

**CHINA'S SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE POST-COLD WAR
ERA**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of PhD

in the University of Hull

by

ONG CHUN MENG, RUSSELL, BSc (Econ), MSc (London)

May 1999

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank my supervisor Dr Eric Grove, Professor Noel O'Sullivan and Dr Tim Huxley for their assistance during my time as a research student at the University of Hull. I would also like to thank Professor Michael Yahuda, Dr Christopher Coker and Ms Rosemary Gosling of the London School of Economics and Political Science for their assistance over the years. Special thanks must also be given to the staff of the Brynmor Jones Library and the Computer Centre, the staff of the British Library of Economics and Political Sciences and Computer Centre at the London School of Economics, and Mr Chris Thompson, who have all provided the necessary facilities to carry out my study.

CHINA'S SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to analyse China's security interests, in terms of a wider definition of security, in the post-Cold War era. First and foremost, it must be stated that the concept of security here is broadly conceived, which is congruent to the Chinese emphasis on comprehensiveness (*quan mian hua*). In particular, this thesis aims to incorporate non-military elements of security, such as political security and arguably, the most important of all, economic security. It will be argued that the adoption of a broader definition of security is vital, for only by doing so will it enable us to gain a better understanding of China's security interests in the post-Cold War era. This study is in itself important, as China's role in international relations is increasing over time. Geographically, the scope of the thesis is focused on Northeast Asia, although certain issues relevant to the central argument of the thesis, such as human rights and the collapse of communism, are also included. This introductory chapter is divided into two sections. The first surveys the post-Cold War security environment in Northeast Asia, which forms part of the milieu in which Chinese policymakers assess their security interests. The second section explains the structure of the thesis and the assumptions, also setting out the research methodology employed.

The context: The post-Cold War era and Northeast Asia

As the Cold War ends, China's security agenda is naturally affected and there is in general a need to reassess the new security patterns and structures taking shape in the international system. This means that China's security policymakers have to react to changes both to the system in Northeast Asia and, indeed, to the entire international system. For our purposes, Northeast Asia may conveniently be regarded as a geographical area that includes Japan, China, South Korea, North Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan and the far eastern portions of Russia. Historically, this has always been a region full of contradictions and conflicts. During the twentieth century, Northeast Asia experienced three wars, the 1905 Russo-Japanese War, the 1937-1945 Sino-Japanese War and the 1950-1953 Korean War. In addition, the Cold War confrontation was also fought out in Northeast Asia. This has led to the possibility of conceptualising Northeast Asia as a "security complex". Barry Buzan explains that "a security complex exists where a set of security relationships stands out from the general background by virtue of its relatively strong, inward-looking character, and the relative weakness of its outward security with its neighbours".¹ Security relationships will be more strongly linked between the states in Northeast Asia than say, between states in Northeast Asia and those in Southeast Asia or South Asia. Therefore, for the purposes of making the scope more manageable and also to achieve more analytical depth by focusing on a particular region, it is useful to explore China's aim to seek comprehensive security in relation to the Northeast Asian region in

the post-Cold Era. It is also important for us to look back briefly at the Cold War period.

Looking back at the Cold War in Northeast Asia, it would be convenient to look at its manifestation in the form of two adversarial security alliances. One was formed by North Korea, the Soviet Union and China; the other was formed by South Korea, the United States and Japan. Each of these security alliances was formed through bilateral treaties among the different parties and this structure was basically maintained for about 40 years (from the early 1950s to the late 1980s). Although there were some changes during those years, the overall security structure in Northeast Asia did not undergo any fundamental changes.¹ The “classification” of the United States as a Northeast Asian power lies in the fact that, although situated outside the region, America has a strong influence over the region and plays an important role in shaping the regional strategic environment. Therefore, Chinese perceptions of the American threat have to be assessed in this thesis, as this will bring additional insights on China’s security interests as a whole.

After the Cold War ended, Northeast Asia has become an even more important region for analysts and policymakers alike not to ignore. Today, the geostrategic and geoeconomic importance of Northeast Asia cannot be overstated. As Samuel Kim points out, this is a sub-region of Asia where four of the world’s five recognised centres of power, the United States, Russia, China and Japan meet and interact; where “a mixture of two-power, three-power and four-power games

are played out on multiple chessboards with all their enormous complexities and shifting configurations”; and “the only region where the Cold War has ended only partially, contrary to the more synchronised rhythms and expanding virtuous circle of great power co-operations elsewhere”.²

To be precise, security in Northeast Asia has consistently been very important to China in recent years. Apart from Europe, all of the most important forces that interact internationally with China are gathered in this region. For China, this is its “backyard”. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that analysts such as Steven Levine have argued that Northeast Asia has been the greatest area of concern for China in security terms³. History shows that China fought several wars to maintain its security in Northeast Asia. Some campaigns were successful, others were not. China fought against Japan twice, in the 1894-1895 and 1937-1945 wars. Beijing intervened when the onset of the Korean conflict in 1950 brought American military forces to China’s north-eastern doorstep, within easy reach of the capital. In the aftermath of the Sino-Soviet split, China fought a small-scale border war along the Ussuri River with the Soviet Union in 1969. Although the use of force as a means to protect its security interests is increasingly unlikely today, it is true to say that China still faces some regional powers in the Northeast Asian region, who may pose threats to China’s security.

For China, this region, as part of the larger Asia-Pacific region, is vital for its comprehensive security. Therefore, it comes as no surprise when Chinese President Jiang Zemin states:

China is now going all out for economic development and this requires not only domestic stability but also a stable international environment. We attach great importance to political stability in the Asia-Pacific region, because this constitutes an important condition for ensuring economic development in the region.⁴

This statement essentially sums up China's security agenda in the post-Cold War era. China seeks economic and political security, in addition to military security as it continues on the road to regional power status in the twenty-first century. The political and economic aspects of security constitute central themes in this thesis, and are of vital importance to China.

In this thesis, focusing on Northeast Asia also coincides with China's attempt to refocus its diplomacy on the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. This is in some ways reinforced by the international repercussions arising from the 1989 Tiananmen Incident. Furthermore, as Harry Harding points out, the developments in Eastern Europe and the Gulf War in 1990-1991 indicate the need for China to adjust its foreign policy, with emphasis on improving relations with its Asian neighbours, as communism crumbled on a large scale and the United States dominated international security issues as the Cold War ended.⁵ James Hsiung notes that China has begun to focus on a broad range of relations with its neighbours, which he describes as *zhoubian* (surrounding area) diplomacy.⁶ As

Michael Yahuda argues, to a certain extent, this in some way signifies the first attempt at a coherent regional policy that is not subordinated to the relationship between the two superpowers.⁷ Qimao Chen also states that establishing cordial relations with neighbours is regarded as the first priority in China's diplomacy.⁸ A key factor driving China's regional policy, as the rest of the thesis will demonstrate, is the role of economics.

Therefore, it would be helpful to look at China's diplomatic impetus in relation to the growing significance of Asian countries to China's economic development in general, and to the policies of economic reform and opening-up in particular.⁹ In addition, one can also point out that the economies of Northeast Asia are integrating more closely among themselves and intra-regional trade now accounts for over two-thirds of total trade in the region.¹⁰ What appears important for the Beijing regime is that China wants to build up its power base in Northeast Asia before eventually hoping to emerge as a truly global power status.

It is also important to note that this thesis does not disregard the importance of other regions, such as Southeast Asia or South Asia, entirely. To be sure, there is no doubt that China also has security interests in other parts of Asia. For example, China has expressed its desire to establish a stronger presence in the Indian Ocean by negotiating for port facilities in Burma; Beijing's involvement was alleged to include the building and upgrading of naval port facilities, including that at Hanggyi Island at the mouth of the Bassein River and Great Coco Island near India's Andaman Islands.¹¹ This type of manoeuvring is bound

to arouse India's suspicions and should be looked at as part of China's security interests in relation to the countries of India and Pakistan. However, this will require delving into the regional security issues of South Asia, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In addition, there is the question of China's security interests in relation to Southeast Asia. This issue has been given further prominence by events in recent years, specifically China's alleged assertiveness in relation to its territorial claims in the South China Sea. It is fair to say to make a preliminary statement that this has been triggered largely by Beijing's search for economic resources. As the following chapters will show, what is important is that this type of issue highlights the economic aspect of China's security interests. At this point, it must be clarified that the threat China allegedly poses to countries in Southeast Asia is not the subject of this thesis. The fact is that, as serious as the disputes between China and other Southeast Asian states regarding the Spratly Islands may be, these disputes do not appear to threaten the national security or existence of China directly. The aim in this thesis is, after all, to look at China's security interests, not those of its neighbours.

In sum, it is fair to say that both South Asia and Southeast Asia are only relatively less important security concerns for China, compared to Northeast Asia, the main focus of this thesis. In practical terms, the military strengths of potential enemies in these regions lie far from the Chinese capital and the military threats they may pose weigh little compared to any instability in the Korean peninsula, a

resurgent Russia or an expansionist Japan. Undoubtedly, China's security interests certainly extend beyond the regions aforementioned to places such as Central Asia or even further west, but, again, these are outside the scope of the thesis.

Having established the primary focus on Northeast Asia, we can now look at what the ending of the Cold War in the region means for China's security interests. This is useful as a brief guide to the following chapters in this thesis. Today, China certainly perceives some threats surfacing to its security interests in Northeast Asia, and Chinese academics and writers have discussed these issues in some detail.¹² Firstly, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the Chinese Communist Party faces threats to its legitimacy. Rapid modernisation and industrialisation has created many political and social tensions and the gap between the poor and the rich is increasing in China. This might create divisions in Chinese society, undermining the unity of the state in the long run. Given ~~that~~^{the} fact that China only achieved unity in 1949, issues relating to political security are bound to be major security concerns. Although for China, the Russian threat has diminished, the United States remains the sole superpower in the world and therefore in Northeast Asia as well. How China perceives this challenge will be dealt with in Chapter 8.

Moreover, it has been noted by China, among others, that various sources of tension, which have often been submerged because of the demands of the Cold War, may resurface. These include the enmity between Japan and South Korea,

and also between China itself and Japan. Furthermore, nationalist aspirations on the part of states in the region may appear, such as in the form of a more powerful Japan. On a wider scale, it is conceivable that the cessation of the Cold War means not merely that the danger of a direct superpower clash has receded, it also signifies that the potential for anarchy is higher. All these factors are bound to threaten the stability of the region, which means that Chinese security analysts will find it harder to judge the flux of changes and formulate policies accordingly. This is an important point to bear in mind.

As for the instability in East Asia as a whole, numerous debates have been raised. For instance, Gerald Segal and Barry Buzan argue that “as the particular distortions imposed by the Cold War unravel, many historical patterns that were either suppressed or overridden by ideological and superpower rivalry are reappearing”, suggesting that “political fragmentation and hostility” will characterise the region’s international relations.¹³ Aaron Friedberg puts forward the proposition that Asia could be “the world’s primary generator of war (as well as wealth and knowledge)”, just as Europe was for a half millennium.¹⁴ Richard Betts argues that in East Asia, there is “an ample pool of festering grievances, with more potential for generating conflict than during the Cold War, when bipolarity helped stifle the escalation of parochial disputes”.¹⁵ Thomas Berger notes that none of the western arguments for the decline of the possibility of war, including the well-rehearsed one that democracies do not go to war, seem to apply in East Asia.¹⁶ This strand of thinking posits that most of the countries, including

China are not fully developed democracies and in addition, their political culture also suggests that Northeast Asian authoritarian regimes will feel less inhibited than Europeans in using force to settle their disputes.¹⁷ At present, many disputes still exist and have prevented the establishment of closer ties among these nations. One example is the Northern Territories (the Southern Kurile islands) issue, which still remains an obstacle to Russo-Japanese relations. Relevant for our analysis is the fact that China contests with Japan over the sovereignty of Diaoyu Islands (Senkaku Islands).

Most important of all, China still regards Taiwan as a renegade province, and this rivals the hostility between North and South Korea. The possible rise of regional hegemony in the long term is also a matter of concern. The emergence of Japan as an economic power has certainly posed new questions for China's political leadership. Similarly, a resurgent Russia, although unlikely at the time of writing, will also cause concern for China. In general, as evident from the above analysis, structural changes in the international system have made China rethink its security interests in general and to those in Northeast Asia in particular. How these changes affect China's military, political and economic security will become clearer as the thesis progresses. But first, we need to set out the research methodology, the structure of this thesis and the central hypothesis.

Research methodology, structure and hypothesis

Before we start to analyse China's security, it is worth noting that, given the paucity of relevant information available, analysing the security agenda of China is often a frustrating and complex task. Hence, it would be appropriate to acknowledge several methodological problems at the outset. Firstly, the use of "China" in the title does not assume a uniform net security assessment of the political leadership in Beijing. Neither does the accepted convenience of reference to Beijing assume a monolithic perspective across regions, service or generations. More importantly, on issues of political security, one can question whether this relates to just the Chinese Communist Party or the country as a whole. In this thesis, the Communist regime's security is generally taken to mean China's as well. It is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss Chinese domestic politics and how different factions in society, including Chinese dissidents, interpret political security. In addition, a divergence of probable and possible threat perceptions held among both military and civilian analysts is not only plausible but is attested to by widespread interviews and media sources. Therefore, all these require tentative conclusions on what security threats are expected, in what sequence and priority, and by which sector of the regime.

Nevertheless, what is indisputable is that on certain issues such as Taiwan, nationalism may prompt identical assertions where Chinese sovereignty is viewed as being threatened. This thesis aims to offer a synthesised and complete view of the threat perceptions in China, which will on the whole reflect the general trend

of security thinking in China. Further discussion on the coherence of China's security interests will be explored in the next chapter, when we take a closer look at China's concept of security.

Secondly, sources of information present other problems. Secrecy is endemic in national security affairs but doubly so in communist states such as China, where transparency is at a minimum and security consciousness is maximal. For instance, it is very much the standard practice that interviews with foreigners must be conducted with the expectation of the content being relayed to foreign governments or a public audience. This in some ways suggests that the Chinese experts expect some sort of return, such as positive publicity for their various causes, in exchange for any information that they want to divulge. In addition, domestic political-bureaucratic budget battles and patron-client alignments are universal in the Chinese political system. This has, to a certain extent, complicated the context for Chinese comments on future threats conditions, and on what is said and not said to foreigners or in print. What this thesis tries to achieve is to give as full a view as possible, while attempting to avoid the twin pitfalls of assertion and description.

On a more positive note, it must be noted that, in general, access to military and civilian security analysts has ^{seen}~~been~~ a definite improvement over the Mao Zedong era. Repetition of contacts by many Western academics over time permits longitudinal comparison through changing domestic and international

situations.¹⁸ This type of contacts would certainly help security analysts looking at China get a better grasp of Beijing's view.

Although interviews do not constitute part of the research methodology, this thesis will draw on official Chinese statements, such as those made by the president, premier, and foreign minister; the official news agency, *Xinhua*; the official press, such as the Chinese Communist Party newspaper, *Renmin Ribao*, and the Chinese People's Liberation Army newspaper, *Jiefangjun Bao*; and also publications of Chinese academics writing on security issues, in order to achieve an insight into the minds of those influencing and formulating China's security agenda. The publications by China's experts in international relations at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China Contemporary International Relations Research Institute, Beijing University and the China Society for Strategy and Management Research are useful in furthering our understanding of China's security interests.

While some Western academics might regard most of the above-mentioned Chinese sources as part of Beijing's propaganda tools, it is equally important to note that these Chinese publications are extremely important as they can give the non-western reader insights into the Chinese mindset.¹⁹ The critical task is to realise that these sources vary in authoritativeness, audience and sophistication, and hence one must use them selectively insofar as they shed light on China's security concerns. For instance, some sources may reflect a particular faction of the Chinese leadership and hence the audience they are addressing must

also be taken into account. In general, as is the case with interviews, official constraints combine with the changing domestic and bureaucratic-political context would in general tend to affect the tone and argument in the Chinese sources. This thesis attempts to provide as fair and just an account as far as possible. In addition, the problem with Chinese sources is further complicated by Hong Kong press “leaks”, which in general tend to vary in reliability with little basis for confirmation, particularly where personalities are allegedly involved in foreign policy disputes.²⁰ Indeed, private assessments of different Hong Kong publications by veteran reporters show little agreement on their degree of reliability; these Hong Kong press “leaks” often reflecting certain controversial policy views of a particular faction in Beijing engaged in political struggles. Nevertheless, they add another point of inference to be tested against logic when evidence is lacking.

Perhaps most important of all, one has to judge the authoritativeness of the publication. For instance, although the *Ta Kung Pao* is a China-owned newspaper, certain less important articles attributed to staff reporters normally do not carry authoritative weight. However, at the same time, it is unlikely that the *Ta Kung Pao* could have, for instance, quoted an “authoritative” Chinese ministry official without permission from the Hong Kong office of the official Chinese news agency, *Xinhua*. In general, it is true to say that Hong Kong newspapers should be used sparingly, compared to Beijing publications, due to the issue of authoritativeness.

However, the use of China publications must not be over-excessive, as this may lead to the danger of a “Sino-centric” approach that could lead to charges that the thesis is nothing more than Chinese propaganda. Hence, a variety of non-Chinese sources Beijing’s security policy will also be used. This will give a more balanced view to the thesis and help the reader judge, for instance, both sides of a particular argument. The Western literature used includes academic journals, books, and Internet sources on China’s security. A key resource is the *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (BBC SWB)*, which provides Western readers with an up-to date account of the news situation in China. Of course, releases from the official Chinese news agency, *Xinhua*, form the bulk of the China section of *BBC SWB*. In short, despite the acknowledged problems, the media is a necessary albeit insufficient source.

Lastly, a final methodological problem concerns the impact of security threat perceptions on behaviour. This applies not only to China, but also to every state in the international system as well. This further raises the larger questions of information processing, cost calculation and political decision making in Beijing. It is worth noting that Chinese scholars are just beginning to address these questions on the basis of archives, memoirs and interviews from the Mao Zedong era. The preliminary result is that systematic research on subsequent years appears to lack a similar evidential base for comparison, much less generalisation. Given these limitations, it is true to say that projections of probable linkages between perceived threats and specific behaviours must remain speculative. We

must bear in mind that perception is essentially a cognitive process. While it may provide insights into a particular way of thinking, it must still be subjected to different interpretation and debates, which is part of the larger problem faced in conducting research in the social sciences.

Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, certain key assumptions frame the security threat forecasts inferred from the sources used in this thesis. Domestic dissidence and regime factionalism will not jeopardise the Chinese Communist Party's control of the country, at least not totally. Otherwise, the tradition Chinese premise of "internal unrest, external danger" (*nei luan wai huan*) will significantly heighten threat perceptions in relation to security interests. Moreover, it must be pointed out that attendant efforts to unite the country will also magnify external security threats.

In addition, this thesis aims to capture a longer Chinese perspective within the framework of key post-Cold War events, including the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Gulf War and the evolution of the US Asia-Pacific policy. This does not preclude change over time, given the problematic evolution of the Chinese leadership. For instance the passing of paramount leader Deng Xiaoping may have pushed Chinese foreign policy towards a "bureaucratic" model of foreign policy decision making. With Jiang Zemin currently at the helm, China might send out more diffuse and at times, even conflicting signals to the outside world, in the absence of a paramount central figure in the decision making process. However, at the time of writing, certain basic premises of China's security

interests have not been altered in any drastic manner. Moreover, relative stability of the political and economic priorities since 1979 encourages cautious projection for the past and present patterns of threat articulation. In sum, in this thesis, it is assumed that China will resemble some form of a unified state in the foreseeable future, and its security interests will show a certain extent of continuity with those in place at the time when this thesis is being written. Every effort will be made to keep this thesis up-to-date, although it must be pointed that the thesis was written before the Asian economic crisis started.

With these in mind, we can set out the hypothesis in this thesis. The central argument is that:

China's security interests in the post-Cold War era should be studied by incorporating the non-military elements of security. This is in line with China's notion of comprehensive security. In order to achieve a full explanation of China's actions in the post-Cold War era, we must incorporate political and economic aspects into the analysis of China's security interests.

From this central tenet, we can go to say that focusing on a broader definition of security will enable us to understand China's actions in relation to the following states: the United States, Russia, Japan, North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan. It will also enable us to understand China's security views in relation

to the following issues: the collapse of communism, “peaceful evolution”, human rights, trade and development of the Chinese economy. The concluding chapter will state the wider implication that a broader definition of security enables us to gain a better and fuller understanding of a state’s security interests in the post-Cold War era. Although one say that this type of approach is not entirely new, it can be argued that this has not been done in-depth and in a systematic way in any longer piece of research, as far as analysing China’s security in the post-Cold War era is concerned. This is precisely what the thesis aims to achieve.

We can now turn to the structure of the thesis. This will be useful to the reader as a kind of “map” to facilitate the “tour” of the thesis. The next chapter looks at China’s comprehensive approach to security, discussing the influences on Chinese thinking. Chapter 3 focuses on the decline of the Russian threat and the collapse of communism, which have ramifications for China’s political security. Chapter 4 examines China’s security interests on the Korean peninsula, including its traditional military and political ties to North Korea as well as the more recent economic ties with South Korea. Chapter 5 looks at China’s security interests in relation to the rise of Japan. Chapter 6 deals with Taiwan as a security issue for China, again looking at the economic and political aspects, in addition to the purely military ones. Chapter 7 deals with Chinese perceptions of the “peaceful evolution” threat and here the emphasis is on the non-military threats China faces from Western countries such as the United States. Chapter 8 looks at China’s perceptions of the United States and its economics interests in relation to this

superpower. Chapter 9 looks at the implications of China's drive for great power status, as Beijing searches for ultimate security. Chapter 10 provides conclusions stemming from the thesis.

A final word: This thesis is based upon materials available at the time of writing. Every effort has been made to ensure it is up-to-date. Although the thesis cannot be as current as the daily press, the enduring issues that are discussed and analysed should prove to be more important than a mere emphasis on updating events. It is hoped that this thesis will encourage further research and debate over the evolution of China's security interests, which will no doubt constitute an important piece in completing the jigsaw puzzle of international relations in the post-Cold War era.

¹ Ren Xiao, "The current and future security situation in Northeast Asia," *Guoji Zhanwang (World Outlook)*, no. 7 (April 96), pp. 10-12.

² Samuel S. Kim, "Mainland China in a changing Asia-Pacific regional order," *Issues and Studies*, vol. 30, no. 10 (October 1994), pp. 12-13.

³ See Steven I. Levine, "China in Asia: The PRC as a regional power", in Harry Harding (ed.), *China's foreign relations in the 1980s* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 119.

⁴ "Jiang on Spratlys, 'China threat', regional stability", Xinhua news agency, 10 Nov 94 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 11 Nov 94, p. G/1.

⁵ Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: The United States and China since 1972* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1992), p. 275.

⁶ See James C. Hsiung, "China's omni-directional diplomacy: realignment to cope with monopolar US power," *Asian Survey*, vol. xxxv, no. 6 (June 1995), p. 573.

⁷ Michael Yahuda, "Deng Xiaoping: the statesman," *The China Quarterly*, no. 135 (September 1993), p. 565.

⁸ Qimao Chen, "New approaches in China's foreign policy: The post-Cold War era," *Asian Survey*, vol. xxxiii, no. 3 (March 1993), p. 242.

⁹ Steven I. Levine, "China in Asia: the PRC as a regional power," in Harry Harding (ed.) *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 107.

¹⁰ Stuart Harris, "The end of the Cold War in Northeast Asia: The global implications," in Stuart Harris and James Cotton (eds.), *The End of the Cold War in Northeast Asia* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1991), pp. 259-260.

¹¹ See *Far Eastern Economic Review* 12 November 1992, p. 30. See also Malik J. Mohan, "Sino-Indian rivalry in Myanmar: Implications for regional security," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 16, no. 2 (September 1994), pp. 137-156.

¹² The section here draws on a Chinese perspective. See Li Luye, "Current situation Northeast Asia," *Beijing Review*, vol. 34, no. 33 (August 19-25, 1991), pp. 7-8.

