying to garner support of China’s policies from the new Islamist regimes.

In short, China fears the new Islamist regimes in Arab Spring

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15 Mu Chunshan, “China and the Middle East”, The Diplomat, November 9, 2010. In 2010, China’s security budget was $87 billion while defense was $84.6 billion; in 2011 security was $99 billion while defense was $95.6 billion; in 2012 security was $111.4 billion while defense was $106.4 billion. "China boosts domestic security spending by 11.5 pct", Reuters, March 5, 2012; Leslie Hook, "Beijing raises spending on internal security", Financial Times, March 6, 2011.
countries will be more supportive of separatist Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang, which threatens China’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and denies access to energy supplies. Thus the post Arab Spring/Islamic Winter shift in Arab Mediterranean Countries directly impacts China’s core interests and China will increasingly exercise military power to protect these interests. Additionally, as U.S. “pivots” toward Asia, China will naturally seek strategic depth in areas that were once dominated by the U.S. and its western allies.

**Policy Tools**

In terms of what tools China uses to further its interests, they are mainly the soft power tools of yuan diplomacy and economic carrots, such as infrastructure investments and soft loans, as well as the political carrots of the ‘non-intervention’ principle and UN Security Council (UNSC) veto power. China is courting Egypt’s new Islamist regime with soft loans and investments and shielding Syria’s Assad regime in the UNSC.

China’s Middle East policy is similar to its approach to Central Asia—courting Muslim countries with economic carrots in exchange for support for China’s policies. This soft power over time translates into political influence in an Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) strategy. A2/AD here means extra-military means of leveraging soft power with proxies to counter U.S. power projection capabilities. For example, rather than using the military hardware of DF-21D aircraft carrier killer missiles in the Western Pacific, for an A2/AD strategy against U.S. power projection China is using the economic software of investments via proxies in the Middle East to deny U.S. access (e.g., basing, over-flight rights, etc.) and power projection capabilities.

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16 According to Chief of the General Staff Chen Bingde, China’s core interests are national sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity and national unity, and national economic development (*China Daily*, May 19, 2011).


Because the U.S. depends on regional military bases in the Greater Middle East, ranging from Central Asia, Gulf states such as Bahrain (U.S. Fifth Fleet) and Qatar (CENTCOM FOB), and priority access to Egypt’s Suez Canal, without assistance from regional partners or access to bases from which to operate, U.S. military freedom of action would be constrained.\(^{19}\) A case in point is in 2005 when under Sino-Russian pressure within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Uzbekistan ejected U.S. troops from its military base being used to wage war in Afghanistan. Economic carrots over time have translated into politico-military influence (Similarly, in 2009 Russia offered economic carrots for Kyrgyzstan to evict U.S. troops, and the U.S. had to counter the offer with a larger carrot to reinstate itself). Thus China’s increased investments in Central Asia, The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and Egypt may translate into reluctance of these states to cooperate with the U.S. should a conflict break out with China, especially given that China is now an economic powerhouse while the U.S. economy continues to retrench. Thus in a way, regional great power rivalry is more about geo-economics.

**China’s Interests in the Levant/Eastern Mediterranean**

This power rivalry is presently being played out in the Levant. In the Eastern Mediterranean, China has become more assertive in its stance against the West regarding Syria by using three UNSC vetoes, has dispatched its warships to the Mediterranean in a “show of flags,”\(^{20}\) and is courting Egypt’s new government under Morsi—hitherto a key U.S. ally in the region in addition to Israel.

In Syria, China’s support of Assad’s regime is driven by its Libyan experience, fortified by reports of Chinese Uyghurs fighting alongside al-Qaeda and other jihadists against Assad in Syria.\(^{21}\) As

\(^{19}\) *Ibid*, p.8.

\(^{20}\) In July and August 2012, Chinese warships, the *Qingdao* destroyer, *Yantai* frigate, and *Weishan Hu* supply ship, passed through the Suez Canal and entered the Mediterranean Sea at the same time Russia dispatched its naval flotilla to Tartus in Syria. See Christina Lin, “Dragon in the Great Sea”, p. 9 and *Turkish Navy*, August 6, 2012.

stated earlier, China fears that western military intervention in crucial energy markets and propping up of pro-Western regimes could eventually restrict Beijing’s access to oil and gas.\(^{22}\) After the Qaddafi regime fell, Beijing was shocked by the public announcement from the Libyan oil company AGOCO that they “don’t have a problem with Western countries, but may have political issues with Russia and China.” \(^{23}\) Because China perceived it was tricked by Westerners on UNSCR 1973, which NATO exploited to oust Qaddafi under the fig leaf of Responsibility to Protect (R2P), it is now taking a harsh stance on Syria via its UNSC veto. Beijing does not want Syria to become another Libya, and is siding with Russia to counterbalance U.S. influence in the region.

China also fears globalization of Chinese Uyghur jihadists in ETIM and the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), which traditionally enjoyed safe haven in the AfPak region as well as support in Turkey. It fears that Chinese Uyghurs could garner global jihadist support from al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM, which attacked Chinese interests in Algeria in 2009), and others for their cause. Indeed, in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), China already fears TIP’s close ties to al-Qaeda, which trains TIP and placed its leader, a Chinese Uyghur named Abdul Shakoor Turkistani, as new commander of al-Qaeda’s Pakistan forces and training camp in 2011, just a few weeks before Osama bin Laden was killed.\(^{24}\) Thus the internationalization of Chinese Uyghurs’ separatist cause is a real concern for Beijing.

This was underscored in October 2012 when Chinese press broke the news that Chinese Uyghurs were fighting alongside al-Qaeda and other jihadists against the Assad regime, saying the link between Xinjiang terrorists and international terror groups ‘seriously undermines China’s national security.’\(^{25}\) It is significant in that many foreign fighters from Libya, Iraq, and elsewhere have been mentioned in Syria, but this is the first mention of Chinese fighters.

\(^{23}\) Yun Sun, “What China has learned from its Libya Experience”, Asia Pacific Bulletin, No 152, East West Center, February 27, 2012.
\(^{24}\) Times of India, May 11, 2011.
As such, China sees the U.S. and the West as supporting al-Qaeda and the East-Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)—Jihadists that threaten to overthrow the Chinese government in Xinjiang. So rather than China being on the “wrong side of history” as accused by then Secretary Clinton, the U.S. and the West are on the wrong side of Chinese history. China has thus taken a more proactive stance on Syria, using UNSC vetoes alongside Russia, in order to safeguard its interests and defy a repeat of what China sees as the Western duplicity of UNSCR 1973.

China is also courting Egypt, a geostrategic pivot state controlling the Suez Canal and in close proximity to the Horn of Africa, to further project its influence in the Middle East and Africa. Beijing has pursued agreements that enhance China’s direct access to Egyptian port facilities along the Suez Canal and expanded military cooperation such as arms sales and defense industrial cooperation. Elsewhere in the Levant, Chinese interests in Lebanon are limited to PLA presence under the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) as well as various strategic infrastructure projects such as enlarging Tripoli Port, while in Jordan the Chinese Development Bank is seeking to fund Jordan’s railway projects. China is building Israel’s Med-Red railway linking the Mediterranean port of Ashdod with Eilat Port in the Red Sea, with plans to extend the link to Jordan’s Aqaba Port. In its meetings with Egypt’s Morsi, China also inked deals to build a high-speed railway linking Cairo, Alexandria, Luxor and Hurghada, with a longer-term view to eventually connect Africa with the Middle East via Egypt.

Map 1: Railway from China to the Middle East

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26 In 2000 China signed a 30-year concession with Egypt to develop the eastern portion of Port Said and in 2004 China kick-started two major investment projects on the Suez Canal, building a container terminal, a dry port and a workshop to build containers. Sherine Nasr, “China meets Egypt”, Al-Ahram, Issue No. 699, 15-21 July 2004.
27 “China bank might account Jordan railway project”, War and Peace in the Middle East, September 23, 2011; Amiram Barka, “Israel, China agree to build Eilat railway,” Globes, July 3, 2012.
In light of Arab states’ instability in the Levant, China has turned to Israel to upgrade bilateral relations and resuscitate their defense relations. Qi Qianjin, deputy director-general of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People’s Congress of the PRC, sees Israel as a rock of stability amid a sea of upheavals: “Israel is a vital country regarding peace and stability in the Middle East. Therefore, China hopes a peaceful Middle East can be created through joint efforts by Israel and other countries.”

When asked whether China’s traditional pro-Arab stance would be an impediment to upgrading Sino-Israeli relations, Dr. Yang Guang, director general of the Institute of West Asian and African Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS), responded, “I believe that Chinese-Arab relations are a mutual dependency…it has nothing to do with Chinese-Israeli relations. With Israel we cooperate at a different level…the Arab world and Israel cannot be alternatives for each other.”

Thus, despite China’s previous pro-Arab sentiments, it appears more open to a balanced policy in cooperating with Israel as a hedge to protect its interests in the region. Moreover, according to Yoram Evron at the Institute for National Security

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Studies (INSS) in Tel Aviv, China believes that “strengthening its relationship with Jerusalem would be a sign that it gradually is coming to possess a foothold in the region, while somewhat offsetting, and perhaps even undermining, American political influence there.”  

Israeli interests reinforce China’s interest in upgrading Sino-Israel ties. From the Israeli perspective, China has gained prominence in its strategic calculus in the face of a waning U.S. ally. Aron Shai, in a 2009 INSS memo, expressed concern that, given America’s declining power and strategic retreat from the Middle East as well as the fear that Obama’s administration would not be as friendly towards Israel, Israel needed to seek new allies and hedge itself in this volatile region:

“The United States seems to be in dire straits at home and abroad—politically, militarily, and strategically…this reality and Barack Obama’s election as president could very well result in Washington altering its traditional commitment towards its allies. In an emerging crisis, economic and strategic needs of client countries might therefore be put at risk. Israel should take this into serious consideration.”

Thus, in June 2011, Israel and China revived their military relations after a long hiatus when then Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak visited Beijing followed by a reciprocal visit to Israel by Gen. Chen Bingde, chief of staff of the PLA, and a subsequent flurry of high level military exchanges.

**China in Israel’s Strategic Calculus**

In the face of a U.S. strategic retreat from the Middle East and perceived waning influence as a security guarantor, Israel, like

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many other Arab Gulf states, are looking to hedge themselves with a rising power such as China. Moreover, China is a UN Security Council member and Israel hopes to have China’s ear on issues regarding Iran and Syria in order to break the pervasive stalemate on UNSC Resolutions. In fact, 10 days before Prime Minister Netanyahu left for Beijing, the head of Military Intelligence Major General Aviv Kochavi secretly visited his Chinese counterpart Major General Chen Youyi in China to discuss Iran’s nuclear program and the civil war in Syria.34 The meeting was held at the Ministry of State Security (MSS), the equivalent of Israeli Mossad. Kochavi showed his Chinese colleagues the latest intelligence reports and presented Israel’s evaluations on the progress of Iran’s nuclear program, Syrian President Bashar al Assad’s chances of hanging onto power, and the fear of chemical and advanced weapons—some of them made in China—falling into Hizbullah’s hands.35 Intelligence sharing, especially on Islamic extremism given China’s concerns regarding Muslim Uyghur (e.g., ETIM and TIP) attacks in Xinjiang and their al-Qaeda links in Syria, is an area China is looking to upgrade with Israel.36

Also, China is a large export market for Israeli hi-technology products and arms, as well as a potential energy export market for Israel’s newly discovered natural gas. Current bilateral trade stands at $8 billion annually, and on this recent visit Netanyahu signed additional trade agreements that would help increase it to $10 billion annually within three years.37 Given the U.S. and European economic downturn and China’s continual rise, Beijing offers an alternative attractive market for Israel’s export earnings.

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34 Barak Ravid, “Israeli head of military intel discussed Syria, Iran in secret Beijing visit”, Ha’aretz, May 5, 2013.
35 Ibid.
Israel and China’s Strategic Calculus

Advanced Technology

For the Chinese, Israel offers first and foremost a source of advanced technologies. In addition to advanced technologies in renewable energy, agribusiness, and green industry, China is also interested in dual-use technologies, specifically Israeli drones. During the 2013 Herzliya conference when asked what China hopes to get out of its relationship with Israel, Liang Yabin, a Chinese official from the Central Party School, answered, “Unmanned spy planes, that is what we want to get.” He added that he heard Israel had developed a technology that could break through physical walls, though he did not elaborate further.

Indeed, China is entering a new era of military modernization by building drone fleets both for civilian and military use. In an October 2012 report, the Pentagon’s Defense Science Board (DSB) issued a “wake up call” over Chinese unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) development, calling the military significance of China’s move into unmanned systems “alarming.” Beijing is already aiming to follow the U.S. lead in using UAV to target enemies of the state even on foreign soil, such as plans to assassinate a drug trafficker in Burma who had killed 13 Chinese nationals back in 2011, similar to the U.S. hunting down terrorists in Pakistan and Yemen. Another driver for China’s deployment of drones is to tip the military balance across the Taiwan Strait in its favor as well as in territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas.