¹³ Barry Buzan and Gerald Segal, "Rethinking East Asian security," *Survival*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer 1994), p. 7.

¹⁴ Aaron L. Friedberg, "Ripe for rivalry," *International Security*, vol. 18, no. 3 (Winter 1993-1994), p. 7.

¹⁵ See Richard K Betts, "Wealth, power and instability," *International Security*, vol. 18, no. 3 (Winter 1993-1994), p. 64.

¹⁶ Thomas U. Berger, "From sword to chrysanthemum: Japan's culture of anti-militarism," *International Security*, vol. 17, no. 4 (Winter 1993), p. 93.

¹⁷ Barry Buzan and Gerald Segal, "Rethinking East Asian security," *Survival*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer 1994), p.14

¹⁸ This article is an example. Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser, "Multilateral security in the Asia-Pacific region and its impact on Chinese interests: Views from Beijing," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 16 no. 1 (June 1994), pp. 15-28.

¹⁹ For a discussion of new sources available for study on China's national security, see David Shambaugh, "Appendix: a bibliographical essay on new sources for the study of China's foreign relations and national security," in Thomas Robinson and David L Shambaugh (eds.), *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 603-618; and Robert S Ross and Paul H.B Godwin, "New directions in Chinese security studies," in David Shambaugh (ed.), *American Studies of Contemporary China* (Armont, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), pp. 138-162.

²⁰ In one instance, interviews confirmed a *Zhengming* report on a unique 1993 security conference. See David Shambaugh, "The insecurity of security: The PLA's evolving doctrine and threat perceptions towards 2000," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Spring 1994), pp. 3-25.

CHAPTER 2: THE CHINESE CONCEPT OF SECURITY

In this chapter, the focus will be on the theoretical concept of security. In particular, we aim to explore the Chinese concept of security in greater detail. This is useful in setting out the approach the following chapters will take. First, we turn to the debate on broadening the scope of the security concept in international relations, which in many ways coincides with the growing importance of economic issues in the post-Cold War era. Secondly, we analyse the Chinese approach to security, in relation to the non-Chinese literature discussed in the preceding section. It should be clear by the end of this chapter that the Chinese concept of comprehensive security is, to a large extent, very much in line with the increasing widespread adoption of a broader definition of security in the field of International Relations. We first turn to the concept of security in general.

The concept of security

The concept of security is a central one in International Relations. Its prominence ranks alongside concepts such as power, balance of power, war and peace; and it is in many ways arguably more relevant than these more traditional ideas to the modern study of International Relations. The increasing importance of security in International Relations will become more evident as this chapter progresses and as the thesis develops. Generally, it is fair to say that what security means in the domestic and international context and how the concept can be operationalised, is a much-disputed matter in academic circles. This comes as no surprise since security is essentially a

multidimensional concept. It is malleable and subject to different interpretations by both academics and policymakers alike at different times. However, despite the theoretical problems and controversies pertaining to the operational utility of the concept in the past, few proponents would disagree with the proposition that it is the core value of both states and security studies in modern International Relations. To be precise, the concept of security is one of the focal points of International Relations, just like power, war or peace. Indeed, one can even make a preliminary proposition that it should replace power, as the central concept in the field of International Relations. However, at this stage, the debate is still raging over what security actually means.

Before discussing what security means, one has to take one step backwards first. In this thesis, one possible way is to look at the concept of security in two dimensions. The first is to conceptualise security in terms of the “level of analysis”; the second in terms of the different aspects of security. This type of approach has been outlined in Barry Buzan’s study on security.¹ A useful analogy would be that the first dimension refers to the depth of a pond while the second relates to the surface area of the pond. The first, the “level of analysis” is in fact a well-documented problem in international relations theory and was first noted by David Singer in an article published in the 1950s.² This type of thinking basically posits looking at international relations issues in terms of the three “levels” of Man, the state and the international system. International relations theorists such as Kenneth Waltz have applied this type of analysis to a study on the causes of war, looking at the three “levels” of human nature, the state and the international system in turn.³ Although this type of approach is highly commendable, it also means that theorists need to be competent in other

fields to embark on such types of analysis. For instance, one would need a reasonable knowledge of psychology, which is essential towards understanding human nature. This means that the scope of a particular study might become too broad for most to handle comfortably, and at times even render the scale of the entire exercise too huge to undertake in a meaningful manner. Indeed, this is a dilemma international relations scholars have to cope with.

This type of dilemma also arises in the study of security. One can speak of the three “levels” of individual security, state security or national security, and international security. At this stage, it must be pointed out that, in order to make the scope manageable, this thesis deals primarily with the state, specifically the Chinese state. In other words, this thesis will not analyse security from all the perspective of the Chinese citizen or from the vantagepoint of the international security system.

It is also worth pointing out that an approach focusing on the second level is not without its problems. There are disputes over what is or what should be the second level. For instance, Martin Shaw has argued that society should be the primary referent of security.⁴ The distinction between State and Society is a familiar one in the social sciences. For our purposes here, it would be fair to assume that the debate is at present not serious enough to alter our analysis here entirely. As for the other two “levels of analysis” - the individual and the international system, they are incorporated insofar as they add insights and support arguments in this thesis, which to all intent and purposes focuses on the security of the Chinese state.

In addition, one must be aware that in discussing security, there are often contradictions between individual, state and international security. What is viewed as

secure from one level may be seen as insecure from another. For example, one can point to the classic contradiction between individual (largely subsumed as the human rights issue) and state security. Writers such as Ken Booth have argued that the individual should become a central referent in any attempt to discuss the concept of security.⁵ While we need not engage in this debate for our purposes here, it is important to note that the individual's security interests may be threatened by the state that purports to represent his or her security interests and comes into this thesis insofar as China perceives human rights (individual security) as a national security threat. This issue is most often linked with Chinese perceptions of the US strategy of "peaceful evolution" (Chapter 7), a subject which tends to be ignored in analyses of China's security interests.

Moving on to the "highest level of analysis", which is the international system, the important thing worth noting is that China's search for security is reinforced by the anarchical nature of the international system. The conventional wisdom in international relations is that foreign policy and a state's security interests do not exist in a vacuum. They are reactive as much as they are proactive. Having said that, it must be pointed out from the beginning that this "level" will not be the primary focus of this thesis. The third level, the international security system, is studied insofar as it sheds light on China's security interests. In fact, the first part of Chapter 1 had started off by looking at this level, in this case the regional security system in Northeast Asia since the Cold War ended, which constitutes the milieu in which China assesses its security interests. Particularly problematic for Chinese policymakers responsible for security in the region are the interplay of traditional



state-to-state relations and various forms of transnational and multilateral linkages. It is important to note the extent to which the new multilateral arrangements, together with trade and investment flows and the explosion in communication and information links, alter the geostrategic landscape and more importantly, the manner in which China conducts its security policies. Having specified the state, specifically the Chinese state, as our “level of analysis” in this thesis, we can now turn to the question of what security really means.

The non-military aspects of security

The scope of security is also a subject of much debate. The question of what should be included in the study of security is not only an academic one, but it is, to all intents and purposes, a practical one. In general, as we move towards the twenty-first century, it is fair to say that the traditional concept of security employed in International Relations has become increasingly anachronistic. In some ways, this is an indication of the changing times and the new agenda in international relations today. Certain changes that have occurred in global politics in recent times, such as the rising importance of economics in global affairs, have hastened the need to come to terms with widening the scope of the security concept. A clear illustration is the perceived need to use naval vessels to monitor the Exclusive Economic Zones over which states have legal authority since the early 1980s. Another example is the relationship between the burdensome foreign debt and environmental decay in some Third World regions, and the consequent

threat of mass migration which may in turn lead to conflicts between states and even call for forceful responses from some.

Hence, it appears that security and the accumulation of military power are no longer seen as synonymous. Academics and policy analysts alike have begun to take more of an interest in economic issues and in fact many have already begun to probe its frontiers. For instance, the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies published in its journal *Survival* a special issue on the non-military aspects of what it calls “strategy” as early as 1989, which indicates a new way of looking at security issues in the modern era.⁶ At this point, it is useful to conduct a brief survey of this literature, since this forms the theoretical justification for the thesis.

Steve Smith, in a review article assessing the Barry Buzan’s book *People, States and Fear*, acknowledges that Buzan’s book opens up the subject of international security studies from its narrow traditions and links it to the wider arena of international studies, which coincided with what an increasing number of specialists are calling for.⁷ Joseph Nye and Sean Lynn-Jones list economic, sociological and psychological dimensions of threats as important for security analysts, although they still regard these subjects as peripheral and “only remotely related” to central political problems of “threat perception and management”.⁸ To Nye and Lynn-Jones, security therefore, still essentially mean military security. Strategic issues are identified as part of international security studies but they believe that strategic studies (defined as “the choices between alternative strategies for states”) exclude some of the more basic theoretical questions about the relationships between international economics and international security.

Nevertheless, such recognition indicates that security should be conceived as more than merely in military terms.

Others, such as Neta Crawford, but again not to the extent envisaged by other more progressive analysts, argue for a broadening of the security agenda, including a redefinition of security including the relationships between economic and military security, and between the environment and security.⁹ Simon Dalby also argues in favour of broadening and suggests some specific alternative approaches to the security problem, such as non-offensive defence and the economic and ecological dimensions of security; evaluating these approaches, he makes the point that attempts to rethink security are often oblivious to the theoretical and political pitfalls that imperilled the enterprise in the first place, further questioning whether rethinking security is necessarily the best way to proceed in dealing with issues of ecology, economics and constructing post-Cold War politics.¹⁰ To various extents, the above analyses indicate that scholars have begun looking at the non-military aspects of security and explored the interrelationships between the military and non-military aspects of security.

Joseph Nye, in another article entitled “The contribution of strategic studies: future challenged”, favoured a broader concept of security than the one traditionally adopted within the strategic studies community, indicating that a definition of strategic studies “limited to issues of military operations” will be severely deficient.¹¹ However, despite favouring international security as the “central concept”, he does not favour expanding into economic and environmental issues, arguing that an expanded concept of strategic studies can keep its focus if it has the “balance of power” (implicitly primarily military power) at its core. Such continued adherence to the familiar concept

of balance of power is expected among analysts, but an acknowledgement of other non-military issues is more important, as this thesis will argue. It must be pointed out that, today, very few in the field of Security Studies have such a narrow conception of security.

John Chipman notes that while the non-military aspects of security might occupy more of a strategist's time than in the past, questions relating to the procurement, deployment, engagement and withdrawal of military capabilities is still the main approach to understanding security, adding that the task of the strategist is to "provide policymakers with the conceptual tools that can be applied to the task at hand", which means "the strategist's 'intellectual' agenda for the 1990s should consist primarily of developing the appropriate tools for the consideration of self-determination and revolutions, collective security and war termination, economics and security, ethics and strategy".¹²

Here we see again the desire to hold on to the traditional elements of security, while acknowledging that economic security issues need to be accounted for as well.

The familiar narrow conception of security has often been identified with realist and neo-realist approaches to International Relations, in particular with the prominence of the concept of balance of power. Basing much of his argument on the experience of the Soviet Union, Edward Kolodziej stresses the importance of domestic variables, for "economic and political assurances, responsive to societal demands now expressed with pervasive force throughout the international system (albeit with varying weight, intensity and saliency), must be fashioned to ensure stable and legitimate security systems", arguing for a holistic approach to the "international security system",

embracing a geopolitical dimension, a welfare dimension, and the issue of domestic political stability and legitimacy.¹³ This emphasis on the political dimension is pertinent to our analysis, as China is facing threats to its political security, much as the Soviet Union once did in the late 1980s.

At the far end of the spectrum, there are also those who rejected the notion of a wider security concept almost entirely. For example, Stephen Walt opposes the inclusion of non-military issues such as poverty and environmental decay into the security agenda for he believes that such an expansion would destroy the field's "intellectual coherence".¹⁴ Although this thesis does not deal directly with specific theoretical debates, this brief survey suggests that an approach to security centring solely on military aspects is becoming increasingly anachronistic, since many writers now support the view that security should be conceived more widely in the modern era, albeit with different degrees of commitment. The view adopted in this thesis will therefore challenge the thinking of those who continue to argue in favour of equating China's military strategy *solely* with China's national security policy, since the case for accepting a broader security agenda has been recognised in most corners of professional security analysis. At the same, it is also true to say there are obvious military implications even in some non-military aspects of security.

China's comprehensive security

Having examined the current non-Chinese debate on broadening the scope of the security concept, we can now turn to the Chinese conception. For our purpose here, it is fair to say that the defining feature is comprehensiveness (*quan mian hua*).

There are various interpretations to this, all quite congruent with the argument of this thesis. In simple terms, the Chinese concept includes more than just the military aspects of security. To be more precise, as noted by writers such as Weixing Hu, a more inclusive term, “comprehensive national strength”, is used by Chinese strategic planners in discussing long-term security strategy.¹⁵ This type of analysis has also been noted by Western analysts such as David Shambaugh.¹⁶ Another manifestation of Chinese security formulation is embedded in the notion of a “new security concept” possessing the characteristics of being “comprehensive, all-round, and mutually equal”; an indication of it being applied, according to the Chinese, was evident in a major security agreement signed with Russia and other Central Asian states in 1997, and the announcement of an unilateral disarmament in August 1997 whereby China will further cut its troops by 500,000 in three years on the basis of a reduction of one million troops in the 1980s.¹⁷

We may categorise China’s security into several categories. For example, an article in the Chinese army newspaper, *Jiefangjun Bao*, has listed military, political, economic, scientific and technological security, and social security as elements of the “new security concept”.

Military security and political security

From the viewpoint of military security, one Chinese description in the *Jiefangjun Bao* states:

The military force shoulders the important mission of defending the state's territorial sovereignty and integrity, resisting foreign aggression and safeguarding state unification. Therefore it is necessary to strengthen army building, develop armament and reform the military organisations. The military forces of all countries should play a role in a broader scope such as cracking down on terrorism and drug trafficking, rescue work and humanitarian aid.¹⁸

This is quite similar to the conventional concept of military security, which focuses on the interplay of military threats and states' perceptions of each other's military intentions. For China, this type of military threat has somewhat diminished as the Russian power declined. More important for the Chinese will be coping with new military challenges that may emerge in the region, such as the military potential of Japan and of course, the United States, the lone superpower. It is worth noting, however, that the role of Chinese military forces has been extended to include crackdowns on activities such as drug trafficking, which have been identified as new security threats in the post-Cold War era. Interestingly, the United States would certainly view drug trafficking as a security threat and this opens up the possibility of Sino-US co-operative actions against such threats.

This message to the outside world deserves our attention because it is an indication that the Chinese have revised traditional security concepts; which they equated with the "Cold War mentality" of "establishing one's security on the insecurity of the opponent".¹⁹ Although it must be pointed out that the Chinese definition is in some ways a implicit criticism of the sole remaining superpower and its notions of a

“new world order”, a subject explored later in Chapter 8, there are certain elements which are important for our analysis. For instance, by rejecting the “Cold War mentality” and revising traditional security concepts, the new security thinking of the Chinese is beginning to shift from a zero-sum approach to international relations, which it has criticised the two superpowers for practising during the Cold War. In short, one can detect that the Chinese are moving towards a more co-operative way of approaching international relations and security issues.

We next turn to the Chinese definition of political security, which the *Jiefangjun Bao* article states in the following manner:

The political body and system of the state cannot be changed by another country, encroachment of a country’s sovereignty and unification shall not be tolerated, and no country shall meddle in the internal affairs of another country. On the international stage, all countries, big or small, poor or rich, are all equal. The big and strong should not be allowed to bully the small and weak. In international political affairs, the superpowers should not be allowed to order other countries about, pursue power politics and impose their values on others. These are the indispensable prerequisites for global and regional security.²⁰

Political security includes the organisation and process of government, and the ideology that gives the rulers legitimacy. In China’s case, communist ideology is severely under threat as Beijing becomes increasingly drawn to the capitalist orbit in its search for economic resources for national development. This type of political security

issue is related to the potential collapse of communism in China, “peaceful evolution” and the nature of the North Korean regime, some of the issues to be discussed later. In many ways, China’s political security is very much related to the continued struggle between the communist and capitalist political systems.

In addition, from the above Chinese formulations of military and political security, we can detect a strong influence imposed by historical events. Therefore, it is felt that understanding the Chinese way of conducting interstate relations in the past would give us a guide to the needs and constraints of Beijing’s quest for comprehensive security in the post-Cold War era. To be sure, China itself is a civilisation going back over four thousand years and it used to dominate Asia, much like the United States is currently dominating the international system. The term “Middle Kingdom” or *Zhongguo* encapsulated the Sino-centric approach to international relations, implying that China was once at the centre and other states had to conduct their relations with Beijing in a deferential manner; China laid claim to a position of dominance and centrality in Asia and adjoining states such as Korea owed tributes to China. This type of thinking is still evident has influenced, to some extent, the Chinese security approach to the Korean peninsula, as Chapter 4 will show.

This Sino-centric type of approach to international relations and security was challenged by the European powers and Japan at the turn of the century. After suffering from the effects of Western imperialism and humiliation, and the brutal Japanese occupation during the Second World War, the communists that came to power in 1949 were an embodiment of anti-imperialist nationalism, with their

legitimacy based in part on an ability to defend against foreigners since 1949. Anti-imperialism has been a central focus in the Chinese search for security, with the result that there exists “a certain obsession with eradicating any residue of the imperialist past in China foreign policy”.²¹ As far as political security is concerned, Chinese leaders today still emphasised the importance of patriotism, *aiguo zhuyi*, as a national ideology to hold society together as well as using it as a reminder to erase the past “century of humiliation”. Indeed, this type of feeling is often shared by states that had been victims of European colonialism.

As far as the issue of political sovereignty is concerned, China had armed liberation struggles in the Third World against colonial powers, such as against in white-racist Rhodesia and Mozambique. China also supported the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, in what was viewed as a Soviet-backed Vietnam invasion of Cambodia at that point in time. China had wanted to be seen as the symbol of Third World independence from the two superpowers. In particular, the late Defence Minister, Lin Biao, had continue to promote mobilisation against both the superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, believing in the all-out struggle against the imperialists. Although one can say that the concept of imperialism employed by Chinese leaders has different targets at different times, imperialism being defined largely as American in the 1950s and then Soviet by the 1970s, the point is that the above highlights China’s firm belief that its political security must never be subjected to interference by the superpowers again.

China’s anti-imperialism stance, evident in its conception of political and military security, is also in many ways related to its negative experience of alliances

in the international system. Historically, China has no permanent friends or enemies and has been suspicious of alliances since the “Middle Kingdom” era when its existence was essentially a world unto itself. At the height of Western imperialism at the turn of the century, the Chinese often sought to “play one power off against another”. For example, as a means to safeguard China’s political and military security, China cleverly used France, Germany and Russia to dislodge the Japanese from South Manchuria after it was defeated in the 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese War.

Furthermore, one can also detect a need for self-reliance in China’s search for security, reinforced by its negative experiences as a victorious ally in the First World War against Germany, which ended in Qingdao in Shandong Province being transferred from Germany to Japan instead of back to Chinese sovereignty.²² This was, of course, a setback to China’s security interests and it sparked off the 1919 May Fourth Movement, where anti-imperialist nationalistic fever reached new heights. Later in the early 1950s, a shared communist ideology with the Soviet Union presented China with an opportunity for a marriage of convenience. Although the first deliberately chosen one in Chinese history, it eventually ended in the Sino-Soviet dispute and the Soviets became a threat in Beijing’s eyes. In short, the Chinese have never experienced any positive experience of seeking alliances to enhance its security interests. The negative experience of alliances contributed to the need for self-reliance, which in turn leads to the current emphasis on economic development in the bid to become a truly global power in the twenty-first century. It also explains why China continues to emphasize an “independent” foreign policy, refusing to align itself to any other power in a formal way.

To sum up, as far as military and political security is concerned, we see a China seeking to redefine its place in the world, drawing upon historical experience for guidance in the quest to enhance its security in the post-Cold War era. Two important lessons were Western imperialism and the Japanese aggression. These have made the Chinese more critical of any emergent international order and are bound to influence their thinking on the search for comprehensive security. The important factor we need to note is that this anti-imperialism posture is always linked, if not equated with nationalism, as modern China seeks to wipe out a “century of humiliation”. This will influence China’s security interests to a large degree. We can now turn to economic security.

Economic Security

China has clearly recognised that security should no longer be conceived in purely military and political terms, therefore we need to explore the economic dimension in this thesis. For example, one Chinese assessment in the *Jiefangjun Bao* states:

The economic interests of a country must not be encroached upon; state-to state economic relations should be established on the basis of equality, co-operation, and common development; no country should be allowed to apply economic sanctions to retaliate against the other, still less use economic sanctions to obtain political gains; trade, investment and other economic activities should be carried out in the light of the principle of mutual benefits and the most favoured-nation

trading status and entry to the World Trade Organisation should not be used as “cards” to exert pressure on another country and disrupt the country’s economic development; economic competition should proceed in accordance with international rules and regulations; economic problems, friction and differences are normal, and should be resolved through dialogue on equal footing, consultation and talks.²³

The realm of the economic is too important for Chinese leaders to discard or ignore. This is a central theme running throughout this thesis. The impact of the Asian economic crisis, which occurred after the thesis was written, further highlights the importance of economic security to China. Before the Asian economic crisis, an indication of the increasing importance of economics in China’s conception of security has already appeared in Foreign Minister Qian Qichen’s speech to the United Nations Assembly in 1994:

Economic priority has become the international trend, as all countries of the world universally attach importance to developing their economies and strengthening international economic co-operation. The Chinese government takes economic construction as the central task of the whole country and makes reform and opening up one as of its basic state policies.²⁴

From the above, it is ^{clear} that national security conceived in narrow military terms no longer seems adequate for the Chinese in the 1990s. To give a more

comprehensive analysis of China's security in the 1990s, we must definitely include the question of economic security. Economic security, which includes the promotion of economic growth, free and fair trade practices, access to markets and natural resources, is increasingly important, not only to China, but to every state in the international system. Economic issues are increasingly taking precedence over political ones, and it can be said that, in general, the dichotomy of "high politics" (military) and "low politics" (economic) in international relations is increasingly blurred and proving to be a false one. This type of argument has already been well established in our discussion earlier in this chapter.

Interestingly, the Chinese have also come up with a concept of scientific and technological security:

Science and technology should benefit rather than ruin mankind. For this reason, it is necessary to bring science and technology into the track of peace and development.²⁵

For our purpose, rather than put it into another category, we may classify it under the rubric of economic security, since science and technology, including those imported from abroad, constitute a tool for the Chinese to achieve a rapid development of their economy. China is particularly keen to strengthen co-operation in technological fields with other countries.²⁶

In addition, the Chinese have also come up with the notion of social security, expressed as:

Keeping population growth strictly under control so as to ease the consumption of common human property; making efforts to protect resources so as to extend the life limit of earth and mankind; and eliminating environmental pollution and allowing mankind to have a piece of pure and permanent land for their subsistence.²⁷

In this thesis, environmental security as such is not discussed.²⁸ Although issues such as population growth are significant to China, they are discussed insofar as they impinge on other aspects of security, predominantly the economic. To sum up, just as was the case with the “level of analysis” issue discussed earlier, while subjects such as science and technology, and environment may be interesting, they are best incorporated into the military, political and most important of all, economic, aspects of security for the purpose of this thesis.

Another point worth noting is that China’s economic security is not internally generated, it is also influenced and shaped by the evolving dynamics of the Asia-Pacific region. In short, security interests, including China’s, are reactive as much as proactive to the milieu in which states operate.

Moreover, the Asia Pacific region is widely seen as likely to be the fulcrum of economic activity in the twenty-first century.²⁹ The basis for this conclusion is not just that this region accounts for one-half or more of the world's population, Gross National

Product and trade, but more importantly because this region represents a main growth point of new and rising economic power, that is, the core of world economic prosperity. For example, the US Central Intelligence Agency and *The Economist* agree that by 2020, six of the ten largest economies in the world will be Asian.³⁰ Although the current financial crisis might have cast doubts in the minds of some, it is fair to say that Asia as whole is likely to make an economic recovery sometime in the future.³¹ Hence, it is very important to consider China's economic interests in this region. China's economic reforms and its drive for modernisation and economic development have been top priorities for its communist leaders, which is a central theme of this thesis.