Israel and the U.S. retain a substantial lead in the UAV field, with Israel as the world’s number one exporter of drones, consisting 10% of its total military exports and earning some $4.6 billion over

the past eight years. As the Chinese Central Party School official admitted at the Herzliya Conference, China hopes to eventually procure Israel’s advanced UAV technology, similar to how they acquired 18 of Austrian company Schiebel’s vertical-takeoff UAV (VTUAV) camcopter S-100s, supposedly for civilian use.

**Strategic Infrastructure Projects**

China is also increasing its economic footprint in the Eastern Mediterranean with various infrastructure projects as part of its “March West” strategy via a New Silk Road connecting China to Europe. In Israel, one key item on Prime Minister Netanyahu’s agenda is a railway line that could turn Israel into a land and sea bridge for Chinese exports to Europe. Interestingly, the proposed railway line is along an ancient route used by caravans from Arabia and India to Europe. As mentioned earlier, this “Med-Red” rail is a 180km railway from Eilat port in the Red Sea to the Mediterranean ports of Ashdod and Haifa. From there, cargo can travel onwards to Europe. Construction is expected to take about five years to complete and will cost about US$4 billion, with plans to extend the railway to Jordan’s Aqaba port later.

The railway is expected to increase trade from China, India and other Asian countries to Israel while reducing Tel Aviv’s dependence on waterways such as the Suez Canal controlled by an increasingly hostile Egypt. Dr. Shalom Wald, Senior Fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute, said, “If the Suez Canal ever closes, it will be a catastrophe to trade and a blow to China also. A lot of Chinese trade goes through the Suez Canal also.” The new railway thus hedges against the chokepoint of the Suez Canal and will enable China to conduct trade of goods and services, including energy from Israel’s new natural gas discoveries, to feed its growing economy.

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43 Yaakov Lappin, “Israel is largest drone exporter in the world”, Jerusalem Post, May 19, 2013.
44 Trefor Moss, “Here come…China’s Drones”, March 2, 2013.
45 Hayley Slier, “Israel’s railway plan to boost China’s trade in Middle East, Europe,” Channel News Asia, May 15, 2013.
46 Ibid.
Energy Security

Large gas discoveries in Israel and off Cyprus have drawn the attention of Lebanon/Hibullah, Turkey, Greece, Iran, the U.S., the European Union (EU), Russia, and China with the potential for military conflict over maritime disputes in the Levant basin, akin to current territorial conflicts in the South China Sea. A region traditionally obsessed with fights over land is now turning its eyes toward the sea.47

In 2010 the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) estimated the Levantine Basin (stretching from the Jordan River to Turkey and out to sea towards Cyprus) could contain as much as 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 122 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas (See Map 2).

Map 2: The Levant Basin


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Two offshore natural gas fields (Tamar and Leviathan) discovered since 2009 off the coast of Haifa by Texas-based Noble Energy, estimated at 25 tcf, represent about 100 years of Israel's gas usage at an annual domestic gas consumption rate of about 5 bcm (See Map 3).  

Map 3 Tamar and Leviathan Gas Fields

On land, Texas-based Zion Oil has been drilling near Haifa since 2005 for a potential 484 million barrels of oil, interestingly based on its CEO John Brown’s belief that oil will be found near the foot of Asher in the Map of the Twelve Tribes of Israel and later confirmed by geologists as reported in 2004’s Oil & Gas Journal (See Maps 4 & 5).

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Maps 4: Map of the Twelve Tribes of Israel

The Twelve Tribes in Canaan

[Map of Israel with twelve tribes labeled: Asher, Naphtali, Dan, Manasseh, Zebulun, Issachar, Gaal, Ephraim, Benjamin, Dan, Judah, and Reuben. The map includes cities and geographical features.]
Israel’s newly discovered oil and gas bounty thus enables it to become an energy exporter and a ‘game changer’ in the Mediterranean energy market. As such, China is also courting Israel, with China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) discussing joint exploration in the Leviathan gas field, building strategic railways in hopes of procuring future gas export deals and increasing military cooperation to access technologies currently under EU arms embargo.  

The main challenge facing Israel’s energy bounty is that upstream companies won’t invest in future exploration unless they have certainty of a large demand market to commercialize their discoveries. In the short term, regional markets in the Mediterranean won’t have sufficient demand for the volume of Israeli natural gas, and Europe will continue to rely on pipelines—

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75% of the EU’s traded gas is through pipelines. Given this, the Asia Pacific region, especially China, will drive global liquefied natural gas (LNG) demand growth in coming decades.\(^{52}\)

The Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) recently forecasted that China will account for more than 30% of projected growth in global energy demand over the next 25 years. By 2035, China’s energy consumption is expected to reach 3.83 billion tons of oil equivalent, more than India, the U.S., and the EU combined. The Chinese government has also been promoting natural gas as a preferred energy source and aims to have its overall energy mix comprise of 10% natural gas by 2020 (it is currently at 4.5%).\(^ {53}\) Since LNG plant is the most feasible form of bringing offshore Israeli gas to market, China is thus a key demand market to attract continued investment for exploitation of Israeli gas.

Additionally, China is an attractive investment partner for Israel. Israel needs to attract $2 billion in risk capital for about 20 exploratory wells to be drilled offshore in the next two years.\(^ {54}\) However, most large multinational oil companies from the West are unwilling to jeopardize their stakes with Arab countries by investing in Israel, nor take on the risk of potential terrorist attacks. As such, China—with its state-backed energy companies and $3.3 trillion war chest—has both the will and the risk capital to invest in Israel, having already cut its teeth in high-risk terrains in Africa, Central Asia and Afghanistan.

**Gateway to Influence U.S. Middle East Policy**

Finally, China is also looking to use the Israel lobby in the U.S. to influence American Middle East policy. In a recent 2012 article on Sino-Israel relations, Chen Yiyi, professor at Shanghai Jiatong University and advisor to SIGNAL—an Israeli institute for Sino-Israel cooperation initiatives—argued that, “Israel can help China handle its relationship with its main competitor, the U.S.” He

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\(^{52}\) Ibid, p.15.  
\(^{53}\) Emma Afterman, “Israel’s natural gas find present opportunities for Israel-China cooperation”, *Caijing Magazine*, August 2, 2012.  
added, “Israel is promoting itself in Beijing as a diplomatic door to Washington by capitalizing on the influential nature of the American Israel lobby.” Back in 1992 when China and Israel first established diplomatic ties, Hong Kong-based newspaper Wen Wei Pao shared similar observations regarding Israel’s unique strategic relationship with the U.S.:

“Israel enjoys a special relationship with the United States. The Jewish people in the United States have always supported Israel, and are very influential in U.S. political, economic, and media circles. It is not possible for Israel’s establishment of diplomatic relations with China not to have some effect on the Sino-U.S. relations.”

As such, rather than allowing the U.S.-Israel relationship to be a burden, Chen recommends that Israel should embrace its alliance with Washington as a way to advance the cause of Sino-Israel relations in the twenty-first century. He specifically pointed to the Taiwan question as a main obstacle to normalizing Sino-Israel ties in the past, especially in the military realm, due to U.S. objections and defense commitment to Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), therefore underscoring the importance of factoring Taiwan into the equation of upgrading Sino-Israel ties.

**Military Dimension of Sino-Israel Relations: Enter U.S., Taiwan, and Cross-Strait Balance**

The Sino-Israel relationship is an important part of China’s Middle East Policy, especially in light of Israel’s unique relationship with the U.S. However, some Chinese scholars downplay the role of the U.S. in upgrading their bilateral ties. Professor Ye Hailin, deputy director and chief secretary of the Center of South Asia

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57 Ibid.
studies at CASS, said, “The United States role is very important in the context of Sino-Israeli relations but it is not a decisive factor...they are like a brick. They can try to stop the cooperation but their impact is limited.”

Nevertheless, Israel’s relations with the U.S. cannot be dismissed. Dr. Li Guofu, a senior research fellow and director of the Center for Middle East Studies, China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), said in an interview, “As President Shimon Peres once told me, Israel’s small size compels it to rely for security purposes on its relationship with the United States—it simply can’t afford to jeopardize that relationship.” He further added, “Despite China’s relations with Israel, and Israel’s efforts to develop further and closer bilateral relations with China, its reliance on the United States is always a factor, a shadow in the background.” Indeed, as a military ally, the U.S. is concerned about any jointly developed U.S.-Israel military technology transfer to China, which would put U.S. troops in harm’s way should a conflict break out across the Taiwan Strait or in the South China Sea where U.S. has treaty allies. Dr. Ye Hailin from CASS admitted, “For the United States the main concern in the Sino-Israeli cooperation is the transfer of high-tech know-how to China that allows China to improve its capability.” Dr. Yang Guang also said, “The United States worries about the rise of China and takes measure to contain China’s rise. It does not want Israel to help the rise of China.”

It is against this backdrop that U.S.-Israel relations hit lows in 2000 and 2005 when it came to light that Israel was selling advanced military technology to China, putting U.S. troops and military assets at risk in the Western Pacific. The first instance was the Phalcon airborne early warning (AEW) system deal in 2000 and the second was the Harpy assault drone deal in 2005. U.S.

60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
defense officials were also troubled by Israeli transfer of the U.S.-financed $1.3 billion Lavi fighter jet technology to China which they used to develop the J-10, as well as the sale of the Python 3 air-to-air missile adapted from the U.S. ALM-9L Sidewinder missile, which China used to develop the PL-8 version it subsequently sold to Iraq. Concerns about China using Israeli military technology to attack U.S. troops were punctuated in the EP-3 incident in 2001, when a Chinese F-8 fighter jet armed with Israeli Python 3 missiles collided with a U.S. Navy EP-3 surveillance plane. A Defense Department official said the Python 3 “would have worked just fine” had the second Chinese fighter been given the order to shoot down the U.S. plane and its crew of 24. Another former defense official familiar with U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation issued a stern warning that, “Our USN and USAF pilots might come face to face with the J-10 one day” should Sino-U.S. military conflict break out.

Israeli arms sales to China, like the 2005 EU attempts to lift the arms embargo, highlight Israel’s underestimation of U.S. concerns about the military balance tipping against the U.S. and its regional allies such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Given the U.S. has alliance treaties in the region to deter Chinese military aggression, whereas the EU and Israel have no such commitments and view China mainly from an economic and export market (including arms export) lens, their military cooperation with China will continue to be a point of contention with the U.S. and its East Asian allies. Moreover, the Phalcon and Harpy deals were very poorly timed—transfers were to occur at junctures when Sino-U.S. military tensions were potentially explosive—in the aftermath of the 1995-6 Cross Strait Crisis and the 2005 passing of China’s anti-secession law that legalized military force against Taiwan, adding to the U.S. government’s sense of betrayal regarding the arms deals.

**Phalcon AWACS Deal in 2000**

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63David Isenberg, “Israel's role in China’s new warplane”, *Asia Times Online*, December 4, 2002.
65Author interview with former American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) official familiar with Taiwan security issue on May 25, 2013.
In the first crisis regarding the Phalcon sale, China and Israel initially discussed the deal in 1994 and scheduled delivery in 2000. Below is a timeline of events.

Table 1: Timeline of Phalcon AWACS Deal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>China and Israel discussed Phalcon deal. China sought to modernize its military with 4 to 8 Phalcons able to simultaneously track 60 planes and ships within a several hundred-mile radius reaching across the Taiwan Straits and into the South China Sea. Israel would receive $1-2 billion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-6</td>
<td>Cross-Strait crisis. Sino-U.S. relation faced a flash point of potential military conflict over Taiwan. China fired missiles in waters surrounding Taiwan, mobilized forces in Fujian, conducted amphibious assault exercises, and threatened to use force against Taiwan. The U.S. responded by upholding the Taiwan Relations Act and deploying the 7th Fleet carrier battle group to the Straits.</td>
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President Clinton ordered ships, including aircraft carrier *USS Independence* carrier battle group (CVBG), to the Taiwan Straits. It was the biggest display of American might in Asia since the Vietnam War. China responded the following day by announcing live fire exercises to be conducted near Penghu from 12-20 March. Seeing that China did not stand down, on 11 March 1996 the U.S. deployed the *Nimitz CVBG*, which steamed at high speed from the Persian Gulf and arrived within days.  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Phalcon deal finalized. Despite the near military clash between China and U.S. over Taiwan, Israel moved ahead with the arms deal to China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>NATO/U.S. accidentally bombed Chinese embassy in Belgrade, further fueling Sino-U.S. tensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Israel’s phalcon delivery to China scheduled.</td>
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The U.S. was upset that Israel would sell this system to China, its competitor and potential adversary in the Asia Pacific.

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70 Jonathan Adelman, “The Phalcon Sale to China”, p.1
However, some Israeli scholars dismissed U.S. concerns that it would undermine U.S. interests in the region and pose risks to U.S. troops, arguing that if Israel did not provide Phalcons to Beijing, the Chinese would probably procure them from Russia in greater numbers. 71 Nonetheless, this dismissal misses an important point from the U.S. Congressional perspective: Israel is a U.S. ally and Russia is not. Thus Congress expects Israel to refrain from providing arms to adversaries that would risk harming U.S. troops, whereas this standard would not be held for a competitor like Russia. Indeed, a spokesman for then Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms (R-NC) said he “expected more from an ally than to provide this type of weapon system to a potential adversary”. 72

In this vein, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) and other senior senators sent a bipartisan letter to then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak expressing their “deep concerns” with Israel’s military cooperation with China and warned Israel would risk the potential “multi-billion dollar U.S. aid package” being discussed as part of a possible peace agreement with Syria if the Phalcon deal went forward. 73 Representative Sonny Callahan (R-AL), Chairman of House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Program, further proposed legislation to hold back Israeli aid worth $250 million—the value of one Phalcon system—unless the Pentagon certified that the deal did not pose a threat to U.S. national security. 74 Having under-estimated Congressional uproar over this deal, Prime Minister Barak finally voided the sale, viewing its ties with the U.S. and U.S. military assistance as outweighing any potential gain with the Chinese on this deal.

72 Wade Boese, “Israel Halts Chinese Phalcon Deal”, Arms Control Today, September 2000. To be fair, Israel also protested against U.S. arms transfer to its adversaries such as AWACS planes to Saudi Arabia in 1981, but the U.S. did not pay heed. See Yizhak Shichor, “Mountains out of Molehill”, September 2000. However, the Taiwan Strait remains the biggest flash point for Sino-U.S. military conflict while Israel’s flash point is not with Saudi Arabia but rather with Iran and Syria.
74 Ibid.
**Harpy Assault UAV Deal in 2005**

The second crisis involved upgrading China’s Harpy UAVs in 2005. Produced by Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI), Harpy is a 500 km-range delta-wing lethal UAV with day and night capability designed to detect, attack and destroy radar emitters with a very high hit accuracy. It is also an all-weather autonomous weapon system that can effectively suppress hostile surface-to-air missile (SAM) and radar sites for long durations.\(^{75}\) Although Israel had already sold about 100 Harpy UAVs to China by 1999, the Pentagon might have been concerned that Israel upgrading these Harpies might inadvertently leak joint-U.S.-Israeli technological achievements related to an even more advanced model.\(^{76}\)

China contracted IAI to upgrade its Harpy UAVs in 2003 and some were sent back to Israel in the summer of 2004.\(^{77}\) At this time, tension in the Taiwan straits was building up due to the 2000 Taiwan election of pro-independence president Chen ShuiBian. Subsequently, in December 2004, Beijing authorities announced they intended to introduce an “anti-secession law” to legalize a military attack on Taiwan. Around the same time, on December 15, the Pentagon’s Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Doug Feith blamed the Israeli defense ministry official on the Harpy UAV deal and reportedly demanded the resignation of retired Major General Amos Yaron, saying Israel misled the U.S. to believe the transaction was merely to replace spare parts and not to upgrade the system.\(^{78}\) On March 14, 2005, the Chinese National People’s Congress passed the “anti-secession law,” thereby setting the stage for a potential military confrontation between the U.S. and China over Taiwan.\(^ {79}\) Given the heightened Sino-U.S. military

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\(^{76}\)Ibid.

\(^{77}\)“Israel-China UAV Deal Provokes Pentagon”, *Sino Defence*, December 25, p. 204.

\(^{78}\)Ibid; Sudha Ramachandran, “US up in arms over Sino-Israel ties”, *Asia Times Online*, December 21, 2004.

tensions, Israel finally agreed to cancel the Harpy upgrade contract in June of 2005.\textsuperscript{80} Below is a timeline of the events.

Table 2: Timeline of Harpy Assault UAV Deal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>China contracted IAI to upgrade Harpy UAVs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>China sent Harpy UAVs to Israel for upgrades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2004</td>
<td>China introduced “anti-secession law” to legalize a military attack on Taiwan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2004</td>
<td>The Pentagon accused Israel of misrepresentation regarding the nature of the Harpy deal—it was actually for upgrades rather than replacing parts as suggested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2005</td>
<td>China’s National People’s Congress passed the “anti-secession law,” setting the stage for a possible military attack on Taiwan and armed confrontation between China and U.S. under Taiwan Relations Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2005</td>
<td>Israel cancelled Harpy upgrade contract.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taiwan, Japan and India are especially nervous about the role of Israeli technology in China’s military modernization efforts. In 2005, Japan’s Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura asked the

\textsuperscript{80} Scott Wilson, “Israel Set to End China Arms Deal Under U.S. Pressure”, \textit{Washington Post}, June 27, 2005.
Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom to end arms sales to East Asia—meaning China. In April 2002, a Taiwanese scholar penned a *Jerusalem Post* article expounding on Taiwan’s security concerns regarding the Phalcon deal to China, followed in May by a Taiwanese delegation to a trilateral U.S.-Israel-Taiwan conference at the Begin-Sadat Center in Israel. In 1999, Indian scholar P.R. Kumaraswamy noted that Israel’s military route to China is entering into a delicate Sino-Indian equilibrium, in addition to concerns about weapons proliferation to Pakistan. Indeed, Israel’s military route to China will have important strategic implications not only for military balance across the Taiwan Strait, but also for other regional actors concerned with Chinese military aggression in the East China Sea, South China Sea, and the Indian Ocean.

**Israeli Drones 2013 Onwards?**

Now, China once again covets Israeli advanced UAVs for its new drone fleets. Chinese engineers have been able to draw on Israeli Harpy technology, and the PRC has built a huge military industrial complex to support its growing drone fleet. As of mid 2011 China has about 180 military drones, according to a report released by Project 2049 on March 11. The Chinese military envisions UAVs performing three main capabilities:

1. Scouting out battlefield targets
2. Guiding missile and artillery strikes
3. Swarming potential adversaries, such as U.S. carrier battle groups

Indeed, PLA operational thinkers and scientists envision attacking U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups with swarms of multi-

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81 Yizhak Shichor, “The U.S. Factor in Israel’s Military Relations with China”.
mission UAVs in the event of a conflict. The order of battle would be such that the attacks would likely open with initial waves of decoy drones simulating offensive air raids, designed to trick U.S. pilots and picket ship defenders into exhausting long-range air-to-air and ship-to-air missile stocks.\textsuperscript{85} Formations of decoy drones would then be followed with groups of electronic warfare UAVs for attacking early warning radar platforms kinetically.\textsuperscript{86} Another challenge is that the U.S. military may have problems detecting swarms of Chinese drones during future conflicts, either because some may go undetected by radar due to their ability to fly extremely low or because they may come in very small sizes.\textsuperscript{87}

As Israel retains its position as the world’s number one drone exporter and China continues to upgrade its drone fleets, some observers predict it is only a matter of time before China obtains coveted Israeli advanced technologies. As P.R. Kumaraswamy penned in his July 2012 article entitled “Israel-China Arms Trade: Unfreezing Times,” given the current strategic context of waning U.S. influence and China’s continual rise in the Middle East, “when it comes to the renewal of arms sale to China, the issue is not if but when and under what circumstances.”\textsuperscript{88} He noted that Israel’s February 2012 appointment of then Minister of Home Front Defense Matan Vilnai as its ambassador to China, at a time when Israel is re-examining its relationship with China on the military front, may be a telltale sign of this trend.\textsuperscript{89}

However, given China’s arms proliferation record to rogue states such as North Korea, Iran and Syria, it is unlikely Israel would transfer advanced UAV technologies to China. As Aron Shai in his 2009 INSS Memo concluded, “[past] improved Israeli-PRC relations failed to deter Beijing from exporting arms to Israel’s


\textsuperscript{\textit{86}}Ian M. Easton and L.C. Russell Hsiao, “The Chinese People’s Liberation Army’s Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Project”.

\textsuperscript{\textit{87}}“Cheap drones made in China could arm U.S. foes”, April 5, 2013.


\textsuperscript{\textit{89}}Ibid.
potential enemies such as Iraq and Iran,” as well as Chinese transfer of advanced weapons to non-state organizations, dramatized by the 2006 Second Lebanon War when Hizbullah fired Chinese C-802 Silkworm missiles and hit the Israeli warship Hanit. Moreover, China had no qualms about selling M-9 nuclear capable missiles to Iran and Syria, or proliferating drones to the Middle East. In fact, Iran has already sold its own crude drones to Syria and Hizbullah, one of which Israel shot down in April this year. As such, China’s proliferation record may serve as a strong deterrent against Israeli arms transfer.

**Conclusion: Bridging the U.S.-Israel Threat Perception Gap on Sino-Israel Relations**

Thus we see the Taiwan question is an important factor in upgrading Sino-Israel relations. Past crises revealed a quadrilateral tug-of-war among China, the U.S., Israel and Taiwan, resulting in a break of official Sino-Israel defense relations. The diplomatic row represents a clash of strategic outlooks that can have lasting consequences, thus Israel's renewed efforts to revive its strategic and defense relations with China would need to be coordinated within this Quartet.

As China recalibrates its strategy towards the Middle East more broadly and towards Israel specifically, Israel likewise will need to recalculate its China policy and factor in the quadrilateral actors of China, the U.S., Israel and Taiwan. The U.S., Israel and Taiwan could hold track 1.5 or track 2 dialogues to air U.S. and Taiwan concerns, similar to the 2002 dialogue held at Israel’s Begin-Sadat Center, with parallel U.S., Israel and China track 1.5 or track 2 dialogues. The U.S. and China could also utilize the U.S.-China Middle East Dialogue, launched by the State Department in

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August 2012,$^{94}$ to hold constructive discussions on this emerging issue. Finally, it is important for the U.S. and Israel to address concerns on the proliferation aspects of any military (especially dual-use) technology transfers to China and its impact on East Asian security in face of North Korean aggressions, as well as impacts on Israel’s own security vis-à-vis Iran, Syria and their terrorist proxies.

Equal Partners: The Potential for New Type Great Power Relations Between the U.S. and China

Ali Wyne

The editors at the *Washington Journal of Modern China* interviewed Ali Wyne, an associate of Harvard University’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and a contributing analyst at Wikistrat, via email on the topic of “new type great power relations.” The following is a transcript of the conversation.

WJMC: Chinese leader Xi Jinping has been speaking about the need for a “new type great power relationship” for over a year now. However, there is still a lot of uncertainty over what this term means in practice. How would a “new type” relationship between the U.S. and China be different from the current relationship? In other words, what changes on both sides have to occur for the U.S. and China to achieve this goal?

Ali Wyne: Transitions between rising powers and leading powers usually end in conflict. According to Jia Qingguo and Richard Rosecrance, in fact, only one of them—that between the United Kingdom and the United States—has ended peacefully.¹ Perhaps President Xi does not mean a “new” relationship, then, so much as one that is rare by historical standards. A truly new great-power relationship would be one in which the U.S. and China manage their competition and cooperation as rough equals. The U.S. has never attempted to sustain international order in partnership with a country that approximates a peer. During the Cold War, the only period when it has faced a plausible superpower competitor, it sought to contain the Soviet Union and ultimately induce its dissolution. For its part, China is accustomed to what one might describe as a concentric-circle arrangement: the Asia-Pacific region was the center of geopolitics, and China, in turn, was the center of that region.

The closer China’s comprehensive national power (CNP) comes to America’s, the harder the U.S. will have to work to insulate its foreign policy from the impulse to pursue containment. China’s economy will likely be the world’s largest within the next 15 years or so, and its military spending may well be the world’s highest within a few decades. Ceding those titles to China will test America’s psyche in ways that it has not been tested in the postwar era. Furthermore, while the U.S. often characterizes its values as exceptional, even universal, it will have to operate in an international system that increasingly incorporates Chinese norms.

China will also have to prepare itself for an unfamiliar environment. While conventional wisdom holds that it is simply resuming its historical weight in the global balance of power, China is unlikely to reemerge as Zhongguo (“Middle Kingdom”). Now that its neighbors include major powers such as Japan, South Korea, India, and Australia, resuming the vassal-supplicant relationship to which it is accustomed seems infeasible. Moreover, while it is common to characterize the U.S. and the European Union as declining powers, China will not be able to achieve its vital interests without engaging them continuously and skillfully. While it will continue to mold the postwar order’s norms, as suggested earlier, its core diplomatic principle of noninterference will come under greater duress. Some of its most important suppliers of vital commodities are highly unstable countries; China will want to intervene there, if only to mitigate political risk and minimize disruptions to the flow of those commodities. Furthermore, while there is some credibility to China’s claim that it can make significant contributions to international order simply by sustaining its own progress—it does, after all, account for nearly a fifth of the world’s population and a ninth of gross world product—that posture will seem increasingly insular for a country with great-power ambitions.