Over the last twenty or thirty years, until of the financial crisis beginning in 1997, development and reinvigoration of the countries in East Asia have added a new chapter in the history of progress. Viewed from the perspective of politics and economics, despite recent setbacks, East Asia is still regarded as a force that should not be ignored in the international arena. In many ways, Asia has already entered a new era where economic factors have become major principles underlying decisions in the international arena. In the post-Cold War era of rising multilateralism and economic interdependence, governments have to redefine their roles as sole interlocutors for domestic and foreign economic relations as well as political relations. In many ways, this creates a dilemma as the traditional nation-states, including China, attempt to manage their security, political and economic interests in a world that both draws entities more closely together and creates more diffuse and fluid ties.

Furthermore, the development of subregional economic co-operation in the region, rooted in the tremendous economic growth of intra-Asian trade and investment dating from the mid-1980s, when country after country adopted economic liberalisation packages, has given rise to new economic security thinking such as the concept of “natural economic territories” (NETs) formulated by Robert Scalapino.³² This concept, a provocative one, is based on the notion of cross-border economic flows linking sub-regions of nation-states rather the states’ political centres, with the concomitant suggestion that economic interests can outpace political ones. For example, how states such as China adjust their political and security relations – as well as their economic development strategies – to this new trend of “economics from below” may yield insights as to how the interplay of competition and co-operation will shape the region’s economic, political and security dynamics in the transitions of the post-Cold War era.³³ This thesis aims to give more emphasis to these types of economic security issues, which have been largely underplayed in security studies on China.

In this thesis, three NETs which China is involved will be covered, namely Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, in the context of how they affect China’s economic security. At this stage, we can say that these NETs will allow China to experiment in economic co-operation, albeit in a cautious manner, given the region’s varying levels of economic development, different socio-political systems and complex security and political relationships. China may find NET co-operation particularly attractive for its economic agenda, especially at a time when the official mechanisms for economic co-operation, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC), East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are in general

proving too slow to achieve a consensus on a regional (or global) economic framework for trade and investments. Thus, NET co-operation can also allow China to proceed along its own path of economic development, just like Mao Zedong had “Sinified” the political ideology of Marxism to suit China’s needs. At the same time, it allows China to go on its own path of development without the need to agree with others on any overarching regional goals.

The relevance, as far as our analysis is concerned, is that NETs are generating innovative means of economic interaction that have limited consonance with traditional economic controls and political arrangements. In fact, one may argue this is a phenomenon particularly suited to the Asian context where there is a strong predilection for incremental rather than bold systemic change. For China, NETs allow it to experiment with economic reform policies and gradually expand if they are successful. The Zhuhai and Shenzhen special economic zones are cases in point. Liberalisation, decentralisation and industrial restructuring can all combine to further motivate China to develop its peripheries and hinterlands that remain isolated from the commercial centres that had prospered in an earlier era. Much of the untapped potential in these areas can be efficiently realised by capitalising on complementarities across China’s political borders, so that the subregions are now being more entwined with world markets and emerging regional ones. This represents one way for China to enhance its economic interests.

This is given further importance since the Chinese Communist Party has increasingly been perceived by the masses as shifting its legitimacy to the economic sphere, with the corollary that the communist leaders must turn to modernising the

economy. In fact, President Jiang Zemin once told party cadres that the party will “collapse” if the economy fails.³⁴ This demonstrates the importance of the country’s economic well being to the communist party which in turn affects the state’s very own survival, indicating a close connection between the economic and political aspects of China’s security. Hence, the current regime in China is using economic development and rising standards of living as a way of re-establishing popular legitimacy. With rising standards of living, people will tolerate the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party in return for growing prosperity and a relatively quiet life free from Maoist-style political campaigns.

This has inadvertently created mutually reinforcing economic success and political stability at the expense of liberalising the Chinese political system, which is precisely what the Chinese communists desire - economic reform and transformation without accompanying changes in the political system. Chinese reformers have also shown that maintenance of the political system does not have to mean keeping the central ideology intact or that there must be an outright rejection of the ideology and its authoritativeness in order to bring about reform in the system. In fact, it has been argued by Yan Sun that China actually pursued a “middle course”.³⁵ This, to a certain extent, refutes the words of a recent study by John Schull that reform communism is unfeasible and leaves only “two options open to a political actor in a Soviet-type system: either a conservative defence of ideology or a radical leap beyond it, an outright rejection of the official discourse’s authoritativeness”.³⁶ These types of political security issues will be further explored in Chapter 3, as they are important ones often not fully explored in traditional security studies on China.

However, it must be noted that the late Deng Xiaoping perhaps underestimated the linkages between the inevitable pressures that would eventually surface as a result of economic growth and enhanced material well-being. One can say that Deng failed to create the necessary institutional mechanisms for more political participation and had bequeathed this problem to his successors. It can even be argued that Deng failed to grasp the most basic of Marxist precepts that the economic base will affect and influence China's political superstructure.³⁷ In addition, China's rapid economic growth may spark off high expectations among the Chinese populace for improvements in their living standards. If these expectations grow faster than the economy's ability to satisfy them, public resentment might degenerate into social chaos. This certainly poses new types of security problems, which have not been given the recognition they deserve in most writings on China's security.

Furthermore, as China pursues economic modernisation, both population and migration are emerging as major threats to the nation's internal security.³⁸ Corruption in China is becoming so serious that senior leaders have warned that the country might disintegrate if this is not controlled.³⁹ All these issues are important in themselves, but they are discussed in this thesis insofar as they are related to issues of China's economic security. The leadership is hoping that economic reforms will ultimately be able to resolve undesirable tensions in Chinese society.

The current Chinese leadership believes there is no turning back. What China needs is more economic reforms that will lead to further growth. This would solve the "contradictions" in Chinese society. The rationale behind this is that, if growth is sustained, then the perception of the wealth gap would be less apparent as the people

are on a whole better off. The last thing that Beijing wants is an underclass in the making and this has come amidst the leadership's claims that "uneven development will not divide the nation".⁴⁰ Chinese leaders, for example, seem to believe that negative effects resulting from inflation and overheating of the economy can be dampened as long as they can meet the basic needs of the unemployed, as the "iron rice bowl" system did during Mao Zedong's reign, providing the people's basic needs for health care, employment and housing.

China's economic security cannot be separated from that of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. The Chinese economy has a direct bearing on the development of the East Asian nations. China offers numerous trade opportunities and a large market for the region. Equally, the sustained and stable economic development of East Asia is crucial to China. The Asian financial crisis has been a matter of deep concern to China. President Jiang Zemin warns that if China begins to suffer financial crises like those elsewhere in Asia, then China cannot hope to place hope in international assistance, due to the sheer size of China's economy and, more importantly, due to the linkage of foreign financial assistance to political considerations. The Chinese regard the East Asian financial crisis as a "historical event" similar to the collapse of the Soviet Union, expressing concern that the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) loans to South Korea, Thailand and Philippines and Indonesia included "stringent" conditions imposed on these countries to "obey" IMF guidelines to change, reform and open up their markets.⁴¹ This is an indication of China's concern about economic events that can lead to its sovereignty and security being compromised. As mentioned earlier, the principle of anti-imperialism is not only embedded in China's

search for security in both political and military aspects, it is also evident in the economic aspect. This is clearly reflected by the communists seeing themselves as engaging in a continuing struggle to free China and defend it against imperialism in all aspects, including economic exploitation in the past era, and also the economic dominance of the West today.

Coherence of China's security interests

Of course, it will be totally wrong to argue that modern China is a single and simple actor. For our purposes here, it is important to look at the question of whether Chinese security interests are inherently coherent and internally consistent, given the flux in the post-Cold War era. This raises the question of how much is there a single Chinese factor in foreign relations.

First, we need to take note of the nature of the Chinese political system, the collapse of communism as a credible ideology in the post-Cold War era and the leadership succession issue in China. To be sure, the Chinese political system is in a transitional phase and one major weakness of communist political systems is the lack of an orderly process for the selection of new leaders. Various historical examples can be cited. For instance, after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, there was a period of political struggle, with the purge of the radical "Gang of Four" eventually resulting in the ascendancy of the late Deng Xiaoping. In China, because there is no democratic process for the selection and removal of leaders, political selections take place through intra-party struggles behind the scenes. Key leaders often place their own cliques in key positions while countering the manoeuvres of rival leaders and

their followers. A more recent example can be found in the removal of the Yang clan from positions of power in 1992. At the Fourteenth Party Congress in October 1992, Yang Baibing was removed from the Military Affairs Commission, the key body controlling China's military; it appeared that Yang Baibing with his older brother, then President Yang Shangkun, had built up a personal network of high-level supporters within the military before and after the 1989 Tiananmen Incident.⁴² Yang Shangkun was later removed as president of China when the National People's Congress convened in March 1993. This type of internal machination of the various factions within the Chinese Communist Party may, to a certain extent, reduce the likelihood of a coherent security agenda.

In addition, there is the leadership succession issue, which also raises questions of whether security interests can be dominated by internal concerns. For example, it is worth noting that during the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong paid more attention to internal affairs compared to foreign affairs. In the near future, it is possible that China's leaders may be preoccupied with internal struggles to the extent that they have less time and energy to present a stronger security agenda related to external concerns. A Chinese leadership without a paramount leader after Deng's demise is bound to have implications for China's security interests. Nevertheless, on certain critical issues, such as the question of nationalism, there will be little room for manoeuvre. A new nationalist elite led by Jiang Zemin may, to some extent, regard the Marxist-Leninist beliefs of their elders as outmoded, but they are certain to share the same conviction that China has been in the past and should become again a truly global power.

Furthermore, it is also worth noting that following Deng's death, competitive successors to the leadership such as Jiang Zemin will be tempted to exploit nationalism to strengthen their claims to the throne and weaken their opponents.⁴³ As they lack authority, the new generation will not be in a position to make compromises on issues of national sovereignty such as Taiwan. The successor political leadership will be unable to move in new directions or reach compromises with foreign powers as that will weaken their already limited power. Such an analysis points to the continuity of a coherent security agenda. This has much to do with the sectors of security that were discussed earlier. It has been noted that dealing with strictly military issues, one can see that there are often less major disagreements within the leadership. This includes the policy towards Taiwan. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that analysts such as Harry Harding have come to the general conclusion that Beijing insists that its foreign policy has been unvarying in its basic orientation and goals.⁴⁴ However, when one moves across the range towards the non-military aspects of security, one is bound to discover much more diversity in Chinese policymaking.

Apart from the question of whether Jiang Zemin will assert near absolute authority, which Deng Xiaoping had done earlier, arguments can also be made regarding the fact that a possible confluence of institutional and ideological crisis will radically transform or even overrun the existing order. On the internal front, this may portend a protracted and inconclusive struggle for power that can encourage powerful local elites to demand greater autonomy from the central government. As Samuel Huntington notes, the causes that produce military interventions in politics, to a certain extent, lie in the structure of society, in particular in the "absence or weakness

of effective political institutions”.⁴⁵ This argument that political instability is a classic breeding grounds for military intervention paints a scenario reminiscent of the final days of the Qing dynasty, which later gave way to warlordism. Having recognised the argument on “disintegration”, the point is that in the view adopted here, this is rather unlikely as the assumptions in Chapter 1 have stated. Moreover, the subject of matter of this thesis is not about the leadership succession struggle in China nor the possible disintegration of the Chinese state system. It is about China’s security interests. As such, this thesis assumes that China will remain as a unified state at the time of writing. More importantly, at the time this research was being carried out, there exists a fair degree of coherence in the formulation and articulation of China’s security interests.

Conclusion

China now seeks comprehensive security, with the connotation that building up a strong economic base will allow it to stand up to any future challenges in the international system. This type of thinking has coincided with expansion in scope of the security concept over the years, as the literature review indicates. In short, this thesis explores the military and political aspects, which form the traditional concerns of state security, while adding to it the important economic element. By no means should this be taken as embarking on an “econophoria”, as the rest of the thesis will demonstrate. What this thesis aims to highlight is that, for Beijing, the ability to achieve national security is no longer wholly centred on military capabilities.

In this thesis, while the approach to security is broader than the traditional one, it does not delve into issues such as environmental security advocated by the most progressive analysts. This has been done to make the scope of the thesis more manageable. As stated in the introduction, it is the aim of this thesis to give a wider role to economics in the security analysis of the Chinese state. Indeed, a more inclusive term, “comprehensive” security is adopted as a means of approaching this study, and it is with this in mind that we can now turn to explore China’s security in relation to other states in Northeast Asia.

¹ See Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the post-Cold War Era* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, 2nd ed.).

² See Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the post-Cold War Era* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, 2nd ed.), p. 26. Also J. David Singer. “The level of analysis problem in international relations,” in Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba (eds.), *The International System* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961).

³ See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

⁴ See Martin Shaw, “There is no such thing as society: beyond individualism and statism in international security studies,” *Review of International Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2 (April 1993), pp. 159-175.

⁵ See Ken Booth, “Strategy and emancipation,” *Review of International Studies* vol. 19, no. 2 (April 1993), pp. 319-321.

⁶ See “The non-military aspects of strategy,” *Survival*, vol. 31, no. 6 (November/December 1989).

⁷ Steve Smith, “Mature anarchy, strong states and security,” *Arms Control*, vol. 12, no. 2 (1991), pp. 325-339.

⁸ Joseph Nye and Sean Lynn-Jones, “International security studies: a report of a conference on the state of the field,” *International Security*, vol. 12, no. 4 (Winter 1988), pp. 5-27.

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- ⁹ Neta C. Crawford, "Future security studies," *Security Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1991), pp. 283-316.
- ¹⁰ Simon Dalby, "Rethinking security: ambiguities in policy and theory," (Occasional Paper), (Burnaby, BC: Simon Fraser University: 1991).
- ¹¹ Joseph S. Nye, "The contribution of strategic studies: future challenged," in Francois Heisbourg (ed.), *The Changing Strategic Landscape* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 327-341.
- ¹² John Chipman, "The future of strategic studies," *Survival*, vol. 34, no.1 (1992), pp. 109-131.
- ¹³ Edward A. Kolodziej, "What is security and security studies? Lessons from the Cold War," *Arms Control*, vol. 13, no. 1 (1992), pp. 11-31.
- ¹⁴ Stephen Walt, "The renaissance of security studies," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 2 (1991), pp. 211-239.
- ¹⁵ Weixing Hu, "China's security agenda after the Cold War," *The Pacific Review*, vol. 8, no.1 (1995), p. 120.
- ¹⁶ David Shambaugh, "Growing strong: China's challenge to Asian security," *Survival* vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer 1994), p. 45.
- ¹⁷ See "Roundup comparing security concepts," China Radio International, 29 Dec 97 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 1 Jan 98, p. G/2.
- ¹⁸ Li Qinggong and Wei Wei, "The world need a news/security concept," *Jiefangjun Bao*, 24 Dec 97, p. 5.
- ¹⁹ Li Qinggong and Wei Wei, "The world need a news security concept," *Jiefangjun Bao*, 24 Dec 97, p. 5.
- ²⁰ Li Qinggong and Wei Wei, "The world need a news security concept," *Jiefangjun Bao*, 24 Dec 97, p. 5.
- ²¹ Benjamin I. Schwartz, "The Chinese perception of world order, past and present," in John King Fairbanks (ed.) *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 276-288.
- ²² C.P Fitzgerald, *The Chinese View of Their Place in the World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 52-53.

²³ Li Qinggong and Wei Wei, "The world need a news security concept," *Jiefangjun Bao*, 24 Dec 97, p. 5.

²⁴ "Foreign Minister Qian Qichen's speech to UN General Assembly," Xinhua news agency, 28 Sep 94 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 30 Sep 94, pp. G/2-G/3.

²⁵ Li Qinggong and Wei Wei, "The world need a news security concept," *Jiefangjun Bao*, 24 Dec 97, p. 5.

²⁶ "Promoting good neighbourliness, mutual trust, jointly building a bright future- congratulating President Jiang's complete success in attending ASEAN and China – ASEAN informal leaders' meetings," Xinhua News agency, 17 Dec 97, in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 22 Dec 97, p. G/4.

²⁷ Li Qinggong and Wei Wei, "The world need a news security concept," *Jiefangjun Bao*, 24 Dec 97, p. 5.

²⁸ For a discussion of environmental security in East Asia, see R.T. Maddock, "Environmental security in East Asia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 17, no. 1 (June 1995), pp. 20-36.

²⁹ See for example, Kishore Mahbubani, "The Pacific Impulse," *Survival*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Spring 1995), especially pp. 103-108.

³⁰ Richard Halloran, "The rising East," *Foreign Policy*, no. 102 (Spring 1996), p.11. See also "The war of the worlds," *The Economist* (October 1, 1994), pp. 5-6.

³¹ According to an economic survey, Asia's economic fortunes in 1999 will depend to a large extent on two questions: Japan's ability to inflate its way to recovery and China's ability to accelerate her domestic growth engines. See, for example, *Far Eastern Economic Review* (March 11, 1999), pp. 42-45.

³² Robert A. Scalapino, "The United States and Asia: Future prospects," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 5 (Winter 1991-1992), pp. 19-40.

³³ For a detailed analysis of Asia-Pacific natural economic territories (NETs), see Amos A Jordan and Jane Khan, "Economic interdependence and challenges to the nation-state: The emergence of natural

economic territories in the Asia-Pacific," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 48, no. 2 (Winter 1995), pp. 433-62.

³⁴ "Jiang Zemin tells party cadres: 'If the economy fails, we will collapse,'" Xinhua news agency, 5 Mar 94 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 9 Mar 94, pp. G/1-G/2.

³⁵ Yan Sun, "Ideology and the demise or maintenance of Soviet -type regimes," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 28, no. 3 (September 1995), p. 335.

³⁶ John Schull, "What is ideology?" Theoretical problems and lessons from Soviet-type societies," *Political Studies*, vol. 40, no. 2 (1992), pp. 728-729.

³⁷ David Shambaugh, "Deng Xiaoping: The politician," *The China Quarterly*, no. 135 (September 1993), p. 490.

³⁸ Paul J Smith, "The strategic implications of Chinese emigration," *Survival*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer 1994), p. 73.

³⁹ "Jiang Zemin tells party cadres: 'If the economy fails, we will collapse,'" Xinhua news agency, 5 Mar 94 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 9 Mar 94, pp. G/1-G/2.

⁴⁰ "Li Peng denies 'China threat', says uneven development will not divide nation," Xinhua news agency, 2 Jan 94 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 4 Jan 94, p. G/7.

⁴¹ Chong Zhongying, "Major changes in international relations - East Asian financial crisis," *Shijie Zhishi*, no. 2 (1998), pp. 24-26.

⁴² Ellis Joffe, "Regionalism in China: The role of the PLA," *The Pacific Review*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1994), pp. 25-26.

⁴³ Allen S. Whiting, "Chinese nationalism and foreign policy after Deng," *The China Quarterly*, no. 142 (June 1995), p. 316.

⁴⁴ Harry Harding, "China's changing roles in the contemporary world," in Harry Harding (ed.) *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 179.

⁴⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 195-96.

CHAPTER 3: RUSSIA AND THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM

This chapter analyses China's security interests in relation to the changes that have occurred in Russia in recent years. It touches on aspects of China's political security, a subject which has been neglected by most writings on China's security when dealing with the decline of Russia as a threat. To be sure, the decline of the Soviet Union, once an archenemy, is a gain as far as military security is concerned. However, more importantly, as far as supporting the argument of this thesis is concerned, is the fact that China's security encompasses more than just the military aspects only. China is deeply affected by the collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union, since the Soviet collapse raises issues of political security for Chinese leaders. Therefore, it is very important to analyse the impact of the events of 1989, 1990 and 1991 on China's security agenda. This chapter first looks at the diminished Russian military threat to China. It goes on to explore China's economic relations with Russia. This is followed by assessments of the impact of the collapse of Soviet communism on China's official ideology.

Military security, political security and the diminished Russian threat

Since the late 1960s, the former Soviet Union had been regarded as a military security threat to China. During the Cold War, the former Soviet Union was ~~seen as~~ ^{as} just as menacing as the United States, if not even more. In addition to being threatened

by the nuclear capability of the Soviet Union, China actually fought a war against the former Soviet Union along the Ussuri River border in 1969.

However, China's military security in relation to the former Soviet Union, changed as the Cold War came to an end. To be sure, relations with the former Soviet Union improved after Mikhail Gorbachev took power. A new Soviet approach to relations with China was evident in Gorbachev's speech in Vladivostok on July 28, 1986. Eager to reduce Sino-Soviet military tensions so that he could cut military spending, Gorbachev called for an end to the "encirclement" of China. This was the beginning of a new Soviet policy towards Beijing, and it accounted for China's perception of a diminished Soviet threat to its military security. As Lowell Dittmer has argued, in a longer chronological perspective, this was part of the strategy of diplomatic bridge building by small steps, an approach inaugurated by the resumption of normalisation talks in 1982.¹

Furthermore, China had benefited from the new Soviet-American relations between the two superpowers before the Soviet Union disintegrated. According to Michael Yahuda, two of the "three obstacles" that Beijing had placed as barriers to Sino-Soviet relations had been removed without direct Chinese involvement, as part of the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) agreement in December 1987 signed with the United States, the Soviets removed their SS-20 missiles from Asia as well as Europe and Gorbachev also agreed to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan by February 15, 1989.² Beijing's military security was further enhanced when the Soviets demobilised 200,000 troops and reduced the Soviet Pacific fleet by one third, as noted by David Shambaugh.³

All the developments in the late 1980s paved the way for the May 1989 summit between Deng Xiaoping and Gorbachev, the first Sino-Soviet summit since Khrushchev visited China in the 1950s. The *Renmin Ribao* hailed the re-establishment of relations between China and the Soviet Union, indicated that “Sino-Soviet friendship was directed at no third country” and highlighted the inclusion of an “anti-hegemony” position that at least proved that the Soviet Union was no longer a threat.⁴ In concrete terms, in 1989, China achieved a breakthrough in bilateral relations with its archenemy, after years of hostility between the two communist giants. Post-Soviet Russia’s decline as a regional power capable of shaping event in Northeast Asia is also very much in accordance with China’s security interests.⁵

After the Soviet Union disintegrated, Gorbachev’s successor, Boris Yeltsin, further increased Russian ties with China. Yeltsin made his first visit to China in December 1992. Later President Jiang Zemin visited Russia in September 1994. For our purposes, it is important to note that, as far as Beijing’s military security is concerned, Sino-Russian summit meetings in 1992 and 1994 marked the progressive resolution of border differences, and they also sharply increased significant transfers of Russian weapons and military technology to China.⁶ One can say that military relations have also flourished between the two former enemies. Central Military Commission vice-chairman Liu Huaqing visited to Moscow to discuss the purchase of Soviet weapons systems and technology; and later, five-year military co-operation agreement for the transfer of military technologies was signed during Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev’s November 1993 visit to Beijing.⁷ Such military

technology transfers enhanced China's military security, not only vis-à-vis Russia, but also vis-à-vis other states as well.

It is also important to point out that for decades, China and the Soviet Union had been locked in a bitter quarrel over ideology, with Mao Zedong denouncing Krushchev's Soviet Union as "revisionist" in the 1960s. Both China and the Soviet Union upheld their own way of socialism as the ideal political and economic system, while berating that practised by the other. However, once the ideological dispute, which had always been a major reason for undermining the relations between the two countries, disappeared, China's ties with Russia improved.

During Boris Yeltsin's second trip to China in April 1996, Beijing announced the development of a "strategic co-operative partnership" (*zhanlue xiezuo huoban guanxi*) of "equality and trust" with Russia; acknowledging that differences in social systems and ideology would not hinder the development of state-to-state relations.⁸ This is a clear departure from the Cold War era, when China was engaged the "ideological dispute" and accused the former Soviet Union of "revisionism". International relations today tend to be dominated by practical security calculations rather than purely ideological disputes; from the Chinese perspective; this is a breakthrough of great significance.⁹ In addition, Boris Yeltsin has also stated that Russia upholds the principle of "one China" in relation to the Taiwan issue.¹⁰ The Taiwan issue will be dealt with in Chapter 6.

President Jiang Zemin made another trip to Russia in April 1997, during which both sides signed a joint statement on the multipolarisation of the world and the establishment of a new international order. In October 1997, President Yeltsin

visited China again. In sum, these visits between the Chinese and Russian heads-of-state have improved relations between the two countries, and have no doubt further enhanced China's military and political security. At a wider level, Beijing has evinced a degree of pragmatism in promoting its ties with Russia to counter the United States' dominance in the international system.

Perceptions of the decline of the Russian threat are now evident among China's academics and international relations analysts. For instance, in the 1993 Chinese security symposium, only ten per cent of the analysts foresaw Russia as China's greatest threat by 2020, arguing that perhaps only territorial disputes and minority nationalities straddling the borders could cause conflict.¹¹ Potential border conflicts have been taken seriously by China as it seeks to have a non-hostile neighbour. For instance, China has established confidence building measures with Russia on their land borders. An important military agreement was concluded in April 26 1996, when China signed an agreement on military confidence-building measures in the border region with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; this far-reaching accord - the most comprehensive arms control agreement in East Asia since 1945 - restricts deployments and exercises in the border region and was uniquely lengthy and legalistic.¹² The following year, in April 1997, China reached a troops-reductions accord with the aforementioned countries along their common borders.¹³ Defence Minister Chi Haotian mentioned that this document on increasing military trust and reducing armed forces in border areas, taken together with the 1996 document, made China's northern 7000km common border "a secure belt of mutual trust".¹⁴ In short, these moves were made by Beijing to bolster its military security.

In the light of this positive development, China's historical rivalry with Russia over Mongolia has also been largely resolved. In June 1991, the last remaining Soviet combat troops were withdrawn from Mongolia. China sees this withdrawal from Mongolia as having enhanced its security since its northern border has now become more secure. More importantly, China's military burden has been greatly relieved due to the disappearance^d what had been for decades a threat to its very national existence. It also means that the Chinese can now divert resources from military spending to promoting economic development. It is this interlinkage between military and economic security that holds the key to understanding China's security agenda.

During the end of the 1980s, besides improving relations with the Soviet Union, Beijing also (began) expanding ties with five Soviet bloc countries of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and East Germany, who had all sided with Moscow during the Sino-Soviet split. Although Beijing had criticised them, along with the Soviet Union, as revisionists; as relations between China and the Soviet Union improved, China rebuilt its long-ruptured relations with these countries as part of its general policy of opening to the outside world. Although this is not the subject of the thesis, it is worth noting that China is on the whole maintaining good relations with these former Soviet allies in the post-Cold War era; as Beijing intends to strengthen economic ties with these countries. Economic interests have to a some extent dictated that China mend its fences with the former allies of the Soviet Union, once its arch-enemy.

Potential new threats

However, while the above analysis suggest that China is militarily more secure with regards to Russia in the post-Cold War era, some potential new threats may have emerged following the Soviet collapse. Most important is Beijing's concern that a non-communist Russia might align itself more closely with West.¹⁵ There are fears that Russian and American collaboration can threaten China's interests. For instance, when the Soviet Union's permanent seat in the Security Council was given to the Russia, Beijing's leaders faced new problems. Russia began to join the United States and France in promoting certain United Nations security moves.

One assessment by a think-tank, China Strategy and Administration Research Society, views the "Basic Document on Mutual Relations, Co-operation and Security Between Russia and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)" released in May 1997 as an indication that Russia has given tacit consent to NATO's eastward expansion, arguing that the United States had realised its initial arrangements for the post-Cold War world order, and had once more dominated the security pattern of Europe.¹⁶ However, as far as the impact of NATO's eastward expansion on the world is concerned, the assessment concludes that either Russia will eventually be integrated with it or Russia will have an acute confrontation with it. In general, the point underlying this analysis is that any semblance of Russo-American alliance will enhance the influence of the United States in the world in general and in Northeast Asia in particular, to the detriment of Beijing's interests. Chinese perceptions of the United States will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 8. It is clear that Beijing

fears it will not be able to manoeuvre between Russia and the United States as it had successfully done in the past; it will not be able to play one power off another in the “great power triangle”.

Even if Russia refuses unconditionally to toe the Western line, the Chinese are concerned that the West may have too much influence on Russia. Today, China is determined to see that relations with Russia will not be influenced or interfered with by a third country. The “three major obstacles” to normalised relations between the two countries illustrates the point.¹⁷ During the Cold War, differences in policy over Afghanistan, Vietnam and Mongolia caused complications in China’s relations with Russia. More recently, Jiang Zemin and Boris Yeltsin have stated that relations between China and Russia are “based on the principle of non-alignment, and not directed against any third country”¹⁸. China does not wish to see its ties with Russia tempered by a third party, in particular the United States. In the light of this concern, President Jiang Zemin has expressed the view that foreign forces should not interfere in Chechnya as this is an internal affair of Russia.¹⁹

At the same time, China feels that the West has no intention of helping the Soviet Union to become a powerful state, as the Western countries “want a weak Soviet Union”.²⁰ For instance, one Chinese source notes that the West (including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund) in 1992 announced a package of loans, debt reduction and cancellation worth US\$55 billion, but only US\$38 billion came through, falling short of the announced amount by US\$17 billion, or 31 percent; and after allowing for debts actually reduced or forgiven, 42.5 percent of the promised loan did not come through.²¹ The source concludes that the West has partly reneged

on its promise on loans promised to Gorbachev because the G-7 (now G-8) only want an “obedient Russia, not a strong but disobedient Russia”.

Hence, it comes as no surprise that China wants to develop its so-called “strategic partnership” with Russia. Although Chinese leader Li Peng’s meeting with an ailing Boris Yeltsin in Moscow on December 1996 produced no major agreement, their talk of a “strategic partnership” was given prominence. Yet, although Russia did transfer significant weapons to China, the relationship is far less strategic and certainly far less of a partnership than China likes to pretend. Beijing’s exaggeration of the extent of the “strategic partnership” is, however, an attempt to counter the United States, until China develops its economy and achieves a truly global power status. What the Chinese leaders will like is that, in Northeast Asia, Russia remains distant from the West and hence indirectly help to check American power in the world and in the region. It is also clear that China prefers to see an independent Russia, not aligned with the West.

In addition to its security relations with Russia, there are also new security issues China faces in relation to the former Soviet satellite, Mongolia, and those states that were once part of the Soviet empire. The transformation of Mongolia from a one-party communist state into a democratic country in August 1991 and, more significantly, from a Soviet satellite to an independent state in some ways represents a challenge to Beijing. For instance, as Mongolia begins to adopt democracy and shake off Soviet domination, Mongolian nationalism may resurface to fill the void left over as Soviet-style communism retreats. Specifically, cross border contact with China’s Inner Mongolia province could engender some form of pan-Mongolian

nationalism, reviving Chinese fears of the “barbarians” who had conquered China in the twelfth century. For instance, Ulan Bator could become a base for separatist activities in China’s Inner Mongolia Province, Hence, Beijing still has to be ready to respond to potential security threats in the post-Cold War era and must remain on the alert for any indications of Inner Mongolian separatism.

Apart from Mongolia, the erosion of central authority, as evident in the collapse of the Soviet empire, has also in general forced China to rethink its control over its non-Han areas. Although the dominance of the Han people in China has been more complete than the ethnic Russians’ dominance in their vast empire, China’s control of its western frontiers is not as secure as Beijing might wish. In particular, China is worried about the ethnic minorities on its western frontiers. As noted by Bonnie Glaser, threats of separatism still exist and the Chinese continue to see a long term threat to their security interests from Islamic fundamentalism and pan-Turkism.²² For instance, after a failed uprising by Chinese Muslims in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region in February 1990, leader Li Peng warned against the danger of “reactionary and splittist forces” carrying out their infiltration activities under “banners of nationality and religion”.²³

The newly independent former Soviet central Asian republics have sympathy for the people in the westernmost regions of China, which are predominantly Muslim. China clearly wants to avoid a scenario arising reminiscent of Soviet empire’s collapse, which ended in former Soviet autonomous republics declaring independence. Hence, in the light of this potential threat, China has sought assurances from leaders of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan who acknowledged that

“national separation is a harmful destructive force” and fully supported China’s stand on this issue, adding that they will “adopt resolute measures to oppose the separatists so that they would not gain a foothold in their countries”.²⁴ It is clear that Chinese leaders have not become complacent since the Russian threat on its northern border diminished; they are aware of any potential military threats that may resurface in the post-Cold War era.

Furthermore, a think-tank, China Strategy and Administration Research Society, points out that, viewed from the strategic angle, the region of Central Asia has become of “high strategic significance” for the United States in ensuring Washington’s “dominant position in leading the world”; since Central Asia links up Europe, Asia and Africa, control over Central Asia will mean the containment of Europe and will have an impact on East Asia, as well as containing Middle Eastern threats.²⁵ More importantly, the Chinese know the economic importance of Central Asia, a region second only to the Gulf in term of oil resources. China itself will need more energy resources for its economic development programme.

In sum, Chinese analysts see the purpose of the US involvement in Central Asia as threefold: to weaken Russia’s influence in the region of the former Soviet Union in order to guard against Russia's restoration to the “former empire”; to stop the influence of Islamic fundamentalism in Iran from spreading northwards; and to restrict the expansion of China’s influence into Central Asia and make use of Central Asia to support the ethnic separatist forces in their incessant “harassment” of the stability of China’s Xinjiang Autonomous Region and other border areas.²⁶ We can see from the above that the Chinese are concerned that growing Islamic activism and

ethnic unrest throughout Central Asia and the alleged United States' interest in the region, as Beijing continues to seek more energy resources for its economic growth. These are issues that relate to China's political and military security.

Central Asia, which is a region is rich in mineral resources and constitutes an important geopolitical position, may in the long term also be a possible arena of Sino-Russian confrontation. As noted by Vladimir Shlapentokh, the other newly independent states in Central Asia are very weak and will not be able to resist the dominance of a great power such as China or a resurgent Russian should they chose to exert their influence over the area.²⁷ For the moment, this scenario is rather unlikely, as Russia has not become strong enough to sustain such challenges yet. In relation to the Tibet issue, Beijing is pleased that Russia has affirmed that Tibet is a part of China.²⁸ This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

However, China is still concerned about the possibility of any resurgence of Russian nationalism.²⁹ For instance, when Russia and Belarus signed a treaty in March 1996 to form a supranational body, Community of Sovereign Republics (CSR), this was interpreted by Beijing as the re-staging of a [Soviet] union".³⁰ Clearly, internal developments in Russia will continue to be a concern to the Chinese. Having dealt with China's political and military security interests in relation to the former Soviet Union, we can now turn to Beijing's economic interests.

Economic Interests

Above all, China seeks to enhance its economic security in relation to Russia. When Russia gradually declined as a threat and political tensions between the two

countries eased rapidly following the normalisation of relations in 1989, economic ties also progressed. In 1996, Sino-Russian trade volume hit US\$6.8 billion and both sides have also expressed that through their joint efforts, bilateral trade volume will continue to increase.³¹

Today, ironically, the Soviet Union, once the provider of financial assistance to China in the 1950s, has now become the recipient of short-term government credits from China. To be sure, the main reason for this move by Beijing is not entirely altruistic. What Beijing hopes to achieve is a sustained development of its economy and Russia can play a part in this regard. For instance, China can provide cheap consumer goods which are in relatively short supply in the former Soviet bloc countries. To Russia, China has become a market for high-tech weapons and heavy industrial equipment. Russian consumers generate counter-trade with which China can pay for Moscow's civilian and military technology. This type of economic relationship is mutually beneficial. More importantly, Russia has oil and timber that are badly needed. For example, Siberia is rich in minerals that could be exploited by Chinese joint ventures. As noted by analysts such as Keun-Wook Paik, Sino-Russian energy co-operation in oil and gas has considerable potential.³² It is possible that fears of competition from other Asian countries such as rival Taiwan may have spurred moves in this direction. Therefore, ~~it~~ came as no surprise that the Sino-Russian joint declaration in November 1997 included support from both sides to draw on the "market" economies existing in the two countries to further co-operation in major joint projects in the areas of gas, oil and nuclear energy, transport and communications.³³

For Russia, stable relations with China could well be the single most important facilitator of economic development in the Russian Far East, as China is potentially its largest and most valuable market in Asia. Despite voiced discontent and even hatred from the Russian population in the Far East and Siberia towards the Chinese who have intruded into their areas, for Russia as a whole, its fragile economy can ill-afford further reductions in Russo-Chinese trade, whose volume is second only to Russia's trade with Germany.³⁴ The Chinese understand that Russia needs the trade with China and have consequently used this to their advantage to further enhance their economic security.

In addition, it is quite possible that China wants to serve as a model for economic reforms. Russian economic reformers have visited China's special economic zones and this also demonstrates to the Chinese people that Beijing is doing well economically, enhancing the government's own legitimacy, a subject to be dealt with later. The two countries have also pledged to support each other in the sphere of multilateral economic co-operation, including China's support for Russia's entry into the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC).³⁵ Now that relations between China and Russia are normalised, China seeks to apply its export promotion policies to the Soviet Union, as it is part of the strategy to sustain its economic growth and to adjust to the need to compete with other nations in the global economy.³⁶ China would also like to diversify its trade in order to avoid becoming overly dependent on the United States, Taiwan, Japan and Hong Kong. Nevertheless, the Chinese are equally aware that, in the long term, a rejuvenated Russia might also

become a competitor vying for markets and investment. At the time of writing, this is unlikely to happen given that chronic problems of the Russian economy still exist.

In sum, China appears to see Russia less as a threat today, as far as military security is concerned. It has increased its trading relationship with Russia and hopes to use Russia as a counter weight to the lone super power, the United States. However, as stated in the introduction, China's security interests are comprehensive. Although military security on its northern border seems secured and its economic ties with Russia are growing, China's political security appears to be deeply affected by the collapse of communism in Russia. Since the Chinese seek "comprehensive security", one has to look at issues of political security, in particular those which relate to the survival of the Chinese Communist Party..

Political security and the collapse of communism in Russia

The collapse of communism in Russia in 1991 has profound implications for China's political security. This issue tends to be ignored in most of the writings on China's security in the post-Cold War era. This thesis hopes to give a clear account of the serious implications of the Soviet collapse in terms of China's political security. After all, in many ways, China's development as a modern state in the twentieth century has been deeply influenced by Soviet developments. For over forty years, both were one-party states sharing a common ideology derived from Marxist-Leninist principles. At various points of their existence, both have been regarded as revolutionary powers challenging the international status quo by advocating world-

wide revolution to overthrow the world capitalist systems Hence, the abandonment of communism in Russia must surely be a test for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in particular for its ability to hold on to power.

To be precise, the former Soviet Union's abandonment of communism was preceded by the collapse of Eastern European communist regimes and this event is worth analysing from the Chinese perspective. China was very concerned when it knew the East European Communist states, at one time its allies before the Sino-Soviet split, were running into problems. In fact, CCP Secretary-General Jiang Zemin told an Soviet official in December 1989 that, as a socialist country, China "cannot but show an interest in the developments in socialist countries".³⁷ As the various Eastern European communist regimes collapsed between 1989 and 1990, the official reaction from Beijing was what one might call a policy of "non-interference". With hindsight, one can say that China appeared to have used the principle of non-interference to avoid making a clear-cut decision on how to respond to the situation, as the events happened in a sudden manner.

However, what is indisputable is that Chinese leaders were beginning to worry about the prospect of ideological challenges to the Chinese Communist Party itself. It is precisely for this reason that the Chinese leaders were apparently unhappy with the Soviet decision not to interfere with the revolutions in Eastern Europe, supposedly blaming Gorbachev for allowing the Eastern European countries to abandon communism although they could not do very much to prevent the collapse.

In what was regarded as a pragmatic move, China, although shocked by the sudden collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, tried to reap some benefits from

the new situation by recognising the successor-regimes. One reason was probably that Taiwan was pursuing a policy of trying to secure diplomatic recognition for itself, and the fact that the former Soviet satellites recognised South Korea suggested that they might also recognise Taiwan³⁸. More was to follow as the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. For our purposes, we need to analyse the implications of the state ideology of China, communism, coming under threat.

State ideology under threat

The demise of the Soviet Union highlighted the legitimacy crisis faced by the Chinese communists. Since communism is in principle universal, its demise in the land of its inception could not but raise the problem of legitimacy for the Chinese Communist Party. In general, the collapse of communism also raised questions pertaining to the viability of communist state systems.³⁹ In political science, this type of problem arises when people question the right of their rulers to govern them and on a wider level, also to the institutions and values through which the government exercises the right to rule the masses.

On the home front, one might say that the collapse of communism as a socio-political world system with an universalist ideology has seriously crippled one of the moral-philosophical bases for organising Chinese society and state. The 1950s, when the Soviet influence on China had been most evident, were considered by Chinese leaders to have been its “golden decade”.⁴⁰ In Maoist China, sacrificing the present for a better future were in some ways justified by the prospects of being on the cutting edge of history, blazing the path that would be soon followed by the rest of

the world. Present costs and sacrifices were rationalised and justified by this vision of a bright future, which was evident in mass mobilisation campaigns such as the 1959 Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s.

Today, it appears that the ability of the Chinese Communist Party to condition mass behaviour on the basis of belief in the collective good rather than the pursuit of individual gain has diminished. The inner confidence of the party imbued with a sense of mission and belief in itself as a unifying revolutionary force backed by the support of the masses has been eroded, along with it the sense of belonging to a world-wide movement that constituted a future for the world. Communism in the 1990s can no longer be invoked as justification for sacrifices and excesses, and thus the main prop of the Chinese communists' legitimacy has been demolished. Today, the Chinese leadership today cannot rely on invoking abstract ideology to justify government policies. All these events that have occurred outside China's borders must surely have implications for the political security of the Chinese Communist Party.

In the Chinese state itself, many young technocrats in China are less inclined to adhere to strict Marxist precepts. In addition, many of these party members are attracted to pluralist and democratic values. At the same time, it is clear that totally abandoning socialism would be disastrous as the Chinese Communist Party came to power on this principle. Renunciation of the existing communist system in China would mean the party leaders' self-renunciation as well, so it is certain that they will not initiate revolutionary political changes at the top. Therefore, Gorbachev's attempts to restructure the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) were

considered by the Chinese to be a bad example. Beijing denounced Gorbachev's resignation as the General Secretary of the party and dissolving the party itself as "the greatest betrayal in the international history of communism".⁴¹ Such a stance indicates that the Chinese leaders were concerned about the ideological underpinnings of their own regime.

With China's political security coming under greater strain than before, party leaders realise there would be a need for some changes while maintaining socialism. In other words, they are willing to explore new ways of advancing economic reform, in an attempt to justify the communist party's hold on power. In fact, when President Jiang Zemin met Gorbachev in May 1989, he stated that "socialism is a new social system and it will inevitably encounter difficulties and twists and turns during the course of its development", adding that "reforms are essential for bringing socialism's potential into play".⁴² Realising that "building socialism with Chinese characteristics is a great and arduous cause which is unprecedented, and therefore has no existing pattern to go by", Jiang Zemin has emphasised "the Yanan spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle" when the communists embarked on the Long March to establish socialism in China.⁴³ This can be interpreted as an attempt to engage the masses to support the Chinese Communist Party during difficult times. The task now is for China to maintain "the flesh-and blood ties between the party and government on the one hand and the people on the other".⁴⁴ After all, the leaders need to fill the ideological void left by the collapse of communism and bolster the party's political security in the process.

Interestingly, in order to fill the void left by the demise of Communism, some Chinese scholars suggest that Confucianism would be suitable since it reinforces the

desire for political stability. The *Renmin Ribao* argues that Confucianism has helped “countries and regions in East Asia to modernise at a much quicker pace” and “steer clear of defects that the West encountered in achieving modernisation”, adding that it will replace the modern and contemporary Western culture in the twenty-first century.⁴⁵ After all, China is widely regarded as the origin and centre of Confucianism, the core dynamic that supposedly facilitated the East Asian economic growth and political stability. Beneath these claims, it appears that the real aim is to encourage economic growth in China without political change. The Chinese Communist Party intends to remain in power despite all the ramifications, such as greater political liberalisation, that introducing market economics are likely to bring.

Besides the reference to Confucianism, to fill the void created by the decline of ideology and to continue holding the state together, Chinese leaders can also try to heighten nationalist sentiment as a way of creating a new political myth that justifies the continued rule of the communist party. Nationalism is a useful political resource, given the fact that China had suffered a “century of humiliation”, and anti-imperialism will certainly strike a chord with the masses, as discussed in the previous chapter. For instance, an article in *Beijing Review* is quick to note that having survived foreign invasions, which “confers a certain national pride”, China values “patriotism”. In this vein, the Chinese have rejected an article written by the US former ambassador to China, James Lilley, that Beijing is fomenting xenophobia to “fill the vacuum” left by the declining appeal of Communism.⁴⁶ Moreover, China aspires to be a great power accorded by its size and growing economic strength. In

this context, a highly nationalistic, anti-imperialistic, anti-Western tone will help. This drive to great power status will be discussed in the penultimate chapter.

In sum, it is clear from the above analysis that the state ideology, communism, is under threat, and since this is the basis on which the Chinese Communist Party came to power and sustain its hold on power, it is clear that the party is therefore more concerned than ever over the need to maintain its political monopoly and bolster its political security.

Political Monopoly of the Chinese Communist Party

Given that the Chinese leaders are not willing to abandon Communism totally, it is clear that a Leninist strand will remain in China, as articulated in the Four Cardinal Principles. First proclaimed in March 1979 to curtail the democracy movement also known as the “Peking spring”, the Principles are:

1. We must keep to the socialist road.
2. We must uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat.
3. We must uphold the leadership of the Communist Party.
4. We must uphold Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.⁴⁷

Above all, the Four Cardinal Principles stress the overriding role of the Chinese Communist Party and its ideology. In the light of this, it comes as no surprise that, in April 1991, China showed deep concern over internal developments in the Soviet Union. During his meeting with former Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr

Bessmertnykh, Chinese leader Li Peng, maintained that it was up to “the people of a country to decide how they build their country and what path they take”, while expressing concern over the situation in the Soviet Union”.⁴⁸ This concern was evident again in May 1991, when President Jiang Zemin told Gorbachev that he was aware that the Soviet Union had been experiencing a “complicated and difficult period” and hoped that the Soviets would “surmount their existing temporary difficulties and score final victory in their social reform and construction”.⁴⁹ Gorbachev’s policies in the Soviet Union was beginning to raise parallel concerns in Beijing at that time as Chinese leaders began to rethink Beijing’s political security.

Above all, the August 1991 aborted coup in Moscow was a practical lesson for China, and the Chinese Communist Party in particular. The Chinese foreign ministry declared that “the changes in the Soviet Union were an internal matter and that China followed a policy of non-interference in another country’s affairs”.⁵⁰ However, it was clear that China remained concerned over the political developments in its northern neighbour.

During the abortive coup in Moscow, various leaders in China perceived the situation there in slightly different ways. There were those in China who were prepared to give support to the anti-Gorbachev plotters.⁵¹ There was no doubt that these Chinese leaders favoured the more conservative, orthodox elements of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. They were justifiably concerned about the impact the collapse of Soviet socialism would have on the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party. Within the limits of the official policy of non-interference, it is fair say that most were delighted with the coup but disappointed with its swift

collapse.⁵² In addition, the Chinese hard-liners at that time perceived that an anti-reform leadership in Moscow would be congruent with their efforts to stem the course of reforms in China.