Both the U.S. and China will have to accept that mutual trust will not increase nearly as quickly as the demands that are placed
on their relationship. It will require “an accumulation of dribs and drabs” (Xi’s phrase) for them to develop that foundation.2

WJMC: The call for “new type great power relations” is interesting because Xi Jinping is ascribing “great power” status to China. Xi’s other new concept, the “China dream”, is also tied to the idea of (re-)rising Chinese power. However, Chinese leaders believe that China is still a “developing country.” How will China balance the demands of being simultaneously a developing country and a great power?

Wyne: China’s effort to portray itself as both a developing country and a great power will come under growing strain. While its per-capita income will lag behind America’s for decades to come—a fact that China’s leaders are quick to stress—it will soon overtake the U.S. in absolute economic size, at which point it is still likely to be growing three times as fast. In physics, an object’s momentum is equal to its mass multiplied by its velocity. If one defines “economic momentum” as gross domestic product multiplied by growth rate, China will be the locomotive of the global economy for the indefinite future. It will, accordingly, face pressure to play a more central role in nurturing global economic stability and strengthening global economic institutions.

China’s attempted duality will prove even more difficult to sustain in the realm of climate change. From 2000 to 2011, America’s per-capita emissions of carbon dioxide decreased from 20.8 to 17.3; China’s increased from 2.8 to 7.2.3 On that trajectory, they will be equal in less than a decade, at which point China’s absolute emissions will be over four times as high as America’s.

The larger challenge for China is that while it wishes to be seen and treated as an equal of the U.S., it does not feel prepared

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to assume the types of responsibilities that this status would confer upon it—partly because of tension that would arise between this undertaking and its historic advocacy of noninterference in other countries’ affairs, and partly because it has so much work to do just to stabilize its own domestic situation. Recall its hesitation to participate in either an explicit or informal U.S.-China “G-2”.

WJMC: You mentioned that China wants to be considered an equal to the U.S. Equal footing for the two countries is an essential part of Chinese formulations of the “new type of great power relations.” However, equality is a fairly abstract term. In a practical sense, what would have to change in the way the U.S. and China interact for Xi Jinping’s government to be satisfied that they are being treated as equals?

Wyne: It is not even clear that President Xi and his colleagues have determined how “equality”—however measured—would be reflected in the two countries’ interactions. That being said, one can imagine some rhetorical shifts that might occur as the gap between the U.S. and China narrows further. While China still talks about continuing its “peaceful rise,” it is likely to shift its focus towards achieving the “China dream,” which is more reflective of its ambitions. The U.S. may talk less about the importance of China’s becoming a “responsible stakeholder” (or a “full stakeholder,” to use former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s more recent formulation). 4 Most Chinese regard such assertions as paternalistic. As Henry Kissinger argues, “lecturing a country with a history of millennia about its need to ‘grow up’ and behave ‘responsibly’ can be needlessly grating.” 5 The U.S. may also begin to affirm more regularly the singular importance of its relationship with China. As President Obama noted at the Sunnyland Summit this June, “it is very much in the interest of the United States for China to continue its peaceful rise because if China is successful,


that helps to drive the world economy and it puts China in the position to work with us as *equal partners* in dealing with many of the global challenges that no single nation can address by itself."\(^6\)

**WJMC: Is the United States prepared to make these changes? What other obstacles might prevent these changes from taking place?**

*Wyne:* It is hard to imagine America’s adjusting itself—rhetorically, at least—to a position of equality with China. Part of that difficulty arises from the reality that its CNP remains far greater than China’s for now, so calls for such an adjustment might sound premature, bordering on defeatist. The more significant component of the difficulty will be psychological. Americans who are now coming of age have no memory of a time when another country or coalition could challenge the U.S. (a child who was born on the day that the Berlin Wall fell—November 9, 1989—will turn 24 this year); U.S. preeminence is built into their worldview.

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The Medical Component of China-Africa Relations

Catherine Beck

The Inception of Medical Interactions

China’s provision of medical assistance to Africa—whether through aid or commercially driven—seeks not only to form a key component of China-Africa diplomatic relations but also to address the pervasive health care crisis in Africa. Many African countries suffer from high rates of death from infectious and parasitic diseases, a shortage of doctors in rural and some urban areas, and an inability to afford needed medications—particularly those protected by intellectual property laws.¹

The medical component of China-Africa relations began in 1963, when the Algerian government invited the first of many Chinese medical teams (CMT) to the continent. From that point on, sending CMTs to Africa frequently represented the first form of bilateral action following the establishment of diplomatic relations. As of 2009, China had sent over 20,000 medical specialists to 50 African countries, and claims to have treated up to 240 million patients. Over 1000 medical personnel from 27 Chinese provinces are currently participating in such medical exchanges in 42 African countries.² Today, Chinese medical professionals are serving in Africa through both official government projects and private, commercial ventures. This paper will examine China’s health-related activities in Africa by looking at China’s medical aid to Africa, commercial medical trade and medical entrepreneurs, and the role of traditional Chinese medicine in Africa, with a concluding look at

² "Guojiaweisheng he jihuashengyuweiyuanhuirenzhenxuexiguanche Xi Jingpingzhuixihuijanyuanwaiyiliaoliuanghuajingshen [Ministry of Health and Family Planning earnestly studies, implements spirit of Xi Jinping's speech to international medical teams]." Ministry of Health and Family Planning.<http://www.moh.gov.cn/mohgjhzs/s7952/201304/94a6ae7791d64e1f95b1ebd2591c1237.shtml>
the challenges and controversies facing China’s role in the development of Africa’s health and medical services.

**Chinese Medical Aid to Africa**

Similar to the U.S., China only offers development aid to those countries with which it maintains diplomatic ties, although it has offered humanitarian aid for disaster situations in countries with which it does not maintain official ties. Chinese medical and health aid to Africa has continually grown and become more sophisticated since fulfilling its primary commitments in 1963. This evolution can be understood as a progression through three phases, as described by scholar Yanzhong Huang, which closely relate to events occurring both internationally and within China's borders. Huang names the three periods as “Maoist Health Aid Policy,” “Transitional Foreign Aid Period,” and “Comprehensive Aid Reform.”

**Maoist Health Aid Policy: 1963-1978**

During this first period of medical aid, China was not only competing with Taiwan for diplomatic recognition on the continent, but was also seeking the support of so-called intermediate zones (such as Africa) during a period of deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations and continuing uncertain Sino-American relations. Thus, foreign aid, including health aid, became a key aspect of China’s strategy to curry diplomatic favor. This period also represented a China motivated by its “internationalist obligation” to support socialist or revolutionary movements in Africa.

Nine CMT’s were sent to Africa in the 1960s, increasing to 24 in the 1970s, with even some of China's poorest provinces sending medical teams. CMTs provided services and some material supplies to African countries free of charge until 1978. In the 1970s, China even provided medical assistance to African countries that still diplomatically recognized Taiwan, by donating cholera vaccines

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and $2.5 million to Chad in 1971 and 300,000 doses of measles vaccine and $50,000 worth of antibiotics to Burkina Faso in 1973.\textsuperscript{4} During this period, CMTs reflected the Maoist health system, emphasizing equality, universalism, and preventative health while practicing in areas where access to health care was typically difficult for local people to obtain.\textsuperscript{5}

**Transitional Foreign Aid Policy: 1979-1995**

Following domestic leadership changes and its rapprochement with the West, China became less focused on obtaining political support from the developing world and more focused on attracting investment and advanced technologies from the West during this second period of aid policy from 1979-1995. No CMTs were sent to Africa from 1979-1980 as a result of a reevaluation of Chinese priorities and strategies for medical aid assistance. By 1982, China had restructured its aid policy to focus on the economic functions of aid, including equality, reciprocity, effectiveness, and diversity.

During this period, China also began to consider working with multilateral agencies to provide aid and began working with the UN Family Planning Association to build a maternity clinic in Gambia. China also began asking some recipient countries to help shoulder the costs of the medical teams, though it should be noted that for those countries fully paying for their CMTs, the teams were no longer considered part of China’s foreign aid. The international backlash following the Tiananmen incident in 1989, led China to intensify its aid levels to Africa in an effort to maintain goodwill with the continent.\textsuperscript{6}

CMTs remained in Africa from 1988-1995, although their numbers were not increased, due in part to the lack of requests.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
from African countries, in addition to the after-effects of the Cold War on the continent. Some additional teams were sent in the latter half of the 1990s, though some changes were made; some teams withdrew from their host countries, others that had previously withdrawn returned, and some teams were replaced by others from new dispatching provinces. Complete withdrawals were typically a result of unstable domestic circumstances or a switch in diplomatic relations from Beijing to Taipei.\(^7\)

**Comprehensive Aid Reform: 1995-Present**

Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, since 1995 China has sought ways to promote mutual benefits and trade through the reform of its aid programs. For example, medical teams in some countries began to charge fees for medicines and services, using the revenue to purchase medical products made in China, which in turn counted as foreign aid. This practice highlighted Chinese enterprises and firms as active foreign aid participants. A Chinese Ministry of Health (MOH) official stressed that China’s health aid should “not only serve China’s foreign policy, but also act as a broker for economic development in China and recipient countries.”\(^8\)

Along these lines, in 1999, the MOH unveiled business-oriented plans to reform health aid, including developing a short list of suppliers of domestic medicine and equipment for future aid work and promoting jointly run hospitals and pharmaceutical firms for mutually beneficial cooperation. Focus was also broadened beyond the scope of sending medical teams to include cooperation with African countries in the running of hospitals and emphasizing the promotion of Chinese pharmaceutical exports.\(^9\)

Today, China’s aid commitments to Africa are generally communicated to the United Nations sessions on financing Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) meetings. China is increasingly

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\(^7\)Yanzhong Huang.
\(^8\)Ibid, p. 20.
\(^9\)Ibid.
focusing its health-related aid commitments on specific tangible goods (e.g. set numbers of hospitals to be built or doctors to be sent) rather than simply promising an amount of monetary aid.

China’s aid program is primarily operated by the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), although its concessional loan program, which makes up the largest portion of Chinese aid to Africa, is administered by the Export-Import Bank of China. In the health field, MOFCOM has primarily managed construction projects and the provision of equipment, while the MOH (recently restructured as the Ministry of Health and Family Planning) oversees the provincial dispatching of CMTs. By the end of 2009, China had financed the building, and often the equipping, of 54 hospitals in Africa.\(^\text{10}\)

A lack of transparency and the decentralization of actors involved in the process of providing medical health aid to Africa make it difficult to know its precise monetary value. Estimates of China’s medical aid levels to Africa by experts in the field have ranged from 500 million RMB annually to 5.3 billion RMB over five years.\(^\text{11}\) According to rough calculations by scholar Debora Brautigam, it is estimated that China has spent approximately $80 million per year over a period of six years (2007-2012) providing Africa with medical teams and building and equipping hospitals and malaria centers.\(^\text{12}\)

Medical Teams, Malaria Centers, and Beyond

Chinese medical teams are organized and sent by individual provinces which have been paired with an African country under the guidance of the Chinese Ministry of Health and Family Planning’s Department of International Cooperation.\(^\text{13}\) Most provinces are paired with more than one country and send medical teams

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10 Deborah Brautigam.


12 Deborah Brautigam.

typically made up of 20-50 members who remain in their assigned African country for approximately two years before being replaced by a new team. Many doctors serve on more than one team. These teams often work in African hospitals and perform surgical operations, acupuncture therapy, basic and specialized health care, conduct herbal research, and organize training courses for African medical personnel. They also often serve in rural areas where African doctors are more reluctant to work and which suffer from low doctor-patient ratios, and often prioritize the transfer of knowledge and technology in an effort to upgrade and build the professional skills of local health workers. The expenses for these teams are typically covered by the recipient nations, including international airfare, doctor and support staff stipends, and the costs of some medicine and equipment brought by the team. For those countries which cannot afford these costs, the Chinese government help cover some of the expenses.

In addition to medical teams, China has deployed military medical units on UN Peacekeeping operations in Africa to assist both civilians and other peacekeepers. Furthermore, the PLA Navy’s number 401 hospital in Qingdao has sent medical teams to Zambia. China has built hospitals, clinics, and pharmaceutical plants; donated medicine such as anti-malaria drugs and medical supplies; and organized workshops and training for African medical personnel emphasizing the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, and avian influenza, all as part of either aid packages or private, commercial ventures.

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14 David Shinn and Joshua Eisenman. *See Appendix A for more detailed information.
15 David Shinn.
17 Drew Thompson.
18 David Shinn and Joshua Eisenman.
Fighting Malaria

CMTs have additionally participated in the fight against malaria in Africa by distributing free medications, including the China-produced anti-malaria drug Cotecxin which has been shown to be highly effective. This drug was approved by the WHO in 1993 and all Chinese medical teams were subsequently required to use this drug in 1996. According to the general manager of Holley Tanzania—a subsidiary of the Chinese company Holley-Cotec, which contributes a third of China’s overseas malaria drug donations—“supplying to the government donation schemes is never commercially incentivized...we normally make the donation to gain better brand recognition overseas,” adding that government orders are generally placed at a price that only covers costs.19

However, as previously discussed, Chinese health aid to Africa started a for-profit track in the 1990s, in which the economic aspect of foreign aid was emphasized and the mutual benefit of trade and the export of Chinese pharmaceuticals were promoted, blurring the line between health aid and commercial activity.20 According to global health expert Yanzhong Huang, China’s health aid is focused on the rebranding of Chinese healthcare service and promoting the export of Chinese medical products, quoting a ministry of health official as saying that China’s health aid should “not only serve China’s foreign policy, but also act as a broker for economic development in China and recipient countries.”21

In 2002, 30 students from 17 African countries participated in a two-part international training course on the prevention and treatment of malaria and tropical diseases conducted by the Chinese Ministry of Health. That year also saw the convening of a

21 Beibei Yin.
Sino-African forum on traditional medicine and pharmaceuticals held in conjunction with FOCAC. As of 2012, China had established 30 malaria prevention centers in Africa, estimated to have cost approximately $500,000 each, and sent 13 malaria prevention teams to 27 African countries. These facilities and their medicines were donated by Chinese companies through a government program. In addition to government-sponsored aid, in 2010, the first large-scale private charity mission was sponsored by Chinese companies doing business in Africa. The Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Group and HNA Group, in partnership with the Beijing Tongren Hospital, sent 20 medical personnel to Malawi and Zimbabwe to perform 1000 cataract surgeries in one week. At the 2012 FOCAC, China promised to send 1500 medical professionals to Africa over the next three years and to conduct the “Brightness Action” campaign to provide free treatment for cataract patients in Africa, in addition to the continuation of providing support and training to African medical facilities and their employees.

Commercial Trade and Medical Entrepreneurs

In 2012, Africa became the largest export market for medicine made in China—with a value of $1.47 billion, a 13 percent increase from the previous year—as well as one of the fastest-growing markets for Chinese medical products. Low cost and good quality reportedly rank among the top reasons among Africans for the purchase of Chinese-made medicines. Antibiotics account for approximately 50 percent of China’s pharmaceutical exports with anti-malarial drugs accounting for about 20 percent. Roughly 95 percent of China’s pharmaceutical exports to Africa are conventional Western medicine rather than traditional Chinese

22 Drew Thompson.
25FOCAC 2012.
Chinese companies tend to have an advantage in the manufacture and export of generic medicines and middle- and low-end medical devices.28

China is also able to supply Africa with medications through its Africa-based pharmacies. Some Chinese government-built pharmaceutical factories in Africa were eventually privatized, allowing Chinese companies to obtain equity participation as joint ventures.29 Others have built their pharmacies from the ground up. For example, the Shanghai biopharmaceutical company Fosun Pharmaceutical Group Co., Ltd. established a plant in Cote d’Ivoire in 2012, with services expected to cover 17 African countries. 30 Mindray, China’s largest medical equipment manufacturer, sells equipment such as ultrasound machines to Africa and has provided training sessions for local doctors as well as organized free screenings for pregnant women.31

Chinese medical companies interested in selling to the African market, regardless of their location, are able to receive support from the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Medicines and Health Products. 32 Although this organization is international in scope, it offers reports and organizes exhibits specifically focused on the African market. Despite their successes on the continent, China’s largest pharmaceutical companies do face barriers. They, for example, are unable to supply to the public sector in Africa due to procurement limitations

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29 Deborah Brautigam.


32 In Chinese: 中国医药保健品出口商会 See www.cccmhpie.org.cn
for international donors that require strict inspection, including pre-qualifications by the World Health Organization.³³

Medical Entrepreneurs

Medical anthropologist Elisabeth Hsu has spent considerable time researching Chinese so-called medical entrepreneurs in both Tanzania and Kenya, conducting ethnographic research on their experiences practicing both Western and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in Africa. Her studies examine many private Chinese practices, which often contain laboratories for conducting simple Western medical tests—carried out by African, often male, laboratory technicians—typically used to identify malaria, urinary infections, stomach ulcers, and, to a lesser extent, HIV infection. Hsu found that African clientele in these regions were attracted to the Chinese clinics, which were considered quick and efficient, as opposed to the Western clinics which were characterized as bureaucratic and decentralized. She furthermore notes that many Africans use these Chinese clinics primarily as pharmacies, rather than for obtaining diagnosis, with a high frequency of males seeking Chinese drugs that boost potency.³⁴

One challenge faced by these medical entrepreneurs is the strict pharmaceutical regulations found in many African countries. In Tanzania, Chinese doctors are prohibited from selling biomedical drugs; however, Hsu noted most still sold such medications (such as aspirin, penicillin, and sulfonamides), which were stored hidden away and locked up. Language barriers present another challenge as most Chinese doctors in Tanzania speak very little, if any, Swahili, and rely on either translators or the use of English to communicate with patients.

Although Kenya is one of the few African countries that has not been a recipient of Chinese medical teams, private Chinese doctors have been practicing in Kenya since the 1980s, often

³³Beibei Yin.
originating from Shandong province. Hsu's research shows that many of these doctors had enjoyed secure livelihoods as state-employed doctors in China during the Cultural Revolution, but had suffered economically following the economic reforms of the 1980s. Additionally, many claimed to have sought employment outside of China because of the early retirement schemes forced upon them by their state employers. She further found that the education and work experience among these medical entrepreneurs varied greatly, though all advertised themselves as competent in practicing Chinese medicine.

In contrast with the Chinese doctors participating in the official medical teams, these private entrepreneurs are generally viewed back home as not being "real" Chinese medical doctors and are not held in very high esteem. While many saw their time in Kenya as temporary, some saw it as stepping stone to more "prestigious" international positions. Others expressed a preference for practicing medicine in Africa versus in other "first world" countries due to a perceived greater respect and acceptance of TCM in Africa.\textsuperscript{35} A key challenge for these doctors in Kenya, however, was their status as TCM practitioners, which, similar to the situation of those practicing in Tanzania, relegated their practice into the realm of the unregulated if not the illegal. Hsu notes:

"Prospects are that well-trained TCM professionals will avoid immigrating into Kenya, and that some of those who are there, while they may once have received a reasonable education, are not maintaining their professional standards. The current neoliberal order fosters a climate conducive to attracting minimally educated Chinese medical entrepreneurs into the informal sector—that is, not well-trained medical practitioners, but drug sellers who are jacks of all trade."


\textsuperscript{36} Elisabeth Hsu (2012), p. 311.
Traditional Chinese Medicine

As a continent with its own forms of traditional medicines—the World Health Organization estimates that up to four-fifths of Africa’s population relies on traditional medicines as their primary form of health care—the promotion of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) has experienced relative success in Africa. This success in part reflects China’s experience in establishing basic health care systems in rural areas. Presently, 37 African countries import TCM from China, with Morocco, Benin, Nigeria, and South Africa each importing more than $1 million worth. TCM treatments are conducted both by the private medical entrepreneurs and the official CMTs and there are many stories of both top African leaders and the general public seeking TCM treatments, particularly acupuncture, for chronic ailments.

China is not only exporting TCM to African countries, but also seeking to collaborate with various African governments in the research and testing of TCM treatments within the continent. For example, in 2010, Ghana’s Ministry of Health and the Chinese State Agency for Traditional Medicine signed an agreement to begin clinical trials of TCM in Ghana. As part of this agreement, China will help Ghana set up an examination and approval system for TCM and tests are to be conducted on medicines intended specifically for the treatment of malaria, hypertension and stroke, diabetes, and cholesterol management.

In 2012, the first China-Africa International Cooperation and Development Forum on Traditional Chinese Medicine and

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38 Shinn and Eisenman.
39 Xinhua. "TCM begins African safari."
Pharmacy was held in Cape Town, South Africa by the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies, the University of Western Cape, and the South Africa Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Association. The forum was intended to assist Chinese TCM businesses in their efforts to enter the African market. Through the forum, a wide acceptance in Africa of TCM’s ability to treat many high-prevalence diseases in Africa was expressed. One African minister of health in attendance stressed his primary reason for attending the forum was the hope to strengthen cooperation in the use of TCM to treat diabetes.42

As with the aforementioned Chinese pharmaceutical companies producing biomedicines and medical equipment in Africa, various TCM-focused pharmaceutical companies, such as the Tasly Group and the Lanzhou Foci Pharmaceutical Company, have also established branches or registered their brands of TCM in South Africa, which possesses the most developed market for TCM on the continent.43 Tasly currently markets its products in Ghana, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, Nigeria, Swaziland, Kenya, Cote d’Ivoire, Egypt, and Uganda, including 200 franchised stores in four countries. The company reports $80 million in trade volume across the continent. Beijing Holley Cotec Pharmaceuticals has similarly experienced success selling a low-cost herb-based anti-malarial medicine in Africa. However, despite the popularity of TCM in South Africa—again, Africa’s top market for such forms of alternative medicines, TCM exports to the country only accounted for just over three percent of the total value of China’s medical trade with South Africa in 2012.44

Another way China is seeking to promote the expansion of TCM in Africa is through the training of African students in China. As of 2012, over 1000 Africans have studied university level TCM in China with some going on to receive master’s degrees in the

43 Ibid.
44 Xinhua. “TCM begins African safari.”
subject. In a CCTV profile of one Senegalese student studying TCM in China, a student who has received a four year Chinese government scholarship—typical for many African students—comments that while the classes in her program include instruction in both Chinese and English, a majority of the coursework is offered in English. The student also stated that she hopes to return to Africa after the completion of her program and provide those in her home country with more affordable health care options.

Challenges and Recent Controversies

Although Chinese medical aid to Africa has been largely successful, the process is not without its challenges. Language barriers, concerns with drug counterfeiting, and issues surrounding the marketing of products in a foreign culture represent the key challenges facing China.

Language barriers negatively affect China-Africa medical assistance in various ways. One issue confronting the efficacy of Chinese medical equipment aid is the lack of training and native-language instruction. For example, recent media reports describe a Chinese-funded malaria center in Tanzania containing a wide variety of China-donated high tech equipment suitable for the diagnosis and treatment of various diseases. However, much of this equipment remains untouched because of a lack of effective training and instruction manuals that are only in Chinese. Similarly, a doctor at another clinic treating only patients under the age of five showed the reporter 10,000 untouched, nearly-expired treatments of donated Arco Chinese malaria medicines. The doctor explained the medications remain unused due to a lack of tests showing the medications are safe for young patients.

In addition to language barriers resulting in African doctors reluctant to use certain Chinese medicines and equipment, many

45 “Traditional Chinese Medicine and Pharmacy (TCM) in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges.”


47 Beibei Yin.
African doctors may still favor medicines produced by Western companies which have invested heavily in clinical trials in Africa. These doctors lack similar data from Chinese companies which would allow them to better compare the products. Ultimately, it is the unknown and lack of understanding preventing some African doctors from making effective use of Chinese donations.

Beyond the lack of studies and trials for certain Chinese medications, the risk of counterfeit drugs entering the African market—whether rightly or wrongly presumed to originate from China—represents another concern. A 2012 study published in the journal *Lancet Infectious Diseases* found that low-quality and fake anti-malarial drugs accounted for more than a third of samples analyzed in sub-Saharan Africa. Another study led by a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute found that Chinese-made drugs for the treatment of malaria performed poorly in tests, and suggested that Chinese exporters to Africa know that poor quality products are less likely to be spotted in Africa, where many countries lack effective regulation. While some African government officials and locals suggest that China is the source of such counterfeit medications, it is difficult to find concrete evidence pointing to the direct source, and there are likely many, including domestic sources. Certainly, local corruption and porous borders play a role in the penetration of these fake goods.

48Ibid.


Nayyar, Gaurvika ML, Joel Breman, Paul Newton, and James Herrington. "Poor-quality antimalarial drugs in southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa." The Lancet Infectious Diseases 12, no. 6 (2012): 488-496.