However, it must be noted that support for the conservative elements in the Soviet Union was also extremely dangerous and risky. The ease of collapse of the Eastern European regimes had demonstrated the risks involved if China were to crudely counter the trends of Communism fading in the late twentieth century. It appeared that China hesitated in giving full support to a lost cause. The Chinese idiom, *sun sui tui chou*, is particularly apt here. The Chinese have always followed the tides of change and used it to their advantage. Moreover, Beijing needed to secure Western economic inputs for its economy and overt support for the hard-line Soviet communists would contradict their plans to see the lifting of the sanctions that had been imposed in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Incident.⁵³ The West might even strengthen calls for sanctions against China. Therefore, Beijing did was to adopt a cautious attitude to maximise its gains from the situation, cleverly camouflaging this dilemma on how to respond to the situation in Russia by repeated proclamations on the principle of non-interference of other countries' internal affairs. Furthermore, this stance also protected China's economic and political relations with post-Soviet successor regimes. This is a clear indication to the linkage of the political and economic aspects of China's security interests.

In general, the Chinese perceived Gorbachev's attempt to restructure the Soviet Communist Party as a bad example. The Chinese congratulated themselves on avoiding the Soviet mistakes in bringing about political reforms. An internal Chinese

document emphasised the need to “resolutely maintain the leadership of the party”, and prevent development of “a multi-party or parliamentary system”.⁵⁴ The Chinese Communist Party became more determined to maintain its dominance in domestic politics in order to ensure its legitimacy remains intact and its political security maintained.

The aborted coup also drew comparisons with the Tiananmen Incident in June 1989. Both were challenges to the ruling authorities from domestic enemies and, ironically, Gorbachev was visiting China at the time of the 1989 demonstrations. An internal document noted that China “resolutely suppressed” challenges “without the slightest mercy, whereas the Soviet [Committee of] Eight was unable to implement the dictatorship of the proletariat” and hence were defeated.⁵⁵ This reference to the use of force if necessary to control any disorder and restore stability was in line with the thinking of hard-liners such as Vice President General Wang Zhen, who stressed the need for China to “keep reminding itself of these costly mistakes made by the Russians”.⁵⁶ Hard-liners in China were even more convinced that unless opposition to party rule was ruthlessly crushed, challenges similar to those in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union might very well succeed in China. To them, such challenges emphasised that the authority of the Chinese Communist Party must never be challenged.

From the experiences of fellow communist states, the Chinese Communist Party has also earned a free lesson in maintaining its political security, especially with regards to the relationship between the military and the party. Perhaps one can argue that the difference was that the China’s People’s Liberation Army played an

important role in restoring order in Tiananmen in 1989, in contrast to the security forces of the former Communist states of Eastern Europe. To the Chinese leaders, the 1991 aborted Soviet coup emphasises the need to “maintain the party’s control over the gun” and more importantly, for the party to use the army to maintain political power.⁵⁷ Writers such as Chong-pin Lin have argued that the People’s Liberation Army differs from Western armies and also from the former Soviet and Eastern European armies in that it had a higher degree of political participation in the state.⁵⁸ Historically, the People’s Liberation Army and Chinese Communist Party were two sides of the same coin. Virtually all of the party’s political leaders in the pre-1949 period were also generals or political commissars in military units. Hence, the hierarchies of the Chinese Communist Party and the People’s Liberation Army remain inextricably intertwined; and Amos Perlmutter and William M Leo Grande have identified this type of leadership pattern as a “dual role elite”.⁵⁹ While this thesis does not focus on the Chinese military, it is worth noting that the connection between the People’s Liberation Army and Chinese Communist Party had helped China’s political security in the past and is likely to do so, albeit to a lesser degree, in the foreseeable future.

Although in the 1990s, the generation of military leaders that came to power through a Marxist style war of national liberation had gone, the fact that the party and army have formed throughout their history a single institutional system with a single elite performing simultaneously the functions of political and military leadership still stands. From the military’s perspective, a strong central government implies the allocation of greater funds to the People’s Liberation Army and it is possible to

describe the Chinese military as the “armed escort of reform”.⁶⁰ The military is also likely to support the reforming succession to Deng Xiaoping because it offered a better opportunity for stability.⁶¹ This in some ways adds to the explanation why the Chinese Communist Party still remains in power today. President Zemin’s recent attempt to “clean up” the military establishment by separating it from its vast economic interests has attracted the attention of many China analysts, although disruption of relations between the Chinese Communist Party and the People’s Liberation Army is likely to be restricted to the minimum.

Economic performance and legitimacy

It is not enough for the Chinese Communist Party to just rely on the military in order to hold on to power; something has to take the place left by the demise of Communism. Above all, in addition to the use of Confucian and nationalist ideologies discussed earlier, the party must now justify their legitimacy on material economic development rather than movement from one abstract Marxist category to another (socialism to communism). The Chinese Communist Party needs to find new substantive validating credentials in the performance and achievements of the economy to appease the masses it rules over and retain its power.

To be sure, undertaking this task is by no means straightforward. Chinese leaders have been engaged in heated debates over the official line to take in the light of Communism’s demise. After August 1991, there was a debate over the approach of the Chinese Communist Party would have to take to avoid the same consequences suffered by the Soviets. Hard-liners such as Deng Liqun argued that the party would

need to mount a “class struggle” against “bourgeois ideology” in order to enhance China’s political security; while the late Deng Xiaoping argued that the collapse of the Soviet Communist Party resulted from its failure in economic reforms, specifically caused by a lack of the sort of change he spearheaded in China, which led to economic hardship for the Soviet masses.⁶² This type of thinking is further reinforced by the Chinese perceptions that in the course of Soviet rivalry with the United States for global hegemony, the Soviet people suffered economically, with the Soviet Union’s national income declining to only half that of America’s.⁶³ As Martin Shaw also notes, the pressure of the arms race has generated “contradictory effects for the Soviet economic system”.⁶⁴ This type of reasoning has important lessons for Chinese leaders to learn.

The late Deng Xiaoping believed that this type of economic hardship would lead to demands for change and concluded that only continued economic reform and opening up to trade would help China.⁶⁵ Michael Yahuda argues that the late Deng’s advocacy of openness play a large part in China becoming the only Communist country or former Communist country to have succeeded in raising living standards in the process of market-oriented economic reforms.⁶⁶ Peter Ferdinand also argues that, perhaps, most important of all, China’s economic reforms have been more successful than the Soviet Union’s.⁶⁷ The standard of living of the people has risen and this has to a certain extent staved off demands for political change in China. Deng Xiaoping firmly believed in using economic growth to keep the masses happy so as to prevent major changes in the system; believing that this was the way to bolster political security. Some writers such as Lowell Dittmer also argue that the

Chinese perceive the possibility of collapse through internal political reforms to be equally or even more threatening than the “peaceful evolution” strategy.⁶⁸ The “peaceful evolution” strategy will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 7.

This type of argument is further vindicated when one looks at Samuel Huntington’s distinction between “procedural legitimacy” and “performance legitimacy”. In Huntington’s argument, “discussion of democratic norms dealing with the procedural aspects of competitive politics such as the recognition of the rights of political minorities, the freedoms of expression and organising and the institution of legislative oversight, contested elections and third party mediation say little about the outcomes of policies that result from these processes”.⁶⁹ This is especially true of China. Historically, regime authority in China has rarely been based on “procedural legitimacy”, but more dependent on “performance” in areas such as economics. It is clear that, since 1979, political legitimacy in China has gradually shifted from the ideological to the material, leading to the situation that promotion of economic growth and rising standards of living has become more important as a criterion for judging the Chinese regime.

In other words, for China’s leaders today, their legitimacy as rulers is tied to the reforms they initiated, much like Boris Yeltsin’s has been in Russia. The Chinese Communist Party realises that its time in power is likely to be short if tries to maintain a strictly Marxist-Leninist state. While economic modernisation may eventually threaten the monopoly of power held by the party, there is no alternative for the party but to place hopes of sustaining itself in power by continuing to satisfy the demands of the masses, this time through material success. Ideology is still

important, but appears to take second place to raising living standards in China, and the best way to gain legitimacy and bolster the communist party's political security is by continuing to generate widespread economic benefits for the Chinese masses through ongoing economic growth.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored China's security in relation to Russia and the collapse of communism. As far as the military aspect is concerned, China's security has been enhanced in the short term by the collapse of the Soviet Union. This is further reinforced by the fact that in general, since the late 1980s, China's relations with Russia have been proceeding in a direction desired by Beijing. In addition, China also seeks to enhance its economic interests vis-à-vis Russia.

However, the collapse of communism and the Soviet communist state have taught China some important lessons in the political aspects of security. Chinese leaders are very disturbed by the possible weakening of communist party control and are adamant that challenges to the party's authority must never be allowed to take place. The events of 1989 and 1991 only strengthened the determination of the Chinese Communist Party to take tough measures against any threats posed to its political security. Since the erosion of socialist values in the Soviet Union implies there will be a vacuum for other values to be filled and can create political uncertainties for Chinese Communist Party, the party must now rely on sustained economic growth to gain political legitimacy and bolster its political security.

As the largest remaining communist system, China is trying to use economic success to hold the state together. Regime stability now rests more than ever on effectiveness in economic performance. As far as the linkage between the political and economic aspects of security is concerned, the fundamental lesson the Chinese leaders need to learn is how to encourage economic growth and move towards a decentralised market economy driven by private capital, while at the same time maintaining political control and resisting any challenges to the communist party's political monopoly. Therefore, it is hoped that this chapter has shown that issues of political security, not often raised in most discussions on China's post-Cold War security agenda in relation to Russia, merit a higher degree of attention in academic circles.

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² Michael B. Yahuda, "The People's Republic of China at 40: Foreign relations," *The China Quarterly*, no. 119 (September 1989), pp. 524-525.

³ David Shambaugh, "China's security policy in the post-Cold War era," *Survival*, vol. 34, no. 2 (Summer 1992), p. 96.

⁴ "Renmin ribao: Jiang Zemin's USSR visit yields 'positive results'," Xinhua news agency, 19 May 91 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Far East*, 21 May 91, p. A2/1.

⁵ Robert Legvold, "Russia and the strategic quadrangle," in Michael Mandelbaum (ed.) *The Strategic Quadrangle: Russia, China, Japan, and the United States in East Asia* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1995), pp. 16- 62.

⁶ Harry Gelman, "Japan and China as seen from Moscow today," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, vol. 13, no. 4 (Winter 1994), pp. 49-60.

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- ⁷ “Russia and China sign defence agreement; arms trade not discussed,” ITAR-TASS news agency, 11 Nov 93 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 13 Nov 93, p. G/1.
- ⁸ Ju Mengjun, “Sino–Russian relations achieve fruitful results,” *Liaowang*, no. 42 (October 1997), p. 43.
- ⁹ Shi Ze, “On Sino-Russian relations in new era,” *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu (International Studies)*, no. 2 (April 96), pp. 1-8.
- ¹⁰ “Xinhua reports Sino-Russian presidential talks,” Xinhua news agency 25 Apr 96 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 27 Apr 96, p. G/4.
- ¹¹ Shu Xiangdi, “Russia’s Asia policy,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, no. 12 (December 20, 1994), pp. 4-7.
- ¹² “Five-nation border agreement signed in Shanghai,” Xinhua news agency, 26 Apr in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 27 Apr 96, p. G/1.
- ¹³ “Chinese party paper commentary hails Central Asian border accord,” Xinhua news agency, 24 Apr 97 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 26 Apr 97, p. G/1.
- ¹⁴ “Defence minister says China’s military diplomacy ‘unprecedentedly active’ in 1997,” Xinhua news agency 26 Dec 97, in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 30 Dec 97, p. G/112.
- ¹⁵ John W. Garver, “The Chinese Communist Party and the collapse of Soviet communism,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 133 (March 1993), p. 19.
- ¹⁶ “Chinese think-tank on Central Asia, NATO,” Zhongguo Xinwen She news agency, Beijing, in Chinese 20 Jan 98, in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 21 Jan 98 p. G/2.
- ¹⁷ Shi Ze, “On Sino-Russian relations in new era,” *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu [International Studies]*, no. 2 (April 1996), pp. 1-8.
- ¹⁸ “China and Russia issue joint statement,” *Beijing Review*, vol. 37, no. 37 (September 12-18, 1994), p. 18.
- ¹⁹ “Xinhua reports Sino-Russian presidential talks,” Xinhua news agency, 25 Apr 96 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 27 Apr 96, p. G/5.

²⁰ “Problems posed by the Soviet Union - a talk given by Gao Di, editor of the Renmin Ribao, to Communist Party editors and cadres on August 30, 1991,” in *The China Quarterly*, no. 130 (June 1992), Documentation, p. 487.

²¹ See Xu Yi and Long Wuhua, “On the relationship between foreign debt and political and military affairs,” *Zhenli De Zhuiqiu (Pursuit of Truth)*, no. 9 (September 1996), pp. 15-20.

²² Bonnie S. Glaser, “China’s security perceptions: interests and ambitions,” *Asian Survey*, vol. xxxiii, no. 3 (March 1993), p. 254.

²³ “Li Peng addresses national conference on nationalities affairs,” Xinhua news agency, 20 Feb 90 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 23 Feb 90, p. B2/1.

²⁴ “Central Asian countries promise Xinjiang military heads to suppress separatism,” Xinjiang Ribao, 3 Nov 97 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Far East*, 18 Nov 97, p. G/4.

²⁵ “Chinese think-tank on Central Asia, NATO,” Zhongguo Xinwen She news agency, Beijing, in Chinese 20 Jan 98, in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 21 Jan 98 p. G/2.

²⁶ “Chinese think-tank on Central Asia, NATO,” Zhongguo Xinwen She news agency, Beijing, in Chinese 20 Jan 98, in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 21 Jan 98 p. G/2.

²⁷ Vladimir Shlapentokh, “Russia, China and the Far East: Old geopolitics or a new peaceful co-operation?” *Communist and post-Communist Studies*, vol. 28, no. 3 (September 1995), p. 314.

²⁸ “Xinhua reports Sino-Russian presidential talks,” Xinhua news agency 25 Apr 96 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 27 Apr 96, p. G/4.

²⁹ Jin Junhui, “Main features of US-Russian relationship in 1995 and its future trend,” *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu (International Studies)*, no. 1 (January 1996), pp. 20-25.

³⁰ Ren Xianfang, “CIS: Resurrecting a Union?” *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 17 (April 22-28, 1996), pp. 8-9.

³¹ Ju Mengjun, “Sino-Russian relations achieve fruitful results,” *Liaowang*, no. 42 (October 1997), p. 43.

³² Keun-Wook Paik, "Energy co-operation in Sino-Russian relations: The importance of oil and gas," *The Pacific Review*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1996), p. 92.

³³ "Text of Russian-Chinese joint declaration," ITAR-TASS news agency, 10 Nov 97, in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 11 Nov 97, p. G/3.

³⁴ See James Clay Moltz, "Regional tensions in the Russo-Chinese rapprochement," *Asian Survey*, vol. xxxv, no. 6 (June 1995), pp. 519-526; Vladimir Shlapentokh, "Russia, China and the Far East: Old geopolitics or a new peaceful co-operation?" *Communist and post-Communist Studies*, vol. 28, no. 3, (September 1995). p. 310.

³⁵ Jiang Yi, "Sino-Russian ties: new constructive partnership," *Beijing Review*, vol. 38, no. 46, (November 13-19, 1995) p. 10; and "Xinhua reports Sino-Russian presidential talks," 25 Apr 96 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 27 Apr 96, p. G/5.

³⁶ John W. Garver, "The Chinese Communist Party and the collapse of Soviet communism," *The China Quarterly*, no. 133 (March 1993), pp. 9-10.

³⁷ "CPSU international relations department head in China meets Jiang Zemin," Peking Television, 28 Dec 89 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Far East*, 30 Dec 89, p. A2/1.

³⁸ Lowell Dittmer, "China and Russia: new beginnings," in Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Relations in the post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1994, 3rd ed.), p. 100.

³⁹ Although Communism is theoretically universal, a communist political system can only take place in the national context. See Michael B Yahuda, "Chinese foreign policy and the collapse of communism," *SAIS Review*, vol. 12. no. 1 (Winter/Spring 1992), p. 129.

⁴⁰ Michael B Yahuda, "Chinese foreign policy and the collapse of communism," *SAIS Review*, vol. 12. no. 1 (Winter/Spring 1992), p.129.

⁴¹ "Problems posed by the Soviet Union - a talk given by Gao Di, editor of the Renmin Ribao, to Communist Party editors and cadres on August 30, 1991," in *The China Quarterly*, no. 130 (June 1992) Documentation, p. 483.

⁴² “Jiang Zemin, ‘we cannot do without the Yanan spirit’,” Xinhua news agency, 14 Sep 89 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Far East*, 19 Sep 89, p. B2/2.

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⁵⁵ “Problems posed by the Soviet Union - a talk given by Gao Di, editor of the Renmin Ribao, to Communist Party editors and cadres on August 30, 1991,” in *The China Quarterly*, no. 130 (June 1992) Documentation, p. 487.

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CHAPTER 4: THE KOREAN PENINSULA

In this chapter, we look at China's security interests in relation to post-Cold War developments on the Korean peninsula. We look at the North Korea's enduring importance to China's political and military security, which is matter debated by scholars today. It will be argued that North Korea continues to be important to China, especially in terms of Beijing's political security. As for South Korea, the emphasis here is on China's economic security. The final part of this chapter looks China's interests in relation to the Korean peninsula as a whole.

North Korea: A military and political buffer state

From the perspective of China's security, North Korea is vital. China's military and political security requires a stable, friendly neighbouring state. North Korea shares a border with China and is also adjacent to one of China's key industrial areas, Manchuria. From Beijing's perspective, an adversary force controlling the Korean peninsula can use it as a launching pad to invade China itself. In the past, after occupying Korea in 1910, Japanese troops used Korea as a ^{launching pad to attack China in} 1937.

~~In~~ the Korean War, American troops under the auspices of the United Nations moved launching pad for attacks into China proper in subsequent years. Furthermore, during northwards from the southern part of the peninsula, too close for China's comfort. Perceiving its own military security to be at stake, China then felt it had to respond militarily. Hence, as far as its military security is concerned, it is quite clear that China would like to have a buffer zone between it and its potential enemies in the post-Cold War era,

North Korea's importance as a buffer state is further reinforced by China's historical relationship with Korea. Korea was a tributary state when China was strong and powerful.¹ It was only when the power of the Qing dynasty declined at the turn of the century that China had to vie with other regional powers for the control of Korea. North Korea shares a border with Russia, and is only separated from the Japanese islands by less than fifty miles of ocean. In addition to China, both Russia and Japan are also unlikely to sit by idly should any crisis break out on the peninsula, so near their territories. Therefore, China is wary that other powers may get involved so near on its doorstep, proximate to its capital, should its North Korean ally collapse or get involved in a war. Specifically, in the post-Cold War era, the loss of North Korea means that China will be deprived of an indispensable security buffer against potential enemies such as Japan and the United States.

Therefore, as far as military security is concerned, it comes as no surprise that Chinese leaders continue to emphasise North Korea's enduring importance to China, comparing it to the function of the lips in protecting one's teeth. The Chinese idiom, *chun wang chi han*, which means that once the lips are dead, there will be nothing left to protect one's teeth from the cold, is particularly apt. In short, North Korea's continuing existence is vital to China. Examining this from the perspective of military security, the important thing to note is that military links have been maintained and the 1961 Sino-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance is still very much valid.² This view is also echoed by countries in the region, such as South Korea. For instance South Korea's Ministry of National Defence perceives that there are no signs of any

particular change in the China-North Korea relationship, despite Beijing's "dual track policy" that is increasingly leaning toward economic relations with South Korea.³

In political and military terms, China is still adamant to keep its North Korean ally. While Boris Yeltsin announced in 1992 that guaranteed Russian military assistance to North Korea in the event of war, as laid down in their 1961 Treaty of Mutual Friendship, no longer applies, China's still maintains its defence alliance with North Korea. For instance, when North Korea announced in May 1994 that it would withdraw from the Military Armistice Commission (MAC), China later withdrew the delegation of the Chinese People's Volunteers from the MAC in an apparent show of solidarity. An alternative body known as the Korean People's Army Panmunjom Mission was subsequently established with North Korea renewing its call for bilateral negotiations between itself and the United States to replace the armistice agreement with a peace treaty. In political terms, Beijing's links with Pyongyang also appear to be more prominent than those with Seoul. The principal reason appears to be the US-South Korean alliance and Beijing's deep suspicions over United States hegemonic intentions in the region.⁴ North Korea is still valuable as an ally, insofar as China continues to view the United States as a threat; an issue explored in Chapter 8.

To ensure North Korea remains an ally, China needs to sustain the North Korean regime, although the degree of commitment is a matter of debate. For example, China is reported to have told South Korea that it will come forward to prevent that the North Korean regime from collapse by sending food and other assistance whenever the regime faces a "critical point".⁵ As far as sending aid to

North Korea is concerned, the Chinese also feel that due to the conflicting points of view among the three main aiding states, Japan, the United States and South Korea, many political conditions have been attached to the aid process. One Chinese article notes that for instance, the United States requires that North Korea fulfils its nuclear agreements, Japan wants North Korea to accelerate the normalisation of diplomatic ties between the two countries, and South Korea wants to resume dialogue with North Korea and increase transparency in the distribution of grain aid.⁶ In this article, China was not mentioned as a helper, suggesting that North Korea had to resolve the grain crisis by adapting to change while maintaining a stable political situation. This type of Chinese thinking suggests that Beijing wants others to bear the financial brunt for helping North Korea, while it reaps the benefits accruing from a continuing North Korean regime.

In reality, the ossification of the North Korean regime can be traced back to the nature of the system Kim Il-Sung created, which is characterised by the inseparability of its political, economic and foreign policy aspects. Preservation of the regime normally requires adherence to established dogma in all areas of policy and fundamental changes such as the complete abandonment of socialism, is likely to undermine the stability of the regime itself. This is similar to the argument relating to the Chinese Communist Party, as stated in the previous chapter.

In addition, claims of North Korea's economic self-sufficiency in accordance with its *Juche* ideology have proved to be false. In December 1993, North Korea for the first time officially acknowledged huge economic failings.⁷

North Korea's ailing economy is generally attributed to two factors. First, North Korea's external trade environment has deteriorated since the end of the Cold War. Deliveries of raw materials and fuel, previously obtained by barter from the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries, have decreased, causing a decline in overall factory production. Secondly, North Korea's heavy military debt burden of an estimated US\$6 billion, a huge strain on its economy, uses up much needed material and financial resources.⁸

Undoubtedly, the economic well being of North Korea is essential to China. Should the North Korean regime collapse, China would probably have to face an exodus of refugees. Domestic instability in North Korea or the use of force by the regime against South Korea could mean that China has to respond in some manner. Another war on the peninsula would mean that China has to come to the aid of North Korea lest its inaction be regarded as a sign of decline of Beijing's military standing in the world. Any conflicts on the Korean peninsula will go against China's desire for a stable regional environment, which is a necessity for its economic development in the race catch up with the established nations.

It is quite evident that Chinese interests require the gradual evolution of North Korea towards economic reform rather than sudden transformation or collapse. For instance, Robert Scalapino notes that China cannot condone the wholesale change of the Pyongyang regime.⁹ The economic systems of Communist countries are intertwined with their political ideologies. Both the Korean and Chinese communist parties have come to power by adopting socialist ideology. China hopes that North Korea will follow the path it has taken to

ensure the survival of the Communist regime. Ensuring the continuing material well being of the masses by pursuing economic growth, as the late Deng Xiaoping had argued, could be one way to resist attempts to change the communist political system. In fact, many North Korean officials reportedly recognise that they can benefit from China's experience with market reforms, rather than a straightforward implementation of the Chinese model, in the course of "pursuing socialism with North Korean characteristics".¹⁰

On its part, Pyongyang has recently shown renewed interest in attracting foreign investment and joining international financial institutions. However, this will be dependent on, for example, the United States and South Korea dropping their severe restrictions on trading with North Korea and supporting its membership in international economic institutions such as the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Japan has already agreed that establishing relations with North Korea will bring an aid package of US\$4.13bn as reparation for the 1910-45 colonial period, which it has done similarly for South Korea in 1965.¹¹ China encourages such positive responses from the outside world, if only to ensure it does not have to bail its North Korean ally out financially. To be precise, China's strategy in prompting North Korea to engage in economic reforms is not designed to bring about liberalisation of the North Korean political system but to promote stability in its buffer state; the strategy has been formulated to enhance military and political security on China's borders.