Whether locally produced or sourced from China or India, the circulation of fake medications—especially retroviral and anti-malaria drugs—across Africa not only has the potential of mortal consequences for those unknowingly taking ineffective or toxic pills, but also of reducing public trust in the efficacy of vital treatments and for creating stronger, more drug-resistant strains of some diseases.\footnote{McLaughlin, Kathleen. "Counterfeit Drugs in Tanzania Undermine Health." Pulitzer Center.<http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/tanzania-aid-developing-world-corruption-fake-drugs-medications-HIV-AIDS>}

Further increasing the challenge, many fake drugs are indistinguishable from their genuine forms, even to doctors who oftentimes must use lab tests to distinguish between real and fake.

Warranted or not, much local and international suspicion points to China as a key source of counter fits, with the chief drug inspector for Uganda’s National Drug Authority even quoted in The Guardian as saying that African countries had been found making fake medications, “but of course China is entering into the African market with everything...I think you have seen their strategy in so many of our sectors. To bring in as many of their own products as possible, in every possible level of quality, and take over.” Laurie Garett, senior fellow for global health at the US Council on Foreign Relations similarly commented, “If reports from African regulators are accurate, Chinese companies are responsible for the most egregious medicine frauds and misformulations seen on the continent...Even within China’s own official media, you can find reports of dumping, drugs/medicines found substandard or fraudulent, causing harm to Chinese, are relabeled and dumped on Africa.”\footnote{McLaughlin, Kathleen. "Malaria is not going away because we are getting fake treatment." The Guardian.<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/dec/23/malaria-fake-medicines-africa-china>}

China refuted reports that it was exporting fake anti-malaria drugs to Africa, yet agreed that many African countries did have problems with the circulation of fake drugs due to severe shortages of medicine and general poverty levels fueling a lucrative market for the import and manufacturing of fake drugs. Chinese officials have called for cooperation with African governments to address this
issue and, for its part, China claims to be stepping up supervisory efforts by installing recognition and tracing technology on drugs and improving anti-counterfeiting labels on drug packaging. Additionally, Chinese pharmaceutical companies are partnering with African governments and drug distributors in an effort to increase the traceability of imported drugs. 53 Despite China’s rebuttal of the claims, some reports describe African residents seeking help from local healers after either not finding success with malaria medications or due to fears of receiving counterfeit medications.54

The promotion of TCM in Africa similarly faces challenges, including language barriers (not only to foster better doctor-patient relations, but some countries require a high language proficiency of TCM practitioners in order to register), the uncertain therapeutic efficacy of the medicines, and a lack of coordinated marketing strategy. One Chinese report further claims a lack of understanding of local cultures has hurt some TCM marketing attempts. For example, a concern for animal rights is commonly held in South Africa, meaning potential patients there would not want to take medication containing animal ingredients, which are commonly found in TCM remedies. Furthermore, as with the anti-malaria and retroviral medications, a few publicized cases of substandard TCM products entering the African market have created negative perceptions hurting the overall marketing of these alternative medications.55

A final challenge—one potentially faced by members of any foreign country in Africa—is the threat of internal instability in various African countries. For example, in December 2012, members of a Chinese medical team in the Central African Republic faced difficulties evacuating, but were ultimately able to leave, when an insurgency was launched by the country’s rebel

54 Kathleen McLaughlin. “Fake Drugs Flood East African Markets.”
55 “Traditional Chinese Medicine and Pharmacy (TCM) in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges.”
groups. As the number of medical practitioners and the volume of Chinese medical investments in Africa increase, the odds of difficulties—whether caused by poor timing, unstable events, or poor communication—will naturally also increase.

Conclusion

It is evident that China’s health and medical related assistance to Africa, both aid and commercially driven, has become increasingly sophisticated and adept at reacting and adjusting to changing landscapes both domestically and on the African continent. New areas of engagement within the field continue to open as established forums such as FOCAC and newly created forums help ensure communication and progression along generally positive and cooperative lines. Despite the challenges China faces in this sector, it appears willing to seek new methods of addressing concerns and cooperating with its African partners.


## Appendix A: Chinese Medical Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>African Country</th>
<th>Year of First Chinese Medical Team</th>
<th>Partner Chinese Province</th>
<th>Other Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Zhejiang, Hubei</td>
<td>Withdrew in 1995 due to war, re-dispatched in 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Sichuan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Ningxia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Fujian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso (as Upper Volta)</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>Sent 300,000 doses of measles vaccine and $50,000 worth of antibiotics in 1973 to assist with measles epidemic; halted in 1994 following suspension of diplomatic relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Guangxi, Qinghai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Shanghai, Shanxi</td>
<td>Interrupted in 1979, dispatched by Shanxi in 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Heilongjiang, Sichuan, Hunan</td>
<td>Switched to Sichuan in 1998 and later to Hunan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Guangxi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo (Republic of)</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Tianjin</td>
<td>Withdrew in 1997 due to civil war, returned in 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Hebei</td>
<td>Halted in 1997 due to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Province</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Democratic Republic of)</td>
<td>Zaire</td>
<td></td>
<td>war, resumed in 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d'Ivoire</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>None?</td>
<td>Hospital construction project; opened anti-malaria center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Shanxi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Guangdong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Henan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Henan</td>
<td>Halted in 1979, returned in 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Tianjin</td>
<td>Development assistance projects include a health center and cooperative pharmacy project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Tianjin, Guangdong</td>
<td>Has constructed health centers; replaced by Guangdong in 1991; halted in 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Guangdong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Guizhou; Sichuan</td>
<td>Provided anti-malaria medication in 2009; withdrew in 1990, resumed by Sichuan in 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Hubei</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Heilongjiang</td>
<td>Sent three medical teams between 1984 and 1989; halted in 1989, resumed in 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Beijing, Jiangsu</td>
<td>Pulled out in 1991 due to internal instability (Contract expired in 1994 and not renewed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Gansu</td>
<td>Has sent 17 teams as of 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Sha'anxi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Zhejiang</td>
<td>Provided anti-malarial drugs to Kenyan government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Heilongjiang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Province(s)</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Shanghai, Jiangxi</td>
<td>Joined by Jiangxi in 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Sichuan</td>
<td>Provides anti-malaria medication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Zhejiang</td>
<td>Donated three ambulances to the Ministry of Health and Social Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Inner Mongolia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Tomé and Príncipe</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Heilongjiang, Sichuan</td>
<td>Sent 171 medical personnel between 1976 and 1997; halted in 1997 following end of diplomatic relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Guangxi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Hunan</td>
<td>Withdrew in 1993 due to war, re-dispatched in 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Jilin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Sha'anxi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Shandong</td>
<td>Approximately 1000 Chinese medical personnel have served in Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Jiangxi</td>
<td>Helped set up first acupuncture center in 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Yunnan</td>
<td>Malaria Research Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>1966, 1970</td>
<td>Liaoning, Anhui</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaire</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Hebei</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Henan, Sichuan, Jilin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Zanzibar 1964  Jiangsu
Zimbabwe 1983  Hunan

Sources: Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China, China Law Info, Foreign Ministry of the PRC, Elisabeth


"Medical Team celebrates completion of training before departing to Angola [Yuan Angela yiliaoduichuguorangpeixunbanjuxingkaixuedianl]." Sichuan International Health Exchange

Hsu, Jilin Department of Health, Li Anshan, Ministry of Commerce of the PRC, Sichuan International Health Exchange Promotion Association, Sina Blogs, Sina News Center, Sohu News

“Work of Jilin medical team praised [Sheng kaizhongfeisaerlang--Jilin sheng yuananzaibiyazaiyiliaoduibaichengzuzaizhangongzuojishi].” Jilin Department of Health.

“Zhejiang medical teams serving in Africa for 44 years [Zhejiang yuanwaiyiliaoduizhuanzhufuizhou 44 nian].” Foreign Ministry.
Appendix B: Medical Cooperation Discussed at FOCAC Meetings

| FOCAC I  |  *African side welcomes more medical teams, promising to create suitable working and living conditions for these teams.  
| October 10-12, 2000 Beijing |  *Chinese side promises to continue to provide African countries with medical equipment, facilities, medicine, and more training to local medical personnel, and to promote co-operation in the use of traditional medicine and pharmacy.  
|  *Both sides agree to cooperate in areas such as reducing infant and maternal mortality rates, and preventing and treating HIV/AIDS, malaria, tropical, and other diseases. |

| FOCAC II |  *Notes progress in bilateral health cooperation  
| December 15-16, 2003 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |  o 53 protocols concluded or renewed in past three years regarding the dispatch of medical teams.  
|  o 2002 convocation of the China-Africa Forum on Traditional Medicine and the adoption of the Plan of Action for the Cooperation of Traditional Medicine between China and African Countries.  
|  *Both sides agree to enhance cooperation in response to the worldwide spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, Ebola, and SARS.  
|  *Both sides agree to extend and enhance traditional medicine R&D cooperation, experience-sharing and technical exchanges, making the training of specialized health care personnel a priority.  
|  *China commits to continue sending medical teams, according to the requests of African countries, and to address requests regarding the composition of the teams.  
|  o China commits to provide countries with some free medicine, medical instruments or materials.  
|  o China will step up the training of local medical workers.  
|  o African countries will be responsible for providing appropriate working and living conditions for the medical teams. |
### FOCAC III
**November 4-5, 2006**
**Beijing**

*Both sides express satisfaction with the progress made in the past three years.*

*Both sides resolve to increase exchanges and cooperation in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, Ebola, Chikungunya, avian influenza, and in the fields of quarantine and public health emergency response mechanisms.*

*China commits to:*

- Assist in the building of 30 hospitals, provide RMB300 million in grants for providing anti-malaria drugs, build 30 demonstration centers for prevention and treatment of malaria in the next three years.
- Continue to send new and additional medical teams according to China’s capacity and the need of African countries.
- Continue to provide medicines and medical supplies needed by African countries and help them establish and improve medical facilities and train medical workers.

### FOCAC IV
**November 8-9, 2009**
**Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt**

*Notes that:*

- China’s promised 30 malaria prevention and treatment centers have all been built and opened; China has provided anti-malaria medicine to 36 African countries for three years.
- China has sent 1200 medical workers to 42 countries since November 2006, including teams sent to Chad, Senegal, Angola, and Malawi.
- China has provided a large amount of medicine and medical devices to African countries.

*Both sides note the importance of strengthening health systems in Africa*

*Both sides agree to step up exchanges, particularly their joint efforts to prevent and treat major communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, avian influenza and H1N1 influenza; and continue to enhance cooperation in*
| Setting up mechanisms to handle public health emergencies |
| *China commits to:*
| o Help 28 African countries build hospitals. |
| o Deliver medical equipment to Mauritius and Niger as promised. |

**FOCAC V**  
July 19-20, 2012  
Beijing

*Notes that:*
| o China has dispatched 42 medical teams to African countries. |
| o There are 1067 Chinese medical personnel in Africa now. |
| o China has provided medical equipment, materials, and medicines to 30 hospitals and 30 malaria prevention centers in Africa and has sent 13 malaria prevention teams to 27 African countries. |

*Both sides note the deepening cooperation in the health sector and commit to step up high level exchanges in the health field and hold a China-Africa high-level health development workshop at an appropriate time.*  
*Both sides commit to expand exchanges and cooperation in the prevention and treatment and port control of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and other major communicable diseases, health personnel training, maternal and child health, health system building and public health policies.*  
*China commits to continue providing support to the medical facilities it has built to ensure their sustainable development and upgrade the modernization level of the hospitals and laboratories.*  
*China commits to continue to train doctors, nurses, public health workers, and administrative personnel for African countries.*  
*China commits to conduct the “Brightness Action” campaign to provide free treatment for cataract patients in Africa.*  
*China commits to send 1500 medical workers to Africa in the next three years.*

Source: [http://www.focac.org](http://www.focac.org)
REVIEWS


Reviewed by Shannon Tiezzi

For nearly fifty years, the curious triangular relationship between China, Taiwan, and the United States dominated U.S.-China relations. In 1971, Henry Kissinger made an historic secret visit to China to pave the way for President Nixon’s trip in 1972. At his first meeting with Zhou Enlai, Kissinger made it clear that America would not support independence for Taiwan or a “one China, one Taiwan” policy. Only after receiving these assurances did Zhou agree that talks to restart the U.S.-China relationship could continue.¹

Today, however, the lingering uncertainty over Taiwan’s status has been overshadowed by other topics such as cybersecurity, the trade deficit, and human rights concerns. In Uncharted Strait, Dr. Richard Bush explains why Taiwan has largely disappeared as an issue in U.S.-China relations: interactions between mainland China and Taiwan are currently at an unprecedented high. However, Bush cautions readers not to be lulled into a false sense of optimism. China and Taiwan are still locked into a status quo which leaves neither feeling particularly satisfied. Bush seeks to explain the current underpinnings of the status quo, as well as exploring the possibilities for the future.