North Korea as a political ally

Apart from the purely military aspects of security, one has to realise that historical ties between the North Korean and Chinese communist parties still exist, although the strength of this bonding has been much disputed. Such ties, however, are still important to the Chinese leadership and this is also true when one looks at it from the North Korean perspective. For example, the 47th anniversary of China's entry into the Korean War, the North Korean news agency describes the Chinese act as a "living example of the proletarian international support"; adding that the valued Sino-North Korean friendship "has overcome all trials and is not affected by the changed situation after the Cold War".¹² In particular, the North Koreans note that the friendly relations between the peoples of North Korea and China play a beneficial role in defending the common cause of socialism and independence, "advancing the revolution and construction in the two countries".¹³ While one may dismiss the propagandistic tone of such statements, however, there is no doubt that "blood" ties between the Chinese and North Koreans were forged during the anti-Japanese war in the 1930s and 1940s, and subsequently strengthened by both the Korean War and the Cold War rivalry that pitted communist against capitalist states. Further evidence of the "blood" ties between the Korean Workers Party (KWP) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) occurred when President Jiang Zemin became one of the first foreign leaders to be informed of Kim Jong-Il's public confirmation as North Korea's leader during the 50th anniversary of the KWP's founding.¹⁴

More importantly for our analysis, North Korea relates to the political security of the Chinese regime since both are communist, and communism, in any

variant or form, has been both the ruling ideology and more importantly the basis on which these regimes came to power and had retained power for such a long time. The collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states has corroded the legitimacy of communism as a political ideology. China and North Korea are currently among the few Communist regimes left in the world and in fact both states are the only Communist survivors in Northeast Asia, following the demise of the Soviet and Mongolian communists. In terms of ideology and bolstering political security, it is only natural that China sustains its ties with North Korea, its last socialist ally in Northeast Asia.

However, rather than any ideological emphasis on a particular form of Asian proletarian movement, both China and North Korea appear to place emphasis on fighting against foreign subversive influences and outside interference in their internal affairs. For example, during the 1989 Tiananmen Incident, North Korea publicly endorsed the Chinese government position, and mutual support in the domain of ideology and domestic politics has become even more important in the post-Cold War era as both states attempt to counter the Western strategy of “peaceful evolution”.¹⁵ After the Cold War ended, it can be argued that a combination of anti-American feeling has actually helped to restore some of their former closeness.

This anti-American feeling is also evident when China expresses concern over the presence of foreign troops on the peninsula and implicitly supports North Korea’s criticism of the large-scale Team Spirit exercises held by the United States and South Korea.¹⁶ To the Chinese, the end of the Cold War means that such large-scale exercises are unnecessary as the Soviet threat has dissipated; they

see the joint military manoeuvres by the United States and South Korea as a threat to its North Korean ally, indirectly threatening Beijing as well. Such a stance is also adopted by North Korea, who criticised the joint military drill codenamed “Foal Eagle” involving most of the American troops stationed in South Korea and the 650,000 strong South Korea “puppet” army in October 1997.¹⁷ While official Chinese rhetoric has always called for the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea, during the Cold War, Chinese diplomats privately conveyed the opposite because the American troops also served as a buffer against the Soviet Union.¹⁸ Once the Russian threat diminishes, China has become more concerned about the presence of any foreign troops on the Korean peninsula.

Whatever the underlying reason, it is clear that China’s concern has been given an added impetus by Beijing’s perception of an aggressive United States determined not only to assert its hegemony over Northeast Asia, but also to export Western democracy as well. The United States has also alluded to the possibility of using selective United Nations economic sanctions against North Korea for its intransigence on nuclear inspection matters. However, Washington would have to rely on China, amongst others, for support for such sanctions to work effectively since the United States does little trade with North Korea.¹⁹ China has the power to scupper the sanctions both either by a veto in the UN Security Council and also through supplying North Korea with essentials in the event of the sanctions. In fact, as North Korea’s main supplier of food grain and oil, China has openly opposed using these sanctions, backing its ally against what it perceives as American hegemony in the post-Cold War era.²⁰

Having discussed the military and political aspects of security, one also has to look at China's economic interests in relation to North Korea. It is interesting to note that since the Second World War, China's relations with North Korea has been characterised by a large lop-sided economic aid program and barter trade for Pyongyang's benefit, with almost all economic transactions based on political considerations.²¹ Today, China's economic interests in relation to North Korea are minimal, compared to the gains Beijing can obtain from North Korea's rival, South Korea. In this light, Beijing has decided to follow Moscow's lead in demanding for cash payments in trade with North Korea effective from January 1, 1993.²² Beijing stopped supplying crude oil to North Korea in barter trade while earlier, it annually supplied about 1.2 million tons of crude oil, of which 650, 000 tons were in the form of barter trade and the remaining 550,000 ton on credit.²³ In short, one may argue that today, it seems that North Korea is being outflanked to some extent by the growing interests of its traditional communist ally, China, who is expanding its economic relations with South Korea.

However, in relation to economic co-operation in the Yellow Sea Rim, China is likely to gain if North Korea opens up. In fact, Japan and even more so, South Korea would like to see China play the key role in opening North Korea to the rest of the world. The Yellow Sea Rim may produce a natural economic "bridge" to bring this about.²⁴ Although at present the economic and political climate is not ripe yet to institute a formal Yellow Sea Rim Economic Co-operation, one can imagine that a key motivation for some type of agreement would create a strong enticement for Pyongyang to become involved, perhaps

with China initiating a bilateral agreement with North Korea first. This type of scenario may be years away, as many smaller building blocks need to be achieved first. Nevertheless, it appears that China is the only one who can do that, and it can also enhance its economic security in the process. We can now turn to the role South Korea plays in contributing to China's economic security.

Economic interests and South Korea

In order to explore China's economic interests in relation to South Korea, it is helpful to see how the normalisation between Seoul and Beijing in August 1992 came about. Before the end of the Cold War, rapprochement between the two sides was slow. The first official contacts occurred in 1978 and did not increase until the 1980s. The fear of losing its ideological ally, Pyongyang, means that for a decade, Beijing made diplomatic ties with Seoul contingent upon the implementation of formal links between the United States/Japan and North Korea.

The end of the Cold War brought about changes in the pattern of inter-Korean relationship and the structure of the great power relationship around the Korean peninsula. Russia established formal diplomatic ties with Seoul, and Pyongyang began talks with Washington and Tokyo on the normalisation of relations. China's neighbours also improved the political climate in the region. For instance, Tokyo adjusted its policy toward the Korean peninsula from tilting toward South Korea to a more balanced one with both Koreas. This to a certain extent gave an incentive for Beijing, and also Moscow, to adjust their traditional ties with North Korea and start a balanced policy toward both Seoul and Pyongyang. One Chinese assessment written in the 1990s argues that great power

relationship on the Korean issue, formerly organised around two blocs during the Cold War, is being replaced by a dual structure that centres on North Korea-four great powers on one hand and South Korea-four great powers, on the other.²⁵

This change in the geopolitical landscape means that the Chinese had to revise their policy and try to extend their influence to the southern half of the Korean peninsula. The normalisation of ties between Moscow and Seoul presented an attractive new opening and precedent. Beijing followed Moscow, not willing to lose out on the benefits accruing from South Korean trade deals, which would enhance its economic security.

A complementary and perhaps more important factor was South Korea's "Northern Policy" adopted in July 1988 to improve diplomatic relations with China and the former Soviet Union. With China, this policy had the twin objectives of strengthening economic ties and establishing political dialogue with Beijing on North Korea.²⁶ Although China reacted cautiously initially, the pragmatic policy of the late Deng Xiaoping gradually allowed it to alter its traditional aversion to a two-Korea policy.

Therefore, in 1991, as a member of the Security Council, Beijing did not veto Seoul's application to join the United Nations (UN). This was despite that fact that for decades, South Korea's suggestion of simultaneous participation with North Korea in the UN was vehemently opposed by Pyongyang, who saw it as symbolising national division. The Chinese decision in effect left North Korea with little alternative but to set aside its declared principle and apply for simultaneous UN membership in May 1991. It also appeared that, at that time, Beijing was worried that supporting North Korea might jeopardise its relations

with the pro-Seoul position of all other permanent members of the Security Council.

In addition, in its bid to participate in regional trade organisations, China evinced remarkable pragmatism and flexibility by sending a foreign minister to Seoul for the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) meeting in November 1991, in the process risking offending Pyongyang.²⁷ One can interpret this as a way of Beijing's skilful foreign policy manoeuvring in an attempt to enhance the economic aspects of its comprehensive security.

During the process of establishing relations with South Korea in 1992, China kept North Korea informed as it did not wish to upset its traditional ally in any severe manner. Beijing was in many ways trying to soften the psychological blow its normalisation with South Korea might deal to North Korea. However, in reality, China probably calculated that North Korea had no friends left in the world and would not be able to do much to block its relations with South Korea. Seeking to facilitate its enormous increase in bilateral trade with South Korea, the Chinese had obviously done an economic cost-benefit analysis in this regard. In addition, there has been a linkage to China's political and military security in the normalisation process with South Korea. According to an internal Chinese text published in the Japanese press, it was stated that, among other things, normalisation would allow South Korea to "escape the influence of the US and Japan" and "make it impossible for the US and Japan to check China with inter-Korea issues".²⁸

Above all, China's move to establish ties with South Korea in 1992 was primarily motivated by economic factors. By extending its relations to the

southern part of the Korean peninsula, China hopes to discover new opportunities to facilitate its ongoing economic modernisation program. China is a developing country with an enormous supply of low cost labour and abundant resources. South Korea, despite the economic crisis it experienced in 1997-1998, is a newly industrialised nation with a booming economy and has many technology-intensive industries. China sees South Korea as the natural economic partner for achieving its development goals.

Bilateral trade in 1994 reached US\$11.72 billion, an increase of 42.5 percent from the previous year.²⁹ China has become the leading target for investment by South Korea. By the end of 1995, South Korea-funded projects had numbered 5800 with contracted investments approaching US\$6 billion.³⁰ South Korea is among currently the four largest investors in China, along with Japan, the United States and Singapore. Top Chinese leaders such as former premier Li Peng notes that the rapid development of bilateral economic relations has “laid a solid foundation for friendly ties”.³¹

According to the South Korean government’s estimate of the mid-1990s, China will become Seoul’s largest trading partner by the end of this century, with a two-way trade of US\$56 billion.³² The recent economic downturn in South Korea might have some negative impact on this projection, but it is fair to say that bilateral trade between China and South Korea will continue to grow. China is now South Korea’s largest overseas investment area. Up to September 1993, South Korean businesses invested US\$1.5 billion in 2153 projects in China, especially in the provinces of Shandong and Liaoning.³³ In fact, South Korea is well poised to transform Shandong Province, which lies across the Yellow Sea

from the Korean Peninsula, as another export-launching pad since much of its investment and trade is concentrated nearby.³⁴ Driven by domestic policy change, South Korea had initially floated the idea of a “Yellow Sea Economic Zone” when it established its south–western coast as a national priority in 1988. A testament to the strong economic complementarities between Northeast China and South Korea was the rapid shift in Korean investment from China’s southern provinces to the Bohai Sea areas in recent years.³⁵ Indeed, South Korea plays a significant role in the provinces of Shandong, Liaoning and Jilin and figures positively in China’s internal policy shift towards emphasising development of the Bohai Seas in order to balance the two economic development centres of Shanghai and the southern provinces. For China, this has proved to be one way of reducing disparities between the rates of economic development between the northern and southern provinces. More importantly, such policies clearly enhance China’s economic security.

In addition, China’s effort to develop economic ties with South Korea is not only aimed at immediate trade benefits but is also intended to allow China to diversify its economic partners and reduce its technological and economic dependence on a few foreign sources. By normalising relations with South Korea, China has added a major trading partner. Economic ties with Seoul can to a certain extent reduce Chinese dependence on trade and investment from other major partners, especially the United States and Japan. For the Chinese leaders, it represents one way of coping with the insecurity of living in an interdependent global economic system. Moreover, South Korea’s economic structures and technology may be more suitable for China’s modernisation programmes than

Japan's and other Western countries' in terms of expense and technology transfer.³⁶

Furthermore, South Korea has proven more reliable as a trading partner, compared to the Western countries. Although Sino-Korean relations underwent a temporary setback following the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, South Korea was keen to improve relations as soon as possible. After all, in 1980, South Korea has its own Kwangju Incident, often compared to the Tiananmen Incident in China. Beijing-Seoul relations have paralleled and even transcended Beijing-Pyongyang relations in the context of view that South Korea can act as a successful economic model for Beijing.³⁷ Beijing is also interested in the way the South Koreans combined the achievements of rapid economic growth with an authoritarian political system, at least up to the 1980s. The coincidence of South Korea's move to democracy with its current economic difficulties may also have some resonance in Beijing, perhaps suggesting that a more pluralistic political system is not conducive to achieving rapid economic success. China wants to have the best of both worlds, as its approach to security is comprehensive, encompassing the military, political and economic aspects.

The improvement in the relations of Sino-South Korean economic cooperation reflects both a foundation of naturally endowed economic complementarities and a degree of political confidence between the political actors. In this regard, Ralph Cossa and Jane Khanna have contrasted the booming Sino-South Korean economic transactions across the Yellow Sea Rim with the UN-endorsed Tumen River Area Development Program that, despite Chinese encouragement, failed to ignite because of lingering security tensions between the

two Koreas, Japan and Russia, as well as a perception in Russia that China would gain more.³⁸

To be sure, the Yellow Sea Rim project is important to China, South Korea and also Japan, as all are seeking to create multiple options for political relations and to cast the widest net possible in their search for economic relations.³⁹ Specifically, the China-South Korea component of the Yellow Sea co-operation has made the most headway in both economic and political terms, while relations with China and Japan are progressing at a more gradual pace. Economic relations between China and Japan will be dealt with in Chapter 5. At present, the trend towards the dominance of economics acts as a hedge against military security threats that do not have the clarity compared to those during the Cold War, and a shift in focus away from superpower confrontation back to regional economic security. Viewed from a global perspective, Yellow Sea Rim economic co-operation has much potential in Northeast Asia as China, South Korea and Japan can carve out a sphere of influence that is not only economically grounded, but also fosters political and cultural ties.

There is no doubt that there is a growing emphasis on economic interests in China's South Korea policy, and this emphasis is likely to remain for the foreseeable future. Economic integration has, to a certain extent, become an end in itself of Beijing's foreign policy as well as a means to facilitate the policy. Traditional Chinese policy in the past towards the Korean peninsula was military oriented and North Korea centred. Today, it is clear that Beijing wants a more comprehensive approach to security that stresses military, political and economic relations, and attaches equal importance to its relations with both Pyongyang and Seoul.

Quest for a stable Korean Peninsula

Having discussed China's security interests in relation to North and South Korea separately, it is now time to assess the larger issue of China's quest for a stable Korean peninsula, which is fundamental to its security. To be sure, President Jiang Zemin has stated that "without peace and stability on the Korean peninsula, there will be no genuine peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region".⁴⁰ Any adverse development on the Korean peninsula will be disastrous for China's ongoing modernisation goals and economic security. For example, during the April 1996 intra-Korean border tension, Beijing worried about the possibility of conflict on the peninsula, stressing that it would continue its "constructive role" in inducing peace.⁴¹ Beijing also joined Moscow in calling for both parties to "refrain from taking any acts that might impede détente".⁴² After all, China has often sought to play a major role in defusing tensions on the peninsula, largely out of self-interest.

China's role is also related to the fundamental question on the signing of a Korean peninsula peace agreement to replace the cease-fire agreement. Chinese academics acknowledge that after more than forty years, the cease-fire agreement signed in 1953 at Panmunjom by the Korean People's Army and the Chinese Volunteer Army on one side and by the United Nations troops on the other, needs to be revised to cope with the changing situation on the peninsula.⁴³ The *Renmin Ribao* also recognises that the armistice agreement signed during the Cold War "does not suit the development and change seen in the international pattern" and

added that the issues concerning the Korean peninsula left over by the Cold War system “have shifted into the orbit of dialogue, peaceful settlement”.⁴⁴

In 1994, Beijing gave its tacit support for a “new peace arrangement” advocated by Pyongyang, when it announced the withdrawal of its delegation to the Korean War Military Armistice Commission. However, as shown in a statement later, former Chinese Premier Li Peng employed the term “new peace mechanism” and not the term “new peace arrangement” used by the North Koreans.⁴⁵ The Chinese term, “new peace mechanism”, was conceived in a broad sense to mean a new system replacing the armistice system and it was received favourably and referred to in South Korea as the “two-plus-two” formula (North and South Korea, and the United States and China). This was in many ways a precursor to the current four-party talks between China, the United States and the two Koreas, initially proposed by President Clinton and former South Korean President Kim Young-sam in April 1997 to discuss the establishment of the “new peace mechanism” for the Korean peninsula to replace the existing cease-fire mechanism.

In the eyes of the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, the stumbling block for the four party talks appears to be the tension between the US and North Korea.⁴⁶ North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-kwan in December 1997 repeated the calls for withdrawal of American forces from the Korean peninsula before signing a peace treaty between North Korea and the United States, and also insisted that the United States lift economic sanctions, while the US side argued that American troops stationed on the Korean peninsula are needed to preclude a possible invasion of South Korea by North Korea.

Although China continues to take a keen interest in the four-party talks, it expects only “gradual and incremental progress”, knowing that they will be a “long and tortuous process”.⁴⁷

For our purpose here, it is important to note that China has now positioned itself as the key intermediary in the Korean situation. Only the United States acts as an external party with any real leverage on this situation, despite the key interests of Japan and Russia. At the same time, strains in Beijing’s relations with the United States do not give China any incentive to assist South Korea, a US ally, to seek closer ties with North Korea.⁴⁸ What Beijing has adopted was a cautious approach, going as far as it could to persuade Pyongyang to engage in further rapprochement with Seoul while not appearing to side with South Korea.

Naturally, China is opposed to any aggressive behaviour on the part of either Pyongyang or Seoul that will jeopardise the stability of the area and consequently, perhaps, its own security. Such behaviour would also make it difficult for China to respond, given that it still values its traditional friendship with North Korea while at the same time increasing close economic ties with South Korea.⁴⁹ Therefore, it came as no surprise that China welcomed the historic “Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression and Exchange and Co-operation between the South and the North” (the Basic Accord) on December 13, 1991, which provided the basis for the establishment of a peace system on the Korean peninsula. The Basic Accord also led to North Korea and South Korea agreeing on the Joint Declaration on De-nuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, with the two sides agreeing to allow mutual inspections of suspected nuclear facilities. Chinese President Jiang Zemin has also told the former South Korean

president, Kim Young Sam, that “China supports the call for a nuclear free Korean peninsula”.⁵⁰

From Pyongyang’s perspective, developing nuclear weapons program seems to be a cost-effective deterrent and “strategic equaliser” in its competition with South Korea.⁵¹ In actual fact, China knows that the risks of allowing North Korea to develop nuclear weapons are huge, as there are implications for China’s own security. Indeed, revelations in 1991 that North Korea either possesses or can imminently possess nuclear weapons would hardly have come as a surprise to China. Both countries have collaborated in nuclear research for decades, and a number of North Korean scientists actually studied in China.

More importantly, it has been pointed out that if the United States fail to fulfil its commitment to protect South Korea, then Seoul would seek nuclear weapons itself.⁵² Japan might acquire their own nuclear weapons in response to the nuclearisation of North Korea and Taiwan might follow. All these would deprive China of being the sole nuclear power in the region, possessing the concomitant clout in international politics. Moreover, such developments are likely to trigger a nuclear arms race in the region and make the regional environment more volatile, which China does not want.

In short, China desires a less militarised Korean peninsula. This would, for instance, permit Chinese forces in the Shenyang Military Region to be reduced.⁵³ China could then divert its limited resources to pursuing economic growth in its north-eastern provinces. In particular, China could seize the opportunity to play an active role in promoting regional economic co-operation schemes such as the Tumen River Area Development Program.⁵⁴ If such schemes become successful,

this means that China can avoid the concentration of its economic activities in the southern provinces of Guangdong and Fujian, thereby ensuring a more even pattern of economic development, reducing income disparities between provinces and lessening the centrifugal tendencies of the Chinese state.

Korean reunification

With the aim of fuelling its ongoing economic growth in mind, it is inevitable that in the longer term, the issue of Korean reunification looms large in China's security calculations. On this issue, China has publicly endorsed the former North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung's reunification project to establish a confederation in 1991. During talks with Kim, Chinese President Jiang Zemin supported his position, which is based on "one nation, one country, two systems and two governments".⁵⁵ At the same time, China has also made it clear that it supports the suggestion for peaceful reunification put forward by South Korea in 1989, known as the Korean National Community Unification Formula, which features a step-by-step approach to reunification.⁵⁶ Essentially, Seoul's approach is the formation of a unified state after a process of recovering a sense of single national community through exchanges and co-operation, whereas Pyongyang's proposal calls for an immediate solution to unify the country.

In any case, Beijing's interest with regard to the task of Korean reunification is due mainly to its goal of engendering a peaceful regional environment. Therefore, Beijing constantly emphasises that only peaceful means must be used to achieve reunification on the peninsula in order to ensure that stability in the region will not be threatened. The central challenge for China is to

make the external environment safe and peaceful for its modernisation drive, therefore China is more interested in maintaining peace and stability in the Korean peninsula rather than specifically in bringing about Korean reunification. Beijing's policies pertaining to Korean reunification are pragmatic, as its Korean policies in the post-Cold War era have generally proved to be.

Another important point worth noting is that Beijing prefers that the Koreans resolve the process of reunification themselves, with outside pressure kept to a minimum.⁵⁷ Beijing is wary that other foreign powers may get involved in the region. China's aim of reducing the probability of other powers getting involved has historical roots. Regional powers such as Japan and Russia had competed for influence over Korea when China was weak. Japan had first moved in to curtail China's influence on the peninsula, with the 1885 Convention of Tianjin confirming a "co-protectorate" over Korea; the convention established an equal right for Japan to intervene in Korea, thereby confirming that China no longer lay sole claim to suzerainty over Korea. China subsequently lost the 1894-1895 war against Japan and had to agree to the independence of Korea. China's influence over Korea was finally ended when Japan occupied the country in 1910. Today, Beijing is anxious to avoid this scenario happening again, especially since Japan is emerging as a great power. Moreover, China is also keen to avoid any possible American intervention, such as those under the auspices of the United Nations in the Korean War.

A unified Korea?

Without doubt, the possible reunification of the two Koreas has important implications for China's security interests. For instance, China would be concerned about Seoul absorbing Pyongyang through "peaceful evolution" or in the event of a North Korean collapse. Beijing knows that both scenarios are unattractive and even threatening to China's interests. South Korea absorbing North Korea, a communist state, can never be a desired outcome as there will then be acute political legitimacy implications for the survival of the Chinese communist state system itself, as noted in the previous chapter. From Seoul's perspective, it may not be able to afford a German style absorption of North Korea, partly because the South Korean economy is weaker than that of West Germany and partly because the economic gap between the two Koreas is much larger in relative terms than that between East and West Germany.⁵⁸ Seoul would have to bear most of the burden and in any case, and this might lead to chaos on China's borders.

At the extreme, a reunified Korea, sympathetic to the West, would mean that foreign presence, such as American, close to the Yalu River. Moreover, a unified Korea might even pursue claims against China for territory along their common border, given that parts of southern Manchuria had been under Korean rule in the past.⁵⁹ A united Korea could also serve as an economic competitor to China.

With reference to Japan, China and the Koreas are all former victims of Japanese colonialism and aggression. Hence, they continue to watch their neighbour to the east with a wary eye. Although Japan had already established

relations with South Korea in 1965, the anti-Japanese sentiment is still pervasive among both North and South Koreans throughout the peninsula, due largely to Japan's historical record. Thus, this represents the one factor around which all Koreans can unite in the long term. Japanese colonialism is often perceived by the Koreans as humiliating and oppressive, in contrast to the previous Chinese influence and control. Moreover, Chinese leaders past and present view their control over Korea as a "natural order" with Chinese characters and Confucianism readily absorbed in Korean society.⁶⁰ China will be eager to use this situation to its advantage. China and the two Koreas can even work together to constrain a strong Japan in the long term since neither will ever accept Japanese leadership of any kind in East Asian politics.