Bush is uniquely qualified to discuss cross-strait relations, having spent five years as Chairman of the American Institute in Taiwan, the organization that handles U.S.-Taiwan relations in the place of an official American embassy. As a result, Bush is able to cut to the heart of the complex nature of China-Taiwan relations. He introduces surprisingly simple concepts that provide a conceptual

framework for discussing the incremental yet historic changes that have taken place since Ma Ying-jeou was first elected in 2008.

Bush argues convincingly that the core of the China-Taiwan dispute is the question of Taiwan’s sovereignty. Both governments have agreed that there is “one China” of which Taiwan is part. However, Taipei considers Taiwan to be a sovereign entity while Beijing’s “one country, two systems” formula would place Taiwan in a subordinate position, eliminating its basic sovereignty. This issue colors all aspects of cross-strait relations, from large questions regarding eventual political unification to minute details over how to frame negotiations over economic issues. To Bush, the essential problem of defining the cross-strait relations cannot be solved until China and Taiwan are able to agree on the extent and limits of a sovereign Taiwan. In other words, while China and Taiwan have made conciliatory gestures in recent years, they are no closer to solving the fundamental problem than they were twenty years ago.

Bush does not expect any resolution of the sovereignty issue anytime soon. He does hold out some hope for what he calls “political stabilization,” whereby Beijing and Taipei would codify their existing relationship without addressing the fundamental dispute. A peace accord, for example, would reduce mistrust in the security realm while not actually addressing questions of unification or sovereignty. However, the path to political stabilization is also blocked by many of the same concerns that prevent unification: differing interpretations of the “one China” principle, the extent of Taiwan’s international role (including security arrangements with the United States), and the Taiwanese independence movement, which still exerts influence on Taiwan’s domestic politics.

Ultimately, Bush argues that the most likely scenario for cross-strait relations is a stall. The less controversial agreements, nearly all dealing with trade and the economy, have already been made. The remaining issues are naturally the more difficult ones. Even the existing agreements face an uphill battle when it comes to actual implementation. The combination of these factors will
probably prevent a repeat of the rapid progress in cross-strait relations that occurred during Ma Ying-jeou’s first term.

Based on this assumption, Bush explores the possibility that Beijing might move from what he call the “mutual persuasion” model to relying on a “power asymmetry paradigm.” Mutual persuasion is more or less what has been happening since 2008: both China and Taiwan seek to expand areas of cooperation through a series of negotiations and mutual compromises. However, should forward progress slow or stall altogether, there is a possibility that China might attempt to assert its will on Taiwan through economic, diplomatic, or even military pressure.

Bush believes that a shift toward the power asymmetry paradigm is unlikely. The consequences, both in terms of global opinion and in terms of China’s economy, would make it risky for China to pressure Taiwan. Because of this risk, Bush argues that as long as Beijing believes it is possible to achieve unification through other means, it will not resort to economic or military force. China most likely hopes that the threat of force will be enough to keep relations moving forward fairly smoothly. However, if Taiwan were to declare independence or otherwise close the door on unification, Beijing might indeed seek to exploit the power asymmetry to achieve its desired goal.

Bush lays out a potential blueprint for Taiwan to keep the dynamic of “mutual persuasion” alive. Taiwan must continue to cultivate cross-strait relations, even while taking its own steps domestically to address economic and military weaknesses. To achieve both these goals, Bush recommends that Taiwan seek closer economic and security ties with the U.S. Trade liberalization with the U.S. would make Taiwan’s economy more competitive in a global market, while also reducing dependence on mainland China. Improving security relations with the U.S. would give Taiwan a boost in its defense capabilities, making it less likely that mainland China will chose to exploit a power asymmetry. Bush also suggests that one of the most important steps Taiwan can take is to clarify for itself what it wants from its relationship with mainland China. Only
by having a clearly defined idea of its own sovereignty can Taiwan successfully negotiate with Beijing.

Bush also provides recommendations for Beijing to increase its chances of successful reunification. Namely, China should continue along the path of mutual persuasion, being patient with incremental progress. Using coercion against Taiwan would both alienate a large part of the island’s population and also raise serious suspicions among China’s neighbors, who keep a close eye on how Beijing deals with the Taiwan situation. Countries all over the world will use China’s actions towards Taiwan as a bellwether of China’s ultimate intentions. Using force of any kind against Taiwan would drain credibility from China’s insistence on its “peaceful development.”

On the other hand, if Taiwan reaps real benefits from its closer relationship with the mainland, there is a much better chance that Taiwan’s people will come to accept unification. To this end, Bush suggests that Beijing should stop vilifying the DPP and instead seek to communicate with this major political party. Bush also posits that China should reassure Taiwan by adjusting its military approach to the island. China’s foreign policy strategy (peaceful development) has gotten out of touch with its defense strategy. Bush notes that continuing an aggressive military posture towards Taiwan actually decreases the chance that unification can occur peacefully. However, Bush notes that altering the PRC’s military strategy towards Taiwan would be extremely difficult.

As the main guarantor of Taiwan’s security, the U.S. also has an important role to play in keeping cross-strait relations peaceful. Bush agrees with the official U.S. government position that arms sales to Taiwan provide much-needed confidence to the island. Without this confidence, cross-strait relations would not be able to progress.² Bush argues that the U.S. should continue arms sales, with discussions to pinpoint what military capabilities would

² Of course, Beijing takes the opposite view and argues that since cross-strait relations are progressing, there is no further need for arms sales.
be most useful for Taiwanese defense. In Bush’s opinion “abandoning” Taiwan, as some U.S. scholars have recently suggested, would increase the likelihood that Beijing might seek to use coercion or even force to achieve its goal of unification. Such an outcome “would represent a failure of the long-term American strategy to shape China into a constructive member of the international community” (224). To Bush, abandoning Taiwan is tantamount to ceding the entire Asia-Pacific to China.

Unsurprisingly then, Bush recommends increased engagement with Taiwan. As noted above, Bush calls for more serious discussions on Taiwan’s military capabilities so that future arms sales can have military utility as well as symbolic value. In the economic sphere, Bush suggests further negotiations under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, eventually leading to liberalized trade between the U.S. and Taiwan. These steps would help strengthen Taiwan both materially and psychologically, which Bush believes would help keep cross-strait relations moving forward on an even keel.

These recommendations, while intriguing, remain largely thought-exercises, as Bush notes that many of the changes he suggests (most notably Taiwan reforming its political system and Beijing rethinking its military approach to Taiwan) are unlikely to occur. Overall, despite its title, the book’s greatest strength lies not in attempts to predict the future but in its clear and precise outlines of the current situation in cross-strait relations. In particular, Bush juxtaposes the positive gains made in the last four years with a coherent outline of the fundamental philosophical differences that currently stand in the way of a long-term political solution. As a result, the reader understands the importance of the positive gains Taipei and Beijing have made while having no illusions that the unification is around the corner.

*Reviewed by Ariane Rosen*

In the middle of the Cold War, President Richard Nixon, a staunch anti-Communist, went to China. This historic event had a profound effect on the United States, China, and the world. A lot has changed in the 40 years since then. Who better to address these changes and what they mean for the future of U.S.-China relations than someone who was with Nixon during his 1972 trip?

Chas W. Freeman started his diplomatic service career nearly 50 years ago. He was the main interpreter while Nixon was in China, held a top position at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, and served as Assistant Secretary of Defense. In *Interesting Times*, Freeman uses his decades of experience and intimate knowledge of U.S.-China relations to provide an in-depth analysis of this ever-changing relationship, beginning with the reemergence of official interactions and continuing through to the future.

Despite the historical analysis provided, it is important to note that Freeman’s book is not a chronological history of modern U.S.-China relations. Instead, it is a grouped, although not chronologically, collection of past essays and speeches. Each chapter begins with an explanation and overview of the pieces to follow. Endnotes are included to update any key details that may have changed since the pieces were originally written. Freeman also provides a supplemental online archive.

While someone new to the topic area might come away a bit confused, for someone with a bit of background, this approach works well. It allows more space to be dedicated to the areas Freeman prioritizes, resulting in a deeper look at key topics than a broader history could. These speeches span many years and show the progression of the author’s ideas, reactions to recent events, and the aspects of U.S.-China relations that were important at the
time. Because the goal of this book is to look at the shifts in the U.S.-China relationship, it is especially useful to see the progression of the pieces over time. They are actually situated within their historical context, instead of merely reflecting back on it.

Freeman begins his book with some of his more contemporary pieces, providing a wider overview that introduces the themes and topics reexamined later in the book. Right away, Freeman’s deep understanding of both the American and Chinese viewpoints is abundantly clear. He provides important insight into how China views itself and how the U.S. and China relate to one another, which is especially useful since misconceptions and misunderstandings are a couple of the key problems facing this vital bilateral relationship.

Next, Freeman provides an in-depth look into the process of normalization. The detail provided in this chapter is un-matched. It is astounding how much behind-the-scenes insight can fit in a single chapter. The author’s personal anecdotes provide additional authenticity to the descriptions of the challenges faced in reaching rapprochement and the impressive diplomacy that ultimately led to the Shanghai Communiqué. Throughout the book, Freeman reminds the reader of the qualities that characterized U.S.-China rapprochement, qualities that are now largely missing from the relationship and need to be embraced again today: pragmatism, cooperation, patience, understanding, and foresight. The relationship needs the ability to focus on common ground while setting aside differences, work together to make China an integrated part of the international system, promote an environment that allows for remaining issues to be resolved peacefully, and create a common understanding and joint goals for the future of the relationship.

An important section of the famous Shanghai Communiqué involved the Taiwan question. The drafters tactfully avoided conflict or the need for immediate action. They also solidified the idea of “one-China” and U.S. commitment to a peaceful reunification as determined by the Chinese people (on both sides of the Strait).
While facilitating the resumption of relations between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China and bringing peace to the Taiwan Strait, the Communiqué also set the parameters for the relationship and for maintaining the status quo. Because of the delicacy of the Taiwan situation and its potential to lead to conflict, it is not surprising that Freeman dedicates three chapters exclusively to the Taiwan issue.

Freeman uses his expertise and appreciation for Taiwan in addition to his practical experience with the People's Republic of China to provide a well-designed analysis of the basis of the Taiwan issue, the reemergence of tensions, the dynamic relationships involved, and the likely consequences of a cross-strait military conflict. The author emphasizes that the Taiwan issue involves the mainland, the U.S., and China and that each entity has its own unique history, interpretation, and ideas, all affecting cross-strait relations.

Freeman points to the emergence of a separate Taiwanese identity and nationalism as the main potential impetus for conflict. He explains that the mainland was content to be patient when eventual reunification seemed the only possible outcome, but with the Taiwanese people now asserting their separate identity, reunification without force seems increasingly unlikely. Freeman also notes that increased ties between Taiwan and the mainland makes conflict undesirable and that, while the U.S. sees its intervention as ensuring peace in the Strait, China sees U.S. involvement as standing in the way of reunification, going against the one-China principle agreed on in the Shanghai Communiqué.

After his focus on Taiwan, the author examines China's self-initiated transformation and growth and the implications this growth has had for China's global role and future development. Freeman characterizes Deng Xiaoping's 'opening up' as an even greater and more important revolution than Mao's. Mao Zedong may have reunified China, but Deng created a prosperous, modern China capable of holding its own in the international arena. The author goes on to examine the obstacles facing China's future
development and what scenarios, while unlikely, have the potential to derail China's rise.

Deng’s revolution not only affected China’s internal growth and prosperity but also pushed China’s reemergence on the world stage. China is now a strong international actor whose actions have regional and global impact. The last few chapters of Interesting Times do a good job showing the impact of the changes and developments during the 40-years covered by the book on the current U.S.-China relationship, global balance, and outlook, concluding with a set of recommendations.

Freeman notes that China’s national security method has generally been defensive and cautious in nature but that, at the same time, U.S.-China military relations are lagging far behind other areas. In fact, these military ties are worse than U.S. military ties with the Soviet Union were during the height of the Cold War. He also points out that regional bodies have been overtaking the wider global order in significance, with China’s role and influence in its region based on economic factors and not politics or ideology. Freeman further argues that China faces too many challenges and domestic instabilities to become a hegemonic world power in the image of a post-WWII United States. He instead sees the emergence of a multi-polar world system where the United States and China are two powerful actors among a multitude.

In addition to the arguments described above, Freeman makes a few other key points that crop up repeatedly throughout the book. For example, he highlights the importance of domestic factors in understanding the U.S.-China relationship, in particular how such factors lead to misinterpretations of the other country’s goals and strategies. Freeman warns of the danger of “mirror-imaging,” of placing one’s own priorities and viewpoints on another country’s actions, and censures U.S. leaders for their selective listening and manipulation of facts to align with political goals.