Furthermore, China would also like to encourage Japanese and Korean rivalry for this represents a sound strategy and cost-effective way of attracting more Japanese investment and technology. Korea and Japan can compete economically and that could give China more favourable concessionary terms of trade and investments from both sides. China's co-operation with Korea could also serve to counter the economic power of Japan in the region. Besides, Beijing prefers not to rely solely on Japanese investment to sustain its economic growth. In short, Korean unification will be beneficial to the Chinese only if they are confident that their security interests are being respected.

For Beijing, the ideal regional environment would be one in which it can pursue its economic growth without regional powers competing for influence on its doorstep. It is evident that in Chinese eyes, maintaining a peaceful Korean peninsula includes some sort of Chinese influence over the region, and it is

precisely this influence that gives China a means to enhance its regional great power status. Some observers such as Kay Moeller and Markus Tidten argue that Beijing's desire to acquire influence on the peninsula can be seen as "the starting point for a return to Pax Sinica in the region".⁶¹

China as a regional power: Security interests

Historically, as a regional power, China had interests on the Korean peninsula. China controlled parts of Korea even before the founding of a unified Korean state in the seventh century.⁶² In 1259, the Koreans surrendered to the Mongols, who had conquered China itself. Between 1368 and 1644, Korea was a tributary vassal of the Ming dynasty. The Manchu dynasty, which succeeded the Ming, conquered the Korean peninsula before subjugating China. Hence, from both the geopolitical and historical standpoints, China does have a vested interest in the Korean peninsula. In the post-Cold War era, all four major powers, the United States, Japan, Russia, and China itself have strategic interests in the peninsula and the nuclear issue has sharpened these interests and increased the importance of being involved at the centre. Aware that the interests of Russia, Japan, and the United States are all at stake in avoiding a major war on the peninsula, China is able to use its influence on North Korea to enhance its great power status in the region and also at a global level. Hence, the Korean peninsula is important in China's conduct of international relations, in addition to being a vital component in its security. China needs to compete with other powers in the international system. After all, it was in the Korean War that China enhanced its prestige as a great power by holding the Americans to a stalemate.

Hence, despite the dangers a nuclear North Korea posed to China's interests discussed earlier, Pyongyang's nuclear threat has also given China a great power role. To resolve the nuclear issue, China's co-operation is needed. For instance, in October 1992, South Korea and China held a summit meeting where the focus was an agreement by China to use its good offices to persuade North Korea to agree to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and South Korean inspection of Pyongyang's nuclear facilities.⁶³

While remaining North Korea's friend and ally, China has also been acting as some sort of liaison for the West. This makes China look like a responsible great power in the eyes of international organisations such as the IAEA and the world community in general. Nevertheless, when North Korea rebuffed inspection demands by the IAEA and announced it would withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in March 1993, China was unwilling to pressurise Pyongyang openly, stating that the issue of nuclear inspection is "more directly a matter between North Korea and the IAEA, the United States and South Korea".⁶⁴ China abstained from the voting on the United Nations Security Council resolution adopted against North Korea, while promising that it would play a constructive role in this regard, such as encouraging talks between the United States and North Korea in May 1993.

When North Korea refused to allow full inspection of its suspected nuclear facilities and indicated it would withdraw from the IAEA in March 1994, Chinese Premier Li Peng argued that pressurising North Korea would be counterproductive.⁶⁵ When the Security Council hinted at sanctions if Pyongyang failed to comply by the IAEA's demands, China stated it would not accept the UN

Security Council resolution.⁶⁶ In both cases, it is quite evident that China regards the Security Council's intervention as an unnecessary complication. This partly reflects China's scepticism towards the United Nations, an experience learnt during the Korean War when the United Nations condemned China for being the aggressor.

For our analysis, it is important to note that the 1993-1994 episode enabled China to demonstrate its importance in relation to the North Korean nuclear issue. Hence, one analyst argues that China views "the Security Council as an important arena for demonstrating its status as a global power and pursuing its maxi/mini realpolitik".⁶⁷ Surely, the North Korean nuclear issue represents a golden opportunity for China to make ~~ground~~^{good} on its claim to global power status. In this context, China is beginning to look far more like a great power, at least in the sense that the nuclear issue requires dealing with China. Moreover, the security order in the region is still very much in the process of being shaped, with much depending on how the nuclear issue in North Korea develops.

Apart from using the nuclear issue to enhance its importance and status in the eyes of the international community, China can also use North Korea as a means to gain leverage against other powers. With Russia fading away as an East Asian power, China is now in a better position than ever to influence a friendless and isolated regime. For decades, both China and the Soviet Union had sought to influence Pyongyang. North Korea, like North Vietnam, profited from the Sino-Soviet conflict by leaning from one side to another, "sitting on the fence" whenever it suited its interests.⁶⁸ The Sino-Soviet rapprochement in the late 1980s, followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union, has eliminated the capability

of Korean leaders to manipulate tensions between Moscow and Beijing. The point is that China today no longer needs to compete with Russia for influence in North Korea today.

For Beijing, Pyongyang's strategic value stems from its unpredictability. By claiming it can exert influence over an "erratic" state, China is likely to enhance its standing in international affairs, although in actual fact, one might say that there is very little that China can actually accomplish in reshaping Pyongyang's national security thinking and behaviour. It is also true that North Korea's potentially destabilising behaviour can also jeopardise China's interest in maintaining a peaceful environment for Beijing's economic modernisation goals and its relations with South Korea, Japan and United States.⁶⁹

For our analysis here, the important thing is that North Korea's foreign policy suits China. Pyongyang's policy calls for normalising relations with the United States and Japan first before normalising relations with South Korea.⁷⁰ On the other hand, Seoul's policy calls for improving relations with North Korea first and then have the United States and Japan improve relations with North Korea. The fact that the two positions are very far apart means China has an important role to play. Indeed the lack of progress in establishing formal links between the United States and Japan with North Korea has helped to restrict the capacity of Washington and Tokyo to influence relations between the two Koreas in a significant and, from their perspectives, productive manner.⁷¹ That gives China further leverage in its political manoeuvres as Beijing now appears to be the key in persuading Pyongyang to normalise relations with Tokyo and Washington.

To all intents and purposes, Beijing and Washington have also been pursuing parallel policies in the Korean peninsula, as it is one of the principal areas where Sino-US interests converge. Both countries are anxious to avoid another conflict on the Korean peninsula. Beijing has encouraged Pyongyang to adopt a more conciliatory stance in its relations with Washington even before the end of the Cold War, acting as an intermediary between Washington and Pyongyang. For example, when the United States eased its restriction on diplomatic contacts with North Korea in 1987, this led to a series of North Korea-US councillor-level meetings in Beijing.⁷² Such actions give Beijing greater political leverage in its dealing with other powers as it is now perceived as having significant influence on North Korea.

At the same time, it is safe to say that the problems of potential instability or unstable unification of the Korean peninsula will not be easily solved if both China and the United States are unwilling to resume a post-Cold War strategic partnership in compliance with transparent reciprocity and interdependence. In this regard, China may not exclude the use of the North Korea card for strengthening its position vis-à-vis the United States, just as America may play the Taiwan card in pressuring China. Therefore, it is plausible to view North Korea as key piece on the strategic chessboard as Beijing plays out its confrontation with the sole remaining superpower.

Like North Korea, South Korea is also important in that it gives China more room to manoeuvre between other powers. Firstly, as part of the normalisation agreement in 1992, Seoul has agreed to the recognition of only one China, and that Taiwan is part of China. This also comes at a time when Taiwan is

increasingly seeking recognition in the international arena. Politically, South Korea and Taiwan had been united by anti-Communist ideology during the Cold War era. The Seoul-Beijing normalisation has removed the last of Taiwan's diplomatic ties to any state in Northeast Asia, and has also helped Beijing move one step closer towards the objective of reincorporating Taiwan under its rule (see Chapter 6).

In addition, China will be keen to exploit any tensions that have arisen between South Korea and the United States, its perceived threat. For example, anti-American feeling has been growing in South Korea since the 1980s, and gestures of resentment toward the United States have been increasing.⁷³ During the 1980 Kwangju Incident that culminated in the deaths of hundreds of civilians in that city, the South Korea government suggested American complicity, or its leading role in the Republic of Korea Army operation, since technically the head of this army was American.⁷⁴

Moreover, this type of resentment appears to increase as political changes in South Korea continue to unfold. The consolidation of democracy has been particularly rapid since former President Kim Young Sam assumed the Korean presidency in 1993, and this trend towards democratisation in domestic politics has translated to the call for a more independent foreign policy. The political legitimacy of Seoul's new elites now seems to depend in part on greater foreign policy and defence autonomy from the guarantors of the recent past. Although tensions still exist between a growing desire for political independence from the United States and an ongoing concern of a possible attack from North Korea, it is possible to argue that decades of dependence on external protectors have

contributed to the rise of nationalism in South Korea. This tide of South Korean nationalism can be exploited by the Chinese.

Furthermore, China is also aware that the United States has been constantly pressing South Korea to increase its financial support for American forces stationed there, since the Americans desire defence cuts in East Asia. As South Korea advances to become one of Asia's most industrialised nations, its economic relations with the United States will become more complex and competitive, bringing along a diverse array of problems. For instance, when the United States accumulated an increasing trade deficit with South Korea in the 1980s, it brought up ~~on~~ the issues of fair trade and market access to South Korea.⁷⁵ In response, South Korea argued that its economy is still fragile with many "infant industries" and high defence expenditures, it had to depend on the import of raw materials and crude oil, and it had problems of large foreign debts and a chronic trade deficit with Japan.⁷⁶

In addition, the United States and South Korea disagree on the interpretations of inter-Korean trade. According to the 1991 "Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression and Exchange and Co-operation between the South and the North" (the Basic Accord), the South Koreans tend to regard economic transactions with their northern counterparts as an important step towards achieving reunification. However, the United States refuses to recognise inter-Korean trade as "domestic commerce" entailing no tariffs, arguing that the inter-Korean agreements actually violated the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) provisions.⁷⁷ Here, we can see a case of American economic

interests impinging on its security policy. This type of impingement is also happening to China.

At the same time, Seoul is aware that Beijing continues to harbour deep suspicions over the US-South Korean alliance in general and over US hegemonic intentions in the region in particular. Hence, the Seoul leadership is unlikely to alienate China by pursuing a hard-line stance against North Korea. In this sense, China may perceive that, in the long run, South Korea can act as a counter to America's continuing presence in Northeast Asia, its "backyard". In short, US-South Korean relations are now plagued with a host of disputes that in essence involve the difficult transition from the Cold War military collaboration to a new post-Cold War normal type of relationship. China can exploit this to its advantage.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, it is clear that North Korea still remains vital to China's military and political security. North Korea acts as a friendly buffer state and an ideological ally. In addition, future developments of the North Korean regime will have an impact on China's quest for a stable regional environment to pursue its modernisation drive. As for South Korea, its contribution to China's economic development goals is now viewed as important as any remaining ideological ties binding Pyongyang and Beijing. By extending its official links to South Korea, China hopes to increase its influence on the peninsula, to protect its national security, secure a more advantageous political position and above all, establish better economic opportunities for itself in the region.

With regards to Korean reunification, China will give its support with the aim of sustaining a stable regional environment so that Beijing can achieve its own economic modernisation goals. Beijing's fundamental objective is to avoid a situation on the peninsula that could lead to war, where the possibility of American troops intervening close on its doorstep is almost certain.

In addition, as a regional power, China also wishes to exert influence over the Korean peninsula. Beijing's influence over North Korea provides it with a means to enhance its regional great power standing and also a leverage against major powers such as the United States. Beijing's influence on the Korean peninsula, for four decades limited to the North, has now been extended to the South, giving it the opportunity to manipulate any tensions between Seoul and Washington to its advantage. A divided Korean peninsula has given China an advantageous position as the single major power that is maintaining close relations with North Korea while developing relations with South Korea. As long as the Korean peninsula remains divided, China will be able to assert its role in the region, and possibly enhance its security interests in the process.

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¹⁹ Stephen Kirby, “The effects of regional power factors on Inter-Korean relations and implications of the nuclear issue for Northeast Asian order,” in Hazel Smith et al (eds.), *North Korea in the New World Order*, (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 66-67.

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⁵⁷ "First day at four-way talks on Korean issue in Geneva: Chinese report," Xinhua news agency, 9 Dec 97, in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 11 Dec 97, p. D2.

⁵⁸ Kyudok Hong, "Seoul's policy approach toward North Korea and Korean Reunification," in Gerritt W. Gong, Seizaburo Sato and Tae Hwan Ok, *Korean Peninsula Developments and the US-Japan-South Korea Relations: Volume One*, (Washington D.C.: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 1993), pp. 20-21.

⁵⁹ Kim Il Sung once asserted that southern Manchuria should be part of Korea. Cited in Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser, "Looking across the Yalu: Chinese assessments of North Korea," *Asian Survey*, vol. xxxv, no. 6 (June 1995), p. 541.

⁶⁰ Kay Moller, "China and North Korea: Godfather, part three," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, vol. xv, no. 4 (Winter 1996), p. 38.

⁶¹ Kay Moeller and Markus Tidten, "North Korea and the bomb: radicalisation in isolation," *Aussenpolitik*, vol. 45, no. 1 (1994), p. 108.

⁶² See, for example, B.K. Gills, *Korea versus Korea: A Case of Contested Legitimacy* (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁶³ North Korea joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1985 but had until 1992 refused to sign an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreement as it was obliged to do by the treaty. North Korea had previously argued that it would not sign the agreements unless all US nuclear weapons are withdrawn from South Korea. The end of the Cold War in a way brought a partial solution to the issue. In September 1991, George Bush announced that all tactical nuclear weapons would be withdrawn from South Korea, paving the way for both Koreas to sign a joint declaration on the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 October 1992, p. 7.

⁶⁴ "China says DPRK nuclear issue should be resolved through dialogue," Xinhua News agency, 12 May 93 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 14 May 93, pp. A1/1 - A1/2.

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CHAPTER 5: THE RISE OF JAPAN

This chapter examines the role of Japan in relation to China's security interests in the post-Cold war era. The first section assesses Japan as a potential political and military security threat to China; this is examined in relation to Japan's ties with the United States, at a time when Japan itself appears to be re-emerging as a great power. This topic forms the traditional writing on China's security. The second section looks at how Japan can actually enhance China's security interests, particularly in the economic sphere. It will be shown that this is the dimension which most analysts and writers have paid insufficient attention to.

Japan as a political and military threat

In recent years, the rise of Japan as an economic powerhouse and the anticipated concomitant political clout it is likely to wield in international politics has received much attention. Among many others, those paying attention include Chinese leaders when they formulate their security strategies. The end of the Cold War has hastened the need to assess the Japanese "threat" among China's policy makers, spurred on to some extent by signs of American retreat or withdrawal in Asia in general.

China's security analysts do not need any reminding that historically, it was Japan's rise that challenged China's long dominance in Northeast Asia and indeed East Asia as a whole. Japan's emergence as a great power in East Asia after the 1868 Meiji Restoration and its expansionist policies threatened China's

security in the past. This has, in many ways, left an indelible mark on the minds of China's security planners, as part of the "century of humiliation" that China suffered at the hands of the imperialist powers.¹ Japan first encroached on China's security in the 1894-1895 War, defeating China and detaching Taiwan from China, then part of the Qing empire.

In addition to Taiwan, the vassal state of Korea was occupied by Japan in 1910. ~~After First World War, in 1919,~~ ^{First World} ~~Although both China and Japan had joined~~ ^{had} the victorious Allies in the War, Japan attempted to pressurise the warlord government in China to accept the Twenty-One Demands, ^{in 1915} which amounted to a de facto concession of China's own sovereignty. Japan had attempted to encroach on China's security and sovereignty in every sense. Amid mass protest, symbolised by the May Fourth Movement in 1919, the weak and disunited government in China gave in partly to Japan's demands and defeated Germany's colonies in China were transferred to Japan instead of reverting to Chinese sovereignty.

By the 1920s and 1930s, it became clear that Japan had become a serious military threat to China. Tokyo took advantage of a disunited China during the warlordism era and moved into Manchuria, setting up the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1931. While Chinese leaders at that time realise the military threat posed by Japan, they were unable to present a stiff challenge. The Kuomintang and the Communists were embroiled in the struggles against each other, although these two groups came together when Japan launched a full-scale invasion into China in 1937. A period of Japanese military occupation of much of China followed and lasted until the end of the Second World War.

The above historical analysis is not taken merely as an academic exercise. Its relevance, summed up under the term “the impact of history”, can be found in all strands of Chinese strategic thinking. In fact, history constitutes an important influence on Chinese security policy. To the Chinese, Japan’s threat to China’s military security is arguably the most serious one posed by any state in modern times. While China had been subject to treaties of extra territoriality by Western powers such as Britain in certain treaty ports, Japan has so far been the only Asian power that actually invaded China proper in the modern era. Therefore, the actions of Japan since the 1868 Meiji Restoration, in particular its actions in China during the Second World War, has resulted in the legacy that Japanese scholar Takashi Inoguchi refers to as “the debt of history”.²

With this historical evidence in mind, Chinese leaders are worried that post-Cold War Japan is likely to recover to its position as a great power. After the Second World War, Japan was restrained from becoming a military power, largely by its own constitution and the 1952 Mutual Security Treaty it signed with the United States. The end of the Cold War has cast doubts on the long term stability of this situation.

Some writers such as Robert Gilpin have argued that, since the end of the Second World War, a “normal” strategy for Japan would be to “rebuild its economic and military capabilities simultaneously and then bring these to bear in raising its position in prestige hierarchies”.³ In addition, China shares the Realist argument advocated by Western scholars that historically, “countries with great power economies have become great power powers, whether or not reluctantly”.⁴ Japan’s stunning economic successes, combined with the end of the Cold War,

mean that Japan is bound to reassessing its role in international affairs. As skilled exponents themselves in turning limited national power to maximum use, the Chinese leaders cannot imagine that Japan will abstain from translating this strength into at least political power in international relations. From here, we can discern a slight difference in the type of security threat that Japan poses to China. In the earlier period, Japan was more of military threat while in the post-Cold War era, with the efficacy of the use of force in international relations decreasing, it appears that an economically strong Japan will become a country with more political clout in the international arena.

Although China acknowledges that, today, Japan wants to play a greater role in international affairs, Beijing is adamant to emphasize Tokyo's past, which is in some ways comparable to Germany's Nazi past. For example, an article in *Beijing Review* emphasises that Japan must first conduct a "self-examination of the history of World War Two aggression before it can gain the trust of Asia and the world".⁵ One of the top Chinese leaders, Li Peng, also notes that "Japan should seriously examine itself" over its wartime actions.⁶ Chinese leaders, academics and the general public all seek to remind Japan of its wartime actions in China. This is in spite of the fact that Japan is not surrounded by weak neighbours as was the case in the 1930s. For instance, one may argue that countries such as South Korea and Taiwan are militarily stronger than they were in the 1930s. Nevertheless, Beijing still contends that Japan is "still linked with war" and warns Asian countries that "constant vigilance against Japan is imperative".⁷ Given the effects Japan's past actions had on China, it is clear that

Japan is still regarded as a potential military threat in many quarters of the Chinese leadership.

While using Japan's past to check Tokyo against a possible reversion to militarism, Beijing has also used this legacy as the starting point in their bilateral relationship. Constantly highlighting incidents such as the revision of Japanese history books on Tokyo's wartime atrocities in Asia and commemorating anniversaries of Japanese wartime aggression serve as a way for China to exert pressure on Japan to denounce its past. China is also sensitive to the alleged rise of right wing politicians in Japan. For instance, the *Renmin Ribao* expresses concern over the Japanese Diet's ambiguous "non-apology" resolution on Tokyo's record of aggression.⁸ Ryutaro Hashimoto's visit in July 1996 in his official capacity as prime minister to the Yasukuni Shrine, followed shortly by the right wing politicians' visit, has been perceived as a result of a current "rightist" atmosphere in Japanese politics.⁹ It is this type of "rightist" tendency that concerns China, for Beijing sees it as paralleling the rise of Japanese military leaders earlier this century, a process that ended with dire consequences for China's security.

In addition, this alleged rise of right wing elements in Japanese is also linked to Japan's actions in the territorial disputes between the two countries. Specifically, disputes have arisen concerning the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands, halfway between Taiwan and Okinawa, which comprise five islands some 166 km north-east of Taiwan. For instance, the China claims that Japan had implicitly encouraged and tolerated right wing organisations in entering Diaoyu Islands to infringe on China's sovereignty.¹⁰ Events in 1996 such as the Japanese Youth

Foundation building a lighthouse on Diaoyu Island and a group from Japan's southern Okinawa-Ken putting up the Japanese flag on one of the islands have been interpreted by Beijing as an chance for Japan "demonstrate its power to the outside world and to test China's determination to safeguard its territory and sovereignty".¹¹ Beijing is bound to be concerned that such events could spur the ultranationalists in Japan.

Similarly, China was outraged when Shingo Nishimura, a member of the Japan's Diet from the New Frontier Party, landed on one of the islands in 1997.¹² The Diaoyu Islands dispute is further complicated by the role of Taiwanese activists from the opposition New Party, who challenge Japan's claim.¹³ China sees the loss of the Diaoyu Islands as a result of Japanese past aggression, for it was forced to cede the territory of Taiwan, which included the Diaoyu Islands to Japan under the terms of The Treaty of Shimoneseke following the 1894-1895 war.¹⁴ More importantly, the Diaoyu Islands are seen as important to China's economic security, and this will be discussed later.

The most assertive statement of Chinese claims of the disputed islands occurred in February 1992, when Beijing proclaimed a law explicitly placing islands such as Diaoyu in Chinese territorial waters and providing China the right to use military force to repel any foreign incursion.¹⁵ China also goes about asserting its claims to the Diaoyu Islands by criticising any semblance of the re-emergence of Japanese nationalism, as well as magnifying the "Japanese threat" to other states in the region. However, what is encouragingly curious in great power terms about the Diaoyu Islands dispute is the way in which both countries tried to play down the various incidents that occurred in 1996 and 1997.

Above all, China is wary about Japan acquiring further military power.¹⁶ However, Takashi Inoguchi argues that, despite the relatively high defence budget in Japan, its Self Defence Forces (SDF) cannot fight a war without the direct support of United States.¹⁷ In addition, it must be noted that Tokyo's new National Defence Program Outline reduces the SDF's overall strength by twenty thousand, demobilises four army divisions, eliminates three hundred tanks, and takes ten surface ships from the navy. The Japanese news agency Kyodo suggests that the downsizing of the SDF forces, when compared with the military potential of South Korea or Taiwan, should not feed the perception of Japan as a military threat.¹⁸

Nevertheless, China is aware that regional developments such as the 1993-1994 Korean nuclear crisis could move the Japanese public to accept a more expanded role for the SDF.¹⁹ In addition, there is also the new Japanese "Defence Outline" contains specific reference to a Japanese "contribution to the creation of a more stable security environment". Beijing is wary of Japanese interpretation of this term, as it has no wish to see Japan become more dominant in regional security matters. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that, in general, Japan's military capabilities have so far been kept in check by its constitution and the Japanese public's aversion to militarism.

The Chinese have also criticised the concept of a Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) system that the United States has been trying to sell to Japan, claiming that this will bring about mistrust and cause suspicion in states surrounding China and destroy the security of Northeast Asia. China argues that the transfer of such technology to Japan is a clear violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is

crucial to the stability in East Asia, adding that if TMD is to serve as a protection against the North Korean nuclear threat, then the US Patriot 2/3 missiles should be adequate.²⁰

In general, it must be said that the fluidity of the post-Cold War period seems to encourage Japan, and China as well, to strengthen their armed forces in order to meet any possible challenges and problems that might have hitherto been suppressed by the Cold War framework. On a wider scale, Western analysts such as Gerald Segal argue that an economic and strategic rivalry between China and Japan for prominence in East Asia is seen as the key feature in the post-Cold War era.²¹ Ironically, even if Japan itself is not drawn into the power vacuum, Tokyo may be pushed into it by China.