He also offers a wake-up call to Americans regarding the reality of China’s rise. It is not just that China is developing and
gaining global power, but also that the United States is losing it. The idea of opposing or stopping China’s rise is faulty. Freeman says it would not work, even if the U.S. for some reason would want to. Instead, the United States should use China’s rise as a catalyst for self-reflection and improvement.

Finally, Freeman cautions that the unexpected is very possible when it comes to U.S.-China relations. China has already taken U.S. policymakers by surprise many times in the past. Just because China has been developing positively, there is no guarantee this will continue. The United States needs to have clear intentions and goals moving forward and continue recent efforts to improve U.S.-China relations. According to Freeman, understanding that things have the potential to go wrong highlights the need for the U.S. to encourage China’s success and emergence as a positive global actor.

Overall, Freeman provides a balanced look at U.S.-China relations, offering insight into both the American and Chinese perspective. Neither country is immune from Freeman’s astute analysis and critique, which often takes the shape of unapologetically blunt commentary. His candor is refreshing and lends his statements a level of believability and authority that is missing from many similar works. Freeman does not just make these statements for their sensationalist value or their readability. They come from a place of decades of experience, from a man who understands what is at stake and truly believes in the importance of the U.S.-China relationship.

**Reviewed by Catherine Beck**

*China Goes Global: The Partial Power* is the most recent book from David Shambaugh, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and founding Director of the China Policy Program in the Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University. As described by the author, this book was undertaken not only as an effort to explain the current state of China in world affairs to a wide variety of audiences, but also out of concern for the tendency of those in academia to “know more and more about less and less.” In other words, according to the author, China scholars are increasingly focusing their research on micro-level domestic phenomena, with few attempts to generalize the greater implications of China’s development.

With these goals in mind, Shambaugh undertakes the task of examining the totality of China’s global emergence—it’s global spread, rather than just its often-discussed “rise”—and poses the overarching question: “Is China truly a global power?” with power defined as having the ability to influence other nations and events. Through extensive functional analysis, Shambaugh ultimately concludes that, despite rapid growth and development, China is only a partial power in all of the examined dimensions.

The book begins by constructing a framework through which China’s global impact can be understood, providing some context and explanation behind the seeming contradictions often found in China’s rhetoric and actions. For example, in recent years, China has alternately emphasized both hard and soft power, exhibited both confidence abroad and insecurity at home, and advocated both keeping a low profile and taking a more proactive global position. To develop an analysis that pushes through these contradictions, Shambaugh focuses on six dimensions: China’s global identities, China’s global diplomatic presence, China and
global governance, China’s global economic presence, China’s
global cultural presence, and China’s global security presence.

Shambaugh finds China in the midst of an international
identity crisis, as its increasingly pluralized foreign policy-making
process has produced a number of competing international
identities, resulting in sometimes-conflicting foreign policies. China
is found to be actively involved in neither trying to solve major
global problems nor shaping international diplomacy, neither driving
other nations’ policies nor forging global consensus. In analyzing
China’s global diplomatic presence, Shambaugh finds its policies to
be driven primarily by the imperatives of history, by affirmative
nationalism and in service of economic development, politics, and
security.

The author additionally examines the evolution of China’s
approach to and role in global governance. Though increasingly
more receptive to participation in global governance, there are
some within China who still view calls to become a more
“responsible player” as veiled attempts at containment. Others
emphasize China has too many domestic issues which must be
addressed before it can focus on global governance. Adding to the
contradictions are Western powers who claim to desire a more
globally active China in theory, yet appear hesitant or nervous
when, in practice, China does become more involved in global
issues.

The second half of the book takes a detailed look at China’s
efforts to go global in the economic, cultural, and security arenas.
While China has certainly made significant developments,
Shambaugh convincingly demonstrates how its relative global
footprint and influence in these areas are not significantly deep nor
greatly influencing global flows, save for the few key areas of global
trade patterns, global energy, and commodity markets, the global
tourism industry, global sales of luxury goods, global real estate
purchases, and cyber hacking.
Shambaugh’s ultimate conclusion is that China has a long way to go before it becomes a truly global power. As a so-called lonely power with few-to-no allies, China is in, but not a part of, the community of nations—formally involved, but not normatively integrated. China’s diplomacy is described as hesitant, risk-averse, and narrowly self-interested, with policies that ultimately are in place to service domestic economic development and political continuity rather than contribute to global governance.

In his concluding chapter, Shambaugh references and agrees with a quote by Joseph Nye: “The greatest danger we have is overestimating China and China overestimating itself. China is nowhere near close to the United States. So this magnification of China, which creates fear in the U.S. and hubris in China, is the biggest danger we face” (311). As China’s growing global presence redefines the U.S.-China relationship, Shambaugh argues that current U.S. policies and strategies need to be adjusted. Arguing that there is no alternative to continued engagement with China, Shambaugh suggests future policies should place more focus on the normative dimension of China’s integration into global institutions through training and capacity enhancing programs.

As discussed in the book’s preface, the author did not expect to reach the conclusion that China had yet to become a fully developed global power, an idea which contradicts notions of the China threat popular in the media and in politics. However, Shambaugh is very convincing in his detailed and well-documented arguments, and has put together a study that truly is accessible to anyone interested in developing a better understanding of China’s global involvement.

Reviewed by Kathy Ogawa

*Enigma of China*, is the eighth installment of Qiu Xiaolong’s Inspector Chen stories, a series of detective novels written in English by a Chinese author. The series features as its detective a renaissance man who introduces us to many different facets of old and new China as he attempts to solve crimes usually involving the rich and powerful. This particular story deals with crowd-sourcing in cyberspace and the extra-legal detention and investigation of cadres known as “shuanggui”, both topics that have appeared recently in real life news stories.

Zhou Keng, Director of the Shanghai Housing Development Committee, was detained and interrogated after a photo of him at a meeting with a pack of expensive cigarettes had gone viral on the internet. His body was found hanging in a hotel room where he was being detained, ostensibly a suicide. But was it indeed suicide? Chief Inspector Chen is enlisted to help with the investigation, in the course of which he walks into the invisible world of cyberspace inhabited by anonymous netizens, some with their own agenda. Who originally posted the photo of Zhou with the expensive cigarettes, and why? Qiu Xiaolong has dedicated this book to “the Chinese netizens who fight for their citizenship in the cyberspace – unimaginable elsewhere – in the face of authoritarian control”.

Chen Cao is a most unusual detective. Officially, he is Chief Inspector of the Shanghai Municipal Police Bureau and Head of the Special Case Squad, First Deputy Party Secretary of the Police Bureau, and member of the Shanghai Communist Party Committee. At heart, he is a poet with a degree in English and a translator of English detective stories, poems and technical documents. He would rather attend lectures at the Writers’ Association than political meetings at his work unit. At home, he is a filial son with a sick elderly mother, unattached but not at all immune to the charms of the opposite sex. In the office he is known for his intellect and
integrity, but is not a team player. As a result, many politically sensitive cases involving allegations against high-ranking cadres end up on his desk. And therein lies his dilemma – should he uphold his professional integrity, or should he cave in to pressure from above?

The case in *Enigma of China* is further complicated as Zhou had been subjected to “shuanggui” and thus the formal investigation is conducted by the Shanghai Party Discipline Committee and Shanghai City Government’s Special Team; Chen is asked to assist only as a consultant, while those driving the investigation hope to swiftly conclude that Zhou committed suicide. But Zhou was head of the Housing Committee in a city prospering over a heated real estate market. Was he really being investigated over a pack of expensive cigarettes exposed on the internet, or is there a bigger picture involved?

So who is the creator of this multi-faceted creature? Qiu Xiaolong, not surprisingly, is also a man of many interests. He originally came to the U. S. as a visiting scholar in 1988, specializing in T. S. Eliot’s poems. He has subsequently published several books which have nothing to do with crime or detectives. For example *Years of Red Dust* is a collection of stories that trace the changes in modern China from the days of the Communist revolution in 1949 to the late nineties—all from the perspective of one small street in Shanghai, Red Dust Lane. Qiu has also published his own Chinese and English poems, and translations of Chinese poems into English as well as English poems into Chinese. He does not, however, translate his own novels into Chinese. The astounding transformation of his native Shanghai, which he visited after an absence of nine years, was what prompted him to start writing the Inspector Chen stories, the first of which won the Anthony Award for Best First Novel in 2001.

Admittedly, there are shortcomings to the novel. The beauty of the Chinese poems, with their rhymes and rhythms, do not quite come through in the English. There are unconvincing aspects of the novel as a detective story, such as Chen stumbling onto some
pieces of key evidence through sheer coincidence (or the careless oversight of earlier investigators, which would seem highly unlikely in the real world). What he does with these pieces of evidence may leave some readers unsatisfied. And finally, perhaps Qiu packs too much into the story – not only the detective work and the poetry, but references to Chinese cuisine, Confucianism, history, literature, and so on, populate almost every page.

These imperfections notwithstanding, Qiu Xiaolong has given the fans of international detective stories their man in China. Chen Cao will take us on a guided tour of modern China, where economic prosperity has brought about materialism as well as a spiritual void and new kinds of social ills, where values and life styles are changing so rapidly it is hard to define what the characteristics of China are (the “enigma of China” referred to in the title). Norway has Jo Nesbo’s Harry Hole, Sweden has Henning Mankell’s Kurt Wallender and Stieg Larsson’s Lisbeth Salander, tsarist Russia has Boris Akunin’s Erast Fandorin—these are just a few of the popular sleuths who will walk us through parts of their cities we could never visit on our own, to meet people we would otherwise never get to know. And now China has Qiu Xiaolong’s Chen Cao to do the same for us.

*Reviewed by Amanda Watson*

In his new work, *The United States and China Since World War II: a Brief History*, Dr. Chi Wang provides an overview of the complex events and interactions that have shaped modern U.S.-China relations.

As a lifelong scholar of Asian history and co-founder of the U.S.-China Policy Foundation in Washington D.C., Wang is perfectly suited to write a history of what is one of the most consequential bilateral relationships in the world today. Over his career, Wang has participated first-hand in policymaking processes and cultural exchanges between the U.S. and China, including as one of the first private U.S. citizens to travel to the People’s Republic of China before the normalization of relations in 1979. Wang’s personal experience enables him to bring something unique to a much written about topic. For example, his detailed account of the negotiations between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Premier Zhou Enlai that first established the relationship between the U.S. and the PRC, Wang is able to explain the motivations of each side as well as the significance of seemingly small gestures, such as Zhou allowing Kissinger to speak first during their initial meeting.

The book starts with a brief chapter of historical background, giving enough context to explain the way in which history—such as the “century of humiliation” China experienced under Western and Japanese imperialism beginning in the mid-19th century—continues to influence the way China interacts with the U.S. today. It then examines the development of U.S.-China relations in the modern period, beginning with interactions between the two powers in WWII, moving through the establishment and normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and the People’s Republic of China, and continuing with the evolution of the
relationship under various American and Chinese administrations up to the present day.

The structure of the book, with chapters titled “Nixon and Mao,” “Deng Xiaoping and U.S.-China Relations,” and “Bill Clinton and Jiang Zemin,” illustrates Wang’s conviction that leadership has been a factor—if not the—key factor in the development and continuity of U.S.-China relations. He notes that it was the strong personal relationships between Kissinger and Zhou and Nixon and Mao that enabled the two countries to develop trust and understanding that helped them establish a new bilateral relationship.

In another instance, a controversy over the collision of a U.S. surveillance plane and Chinese fighter jet in April 2001 and public remarks on Taiwan made by then-president George W. Bush in the same month led to a downturn in U.S.-China relations. Wang argues that the relationship began to improve again due to positive interactions between the two leaders, such as when President Bush and Chinese President Jiang Zemin met at an APEC summit later that year and “both sides showed respect for the other’s culture,” and late when Jiang expressed his support for the U.S. war on terror after September 11. In a bilateral relationship where competitive interests sometimes clash and progress key issues might be elusive or slow, these personal interactions, as Wang correctly points out, matter. They create an atmosphere in which collaboration and cooperation is possible. President Obama’s first meeting with newly anointed Chinese president Xi Jinping at the Sunnylands resort in June of last year, designed more to give the two leaders a chance to get to know each other better rather than to resolve any specific issues, underscored this point.

From The United States and China Since World War II, the reader gets the sense that on the U.S. side the positive momentum in U.S.-China relations has largely been sustained by presidents who understand the strategic need for a constructive relationship with China. In contrast, the U.S. public and Congress—often demanding stronger support for Taiwan or attention to human rights
Wang’s account of the history of modern U.S.-China relations, particularly the attention he pays to the way the U.S.-China relationship was built and sustained through personal interactions between Chinese and American leaders, is very informative. It is a worthwhile read not only for students—Wang’s intended audience—but also for experts or policy practitioners looking for more insight into how U.S.-China relations can continue on a positive trajectory in the future.