From the perspective of Japanese strategic thinking, the alleged rise of China also coincides with the growing economic importance of Asia to Japan, following a surge in private-sector investment into Asia provoked by the rising yen. This is an indication of the importance of economic security to Japan. In addition, this emerging “Asianism” has been sparked off by Tokyo’s lessening economic dependence on the United States and its growing ties with to East Asia. Beijing, for its part, is aware that Japan wants to play a dominant role in the establishment of any Asia-Pacific order.

In some ways, Tokyo’s Asian strategy is premised on the continuation of the US-Japanese Security Treaty, as Japan still needs the alliance with the United States to enhance Japan’s diplomatic standing in Asia.²² In addition to its historical record of aggression, Japan’s negative image is partly attributable to its peculiar geopolitical position. Japan is situated in Asia, but it maintains only loose

relations with its Asian neighbours, especially in political terms. It is thus unlikely that Tokyo can claim to represent Asia in international affairs, a point of which the Chinese will be keen to take advantage of. However, if Japan attempts to form an Asian bloc without China, Beijing is bound to oppose such a move.

Beyond Asia, Japan's interest in becoming a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council worries China. China is bound to lose more than any other permanent members if membership is increased in the Security Council. Although Japan may be unacceptable as a political leader in Asia, it must be pointed out that the burden of its imperial past weighs much less heavily at the global level.²³ For example, responding to calls for greater international responsibilities, Tokyo has tried to legislate its United Nations Peace Cooperation bill, whereby its Self Defence Forces could be deployed abroad. Japan's decision to take a more proactive role in both Cambodia and the Gulf, the first overseas operations in the SDF's history, triggered a largely negative response in China.

In general, although China is aware that Japanese participation in these multilateral military efforts will help erode Japan's isolationism and induce Tokyo to become more involved in multilateral security policy-making, Chinese security analysts are still sceptical and apprehensive, fearing that a possible tension in Sino-Japanese relations caused by the growing role of the Japanese military and in Japan's rise in global influence. One Chinese assessment even claims that Japan is actually seeking a new world order by manipulating by the tripolar "US-Europe-Japan" structure in pursuit of its own interests²⁴.

The United States–Japan alliance

To China, the United States can still influence Japan's foreign policy in a number of ways through the 1952 US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty. Today, the emphasis in the Treaty is perceived by Chinese academics as shifting from "protecting Japan" to "controlling Japan", which includes preventing any resurgence of militancy in Japan.²⁵ Therefore, American forces in the region are seen as pre-empting the need for Japan to become a formidable military power - an outcome desired by no nation in East Asia. Moreover, a continued US presence, even if reduced in size, would reassure states in the region that Japan would not be drawn into any power vacuum.

However, it is important to note that, in Chinese eyes, this is only a short term policy. China will be unwilling to put its faith in the United States keeping Japan in check as the alliance between the two may be altered in the longer term. For instance, some American analysts question how long the United States can "prop up an old alliance with Japan without the shared Cold War values and commonly perceived threat that created the alliance in the first place".²⁶ Former US ambassador Michael Armacost argues that Washington "can no longer anticipate the degree of diplomatic compliance Tokyo exhibited during the Cold War."²⁷ Although the Hashimoto-Clinton joint declaration in April 1996 saw both sides, especially Japan, make a renewed effort to contain their trade dispute by stressing deep security ties, China knows that the strategic relationship between the United States and Japan is likely to change in the long run and Beijing must ensure that its security interests will not be compromised in the event of any major changes.

At the same time, notwithstanding the utility of the Mutual Security Treaty, Beijing is also wary of a possible American-Japanese “collusion” against its own interests. One Chinese view suggests that both the United States and Japan are using the current dispute over the Diaoyu Islands to further their aims of “containing” China, criticising Japan for placing the Diaoyu Islands, (attached to Taiwan and hence part of China), under the trusteeship of the United States during the signing of the 1951 San Francisco Treaty; and criticising the United States for handing the islands back to Japan via the 1971 Okinawa Treaty.²⁸ China argues that the ownership of Diaoyu Islands was determined at the 1943 Cairo Declaration and confirmed by the 1945 Potsdam Proclamation; that “all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa (Taiwan), the Pescadores (Penghu) shall be restored to China.”²⁹ On this basis, the Chinese criticised the United States when Washington stated that it did not recognise claims made by any countries concerning the Diaoyu Islands.³⁰

From the Diaoyu Islands incident, it is quite clear that Beijing wants to deal with Tokyo on a bilateral basis.³¹ Any other powers supporting Tokyo’s foreign policies will constitute a further potential security threat. This stance is also evident when China asks Japan not to expand or broaden the scope of the security treaty with the United States as that might “complicate the situation in East Asia”.³² While stressing that as sovereign nations, the United States and Japan are free to choose bilateral alliances to serve their interests, China points out that “if their co-operation moves beyond the bilateral arrangement, new complications will enter the picture”, which will “undoubtedly affect stability and development in the region and the world as a whole”.³³ What Beijing really fears

is that the United States and Japan might even join forces to “contain” China.³⁴ This is, in some ways, reminiscent of the Cold War era when China perceived the former Soviet Union and the United States as being in “collusion” against Beijing while engaging in superpower rivalry simultaneously.

This type of thinking on China’s security is expressed in an assessment by the think-tank, China Strategy and Administration Research Society, on the 1997 “Japan-US Defence Co-operation Guidelines”. The Society argues that these “Guidelines” break through the restraints of Japan’s “defence only” policy which, forbids the exercise of “collective defence power”; adding that the “Guidelines” aim to turn Japan-US alliance and Japan’s defence situation from an “inward type” with defence against aggression as the dominant factor to an “outward type” with involvement in regional conflicts as the key factor.³⁵ However, another Chinese assessment was more confident that the US-Japan ties might not necessarily be strengthened by the “Guidelines” due to tensions caused by inward-looking tendencies in both countries.³⁶ While one may debate the degree to which China fear a military alliance between Japan and the United States, it is safe to say that the US-Japan alliance is a key determinant in Chinese security thinking.

Furthermore, the Chinese are very concerned whenever they perceive Japan as trying to get involved in the Taiwan issue. Again, this relates to the interpretation of the new “Japan-US Defence Co-operation Guidelines” by the China Strategy and Administration Research Society, which expresses apprehension on Japan’s definition of the “peripheral state of affairs” as actually including the Taiwan Strait.³⁷ Similarly, China has expressed concern when Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiroku Kajiyama declared in August 1997 that

the “surrounding areas” covered by Japan-US collaboration “should include the Taiwan Strait”; for this is regarded as the first time that a top Japanese official had openly “interfered in Chinese affairs” since normalisation of relations.³⁸ These issues will be dealt with further in the next chapter, when we analyse the involvement of foreign powers in the Taiwan issue.

From the above analysis, for China to pre-empt any possibility of a US–Japan collusion, Beijing can exploit any tensions between the two sides. The Americans resent Japan as an economic threat and unfair trader. Japan’s leaders have also faced increasing domestic pressure to stand up to United States on trade matters since the Soviet military threat disappeared and the need for a strong alliance with Washington diminished. China can remain ambiguous about the future of the Japan-US Mutual Security Treaty. If Japan is seen as the main danger, then a continuing American role is essential to prevent the Japanese from becoming too powerful. Beijing’s security can be enhanced by manoeuvring between Washington and Tokyo, as it did between Washington and Moscow during the Cold War. If the Chinese do tolerate a strong American presence in the region at all, then it is with Japan in mind. As long as Japan is tied to the US’ security umbrella, then any potential Japanese assertiveness and militarism could be at least kept in check until China itself becomes stronger. After all, one of China’s strategic goals is to delay Japan’s advancement toward becoming a major military power.³⁹ This is a representation of Chinese astuteness in its manoeuvres to enhance its military and political security vis-à-vis Japan.

Having discussed Japan as a threat, it must also be pointed out that Japan can also be an important political ally to China. When China faced the hostility of

the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Japan was pulled into its anti-Soviet orbit. The normalisation of relations between China and Japan was accomplished in an atmosphere of growing Chinese perceptions of a “hegemonic” threat from the Soviet Union at that time.⁴⁰ This political alliance may be less important in the post-Cold War era, but Japan also supports China on a number of other issues.

On the issue of Taiwan, a Japanese colony from 1895 to 1945, Tokyo is generally recognised as a supporter. Like the United States, Tokyo broke off diplomatic relations with Taipei in 1972 in favour of Beijing. To be sure, Beijing has always stressed that the two sides’ positions on Taiwan and the “historic” issues, discussed earlier in the chapter, form the political basis of bilateral relations. Tokyo do, however, have an unofficial but booming economic relationship with Taiwan and the end to a twenty-two-year freeze on cabinet level meeting between Tokyo and Taipei was broken in 1994 when Tokyo invited Taiwanese officials to an Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) conference in Osaka. However, Japan has yet to totally change its “one-China” stance. Japan’s reactions to China conducting of large-scale military exercises during the run-up to the Taiwanese presidential elections in March 1996 were muted, in contrast to the United States’, with Tokyo calling for Chinese self-restraint. In general, it must be said that Japan’s policy towards Taiwan is in line with China’s attempt to isolate Taipei in the international community, an issue to be discussed in the next chapter.

Japan's role in China's modernisation drive

Although military security and political security are undoubtedly important to China, economic security is also vital. One of the main objectives of this thesis is to emphasise China's quest for economic security, a subject much neglected in most security literature on Sino-Japanese relations. In short, Japan's economic relations with China need to be analysed and it would be appropriate to begin by looking back to the period after the Second World War. China initially responded in a cautious manner to Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida's interest in resuming economic ties in 1952 but things have vastly improved since then.⁴¹ Bilateral trade increased by 30 per cent in 1993 over 1992 and then by a further 22 per cent in 1994 to reach US\$46.26 billion, with a US\$8.8 billion surplus on the Chinese side; these figures mean that China rose from Japan's fifth to second biggest trade partner in the space of three years.⁴² More recently, Japan has become China's top trade partner and fourth largest inward investor.⁴³

In general, Japan is a rich market for Chinese products and China's exports to Japan are essential in accumulating foreign reserves. Japan produces and exports many consumer and capital goods such as machinery that China needs. Proximity adds another positive element as transportation costs are reduced. This reinforces the notion discussed earlier that cross-border economic ties could outpace political ones.

From Japan's perspective, China has also risen to become an important product assembly site for Japanese exports. As Japanese companies develop new subsidiaries in China and move existing subsidiaries in the rest of Asia to China, the market for Japanese components move to China as well. Many Chinese

exports to other markets are hence indirectly dependent on the importance of Japan as a trade partner.⁴⁴ In short, as China and Japan are at different levels of development, mutually beneficial economic relations can form the basis of Sino-Japanese relations.⁴⁵ Such a relationship bolsters China's economic security.

In addition, as an economic great power, Japan is in a position to help China's modernisation drive. The interplay between history and economics is important for the analysis of China's economic security. To be more precise, we need to tackle the issue described by Takashi Inoguchi as the "debt of history", mentioned earlier. China initially attempted to seek compensation from the Japanese government for its wartime actions. However, the Chinese later abandoned their claims for war indemnities with the aim of getting informal Japanese pledges of positive economic co-operation during the normalisation of relations in 1972; this giving Beijing grounds later to believe that it should get the best treatment from Japan of all the countries in the world.⁴⁶ The Chinese have repeatedly reminded the Japanese and the world about events such as the Nanjing Massacre, where the Japanese military invaders had conducted atrocities against the Chinese civilians. In truth, perhaps one may argue that other Asian countries, notably the two Koreas, suffered just as much as China during the Japanese Occupation.

Nevertheless, the "debt of history" has been used in many ways as a tool by China to solicit more economic aid from Japan. Since 1972, China has become more aggressive, exploiting "the debt of history" as an argument to elicit more aid, trade and technology. After all, China's modernisation requires as much help as it can get in order to achieve growth in the shortest time possible; and the logic

is that Japan's economic, technological and financial help is in many ways indispensable. By building up its economic base (with Japanese help), China will then eventually be able to achieve a truly great power status. This is at the heart of China's security interests.

Japan as a provider of foreign capital

Japan's role as China's leading trade partner is reinforced by its position as a major provider of foreign capital. Large scale yen loans are indispensable to Beijing for consolidating its investments in economic and social infrastructures. China is the biggest recipient of Japanese Overseas Development Aid (ODA). For instance, in 1988, China and Japan negotiated a huge ODA loan package for the 1990-1995 period, with the allocation approximately US\$1 billion per year for large scale aid projects, until the Tiananmen Incident occurred. The third package for the period from 1990 and 1995 was one of those that were suspended in 1989. The ODA package was, however, subsequently reinstated and another bilateral trade agreement worth US\$8 million was signed. Since then, it is fair to say that the Japanese have continued to provide capital to China.

In general, Japanese government loans to China have been given high marks by their Chinese users because of low interest rates, the long repayment periods, the accurate choice of projects, and good results. This is, of course, in relation to China's other trading partners, such as the United States. A Chinese trade journal duly acknowledges that these loans have played an active role in China's economic construction.⁴⁷ However, there are also some problems. For instance, at the time of writing, the appreciation of the Japanese yen over time has

increased China's yen debt repayment burden. Since then, currency changes may have dampened this effect to a certain extent, but the Chinese are clearly aware of this type of economic interdependence problem that can impinge on their security interests.

Economic assistance from Japan has also helped the Chinese leadership sustain economic reform and China's opening to the Western world. Tokyo has welcomed and supported Beijing's modernisation programme and open-door policy since the early 1980s. At a global level, Japan is one of the major players in international economic, financial and monetary institutions. Despite the continued difficulty for Japan to play a political-military leadership role, Japan finds it easier to expand its role in international organisations, in particular economic and financial organisations.⁴⁸ For instance, Japan is a very big contributor to aid programmes in general and to the funding of the United Nations in particular.⁴⁹ The point here is that Japan can help China further its economic security, since Tokyo has a certain level of influence in some international economic organisations. For instance, Beijing can use Tokyo as a mediator in supporting Chinese interests in organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Furthermore, China's dependence on Japanese capital and clout in international economic organisations is further reinforced by the relative position of the two countries in international banking organisations. China is the main recipient of loans from the Asian Development Bank, which Japan now clearly dominates. China is also one of the World Bank's biggest borrower, and the World Bank is the single biggest source of foreign capital in China. While the

United States probably remains the dominant force in the World Bank and has even tried to cut off cheap loans to China before. Japan's presence is now (officially at least) on a par with America. Specifically, the internal politics of the World Bank may actually help China in the short run, as the extent of Japan's interactions with the Chinese economy means that it is in Japan's own interests to maintain the level of funding to China.⁵⁰ All these factors must be taken into account in assessing China's long term economic security as Beijing continues to open up.

Japan's influence's in the economic arena is further reinforced global trend towards regional trading blocs, with each country perhaps more interested in its economic activities in a particular region rather than the world as a whole. In this light, a Chinese assessment emphasises that mutual dependence and co-operation with Japan is becoming even more important today when the world economy is moving toward regional trade blocs such as North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and the European Union (EU).⁵¹ While some may dispute the claims that regional trading blocs will become the most important form of economic activity in the years to come, there is no question that this is a trend that policymakers need to take into account, including those in China thinking about economic security.

Japan's direct investment is also essential to China's development, although this has been somewhat cautious compared to its trade relationship and its official development assistance. To be precise, the percentage of Japan's technology exports to China accounts for only a small proportion of total Japanese direct investment throughout the rest of the world. This must be examined in the

context that China needs foreign investment to develop its own resources in the energy sector, including oil.

One Chinese assessment, for instance, questions how the Japanese can underestimate the potential of the Chinese market, especially since other countries look favourably on the potential market for investment that China presents, and the European countries and the United States vie for it.⁵² In reality, perhaps the answer seems to lie in the fact that Beijing has problems managing its transition to a capitalist economy, it has considerable constraints on capitalist activities, and the uncertainty over the eventual success of the reforms have all tended to discourage a more active participation from Japanese businessmen. China is also interested in more technology transfer from Japan, given that science and technology constitute a means for Beijing to achieve economic development. For instance, Japan's refusal to transfer its more advanced technology, especially technology that could be used to modernise China's military, raises suspicions that Japan intends to prevent Beijing from increasing its military capability. Here, we can detect a linkage between the economic and military aspects of China's security.

However, more Japanese direct investment can have implications for the security of China. When taking a long-term perspective, Beijing seems to have mixed feelings about Japanese investment in China and other parts of Asia. The Chinese leaders want technology and capital, but they are concerned about Japanese domination of the Chinese and other Asian economies. This must be understood in the light of China's aim to become an economic powerhouse, possibly matching or even surpassing what Japan has achieved.

The Chinese are particularly concerned that a series of economic policies, including the careful deployment of foreign direct investment and official development assistance, has given shape to a strategy that seeks to lay the basis for a soft region-wide integration of economies under Japanese leadership. For instance, Japanese firms have been successful at creating production and distribution networks linking Asian economies and the consolidation of Japanese corporations in other East Asian economies has made East Asia more of a single structure, referred to by Leon Hollerman as Japan's "headquarters economy".⁵³ This type of Japanese dominance in East Asia is likely to be perceived by most Chinese leaders as an undesirable phenomenon. It reminds Beijing of the "East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere" that the Japanese tried to impose during the Second World War. The last thing that Beijing wants to see in Asia is Japan imposing its economic dominance alongside possible military and political control. Although this type of scenario is unlikely in the foreseeable future, the Chinese leaders are nevertheless wary of any trends towards such a scenario. As explained earlier, historical events play a huge role in shaping Chinese security thinking, none more so than the Chinese experience of the Second World War.

In addition, China's dispute with Japan over the Diaoyu Islands mentioned earlier must be seen in terms of its search for economic resources. Therefore, it appears that behind Chinese rhetoric regarding the Diaoyu Islands, the really important issue is the legal jurisdiction over about 21,645 square kilometres of continental shelf that is believed to hold up to 100 billion barrels of oil. China is, after all, seeking to discover its own offshore oil to replace imports.⁵⁴ On a wider scale, it is also likely that in the not too distant future, Japan and China may

become competitors for economic resources in Asia.⁵⁵ For instance, Barry Buzan and Gerald Segal argue that Japan needs resources for its economy and its interest in protecting “strategic waterways (oil routes) could increase the incentive to intervene in other parts of East Asia”.⁵⁶ The important thing for our analysis here is that China is likely to adopt a firm posture on issues such as the Diaoyu Islands dispute, since its economic security is apparently at stake.

In sum, the negative aspects of Japan’s past have, to some extent, enable China exploit them to its own advantage in terms of enhancing its economic security. In order to achieve its modernisation goals, China has often attempted to claim that Japan should give every possible kind of help in Beijing’s ambitious modernisation programme, in the light of Japan’s historical debt to China. However, this type of posture is beginning to come a full circle. It is also possible to argue that as time progresses, a growing economic interdependence has emerged between China and Japan, and this has, ironically, led to China curtailing its criticism of Japan’s past.⁵⁷

Japan as a more “reliable” trading partner

Besides acting as a provider of loans to China, it is worth noting that Japan is also viewed as a “more reliable” trading partner, especially when compared to China’s other major trading partner, the United States. This type of issue raises the interplay between the economic and political dimensions of security. For instance, unlike the United States, Japan has provided China with economic assistance without completely linking it to human rights policies after the 1989 Tiananmen Incident. In the wake of the 1989 incident, protests from Tokyo were

strong but brief and carefully phrased, somewhat different in tone from those of western governments; Japanese Prime Minister Kaifu sought the understanding of other Western leaders towards Japan's "special relationship" with China in July 1990, and soon thereafter announced the planned resumption of yen loans.⁵⁸ In August 1991, Kaifu visited Beijing, the first head of state among the industrialised nations to visit China since the Tiananmen Incident, marking the full restoration of Sino-Japanese ties. His visit paved the way for a historic official visit by the Japanese emperor and empress to China in October 1992, the first ever by a Japanese monarch. President Jiang Zemin also made the first outside visit by a top-ranking Chinese official after the Tiananmen Incident when he went to Japan during that year. To the Chinese, the above Japanese actions suggest that trading with Tokyo has the advantage that political considerations tend to be given less emphasis.

Furthermore, to a certain extent, Japan's policy of engagement towards China has also shaped the China policies of the Western industrialised states.⁵⁹ Indeed, one may argue that subsequent improvement in Sino-Japanese relations after the sanctions were lifted, as well as the improvement of relations between China and Western Europe spurred the United States to change its sanctions standpoint and improve relations with China. China knows that, as long as it does not appear to threaten Tokyo's security interests directly, Japan appears willing to support the current regime in Beijing no matter what the other western countries' view of human rights may entail. This issue of human rights, which essentially affects China's political security, will be given a more detailed treatment in Chapter 7.

To be sure, the Japanese policy regarding trade with China suits the official line of the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese leadership clearly does not want market reforms to be followed by political reforms, in which the people and organised interests might replace the dominant role of the party. To a certain extent, the party leadership believes that the authoritarian political system based on the leadership of the communist party is the only way forward, which incidentally in some ways resembles the Japanese mode of development, with strong state control and intervention in the economy. With regard to the Japanese mode of development, China may be able to learn from some of Japan's experiences in economic modernisation.

However, although Japan appears as a "reliable" trading partner, it is also clear that Japanese sanctions can hit China severely. The notion of economic security is a tricky one. Increasing trading links with the world economy can also give rise to new problems for China. For example, China is bound to be more vulnerable to economic sanctions as its economy becomes increasingly interdependent with the Japanese economy and the world economy in general. Given that the Chinese are among the most ardent proponents of the doctrine of state sovereignty, the leaders will find it difficult coming to terms with the interdependence of the modern world.⁶⁰ This is especially so if it means that the Chinese leaders have to accept that Beijing's security can at least be affected by crises in the world and regional economies, for instance. Fortunately for these leaders, China has not really been hit by the full force of the Asian financial crisis.

At the same time, it is also true to say that interdependence in the global economy can also give China more options in its trade strategy. By adopting the

strategy of trading its markets for capital and technology, China hopes that the products of the United States, Japan and all countries will compete in its huge market. As one Chinese scholar observes, “China can use Japan as a balance to the US investment and China is happy to see a contest between Japan and the United States for market share” because this “creates a strategic triangle that only gives China more choices”.⁶¹ China can engage Japan as a hedge against the United States becoming too dominant. For its part, Beijing seeks to achieve a balance between its reliance on Japanese capital and technology and its other economic relations with countries such as the United States.

China’s security in relation Japan is also mediated by a much broader strategic economic relationship, of which the Yellow Sea Rim is a component. For instance, there are prospects of Japan and South Korea co-operating in the Yellow Sea Rim to develop a strategic leverage over China in the long run. At present, this does not appear likely owing to the interests that govern the bilateral relationship between China and South Korea, as well as China and Japan. Neither Japan nor South Korea can currently afford to subjugate their multiple priorities with China to the point where they would make joint demands for mutual political or economic goals. As Gerald Segal notes, “China and its provinces have much more leverage and opportunity to play off one partner against the other [in this Natural Economic Territories (NET)] than in any other [of China’s] NETs”.⁶²

Perhaps most importantly, China and Japan share an interest in maintaining regional stability to promote economic growth. The Chinese realise that both economies rely heavily on the Asia Pacific region as a whole, which in turn needs co-operation between China and Japan.⁶³ To bolster regional security,

Beijing even started the first ever bilateral security talks at Tokyo's initiative in December 1993, as both sides seek arms-reduction and confidence building measures in the region.⁶⁴ Both sides also share an interest in a stable and peaceful Korean peninsula and Japan has even hinted at exploiting its enormous economic resources in inducing conciliatory changes in North Korea.⁶⁵ As for the Chinese, former Premier Li Peng has indicated the China would like Japan to normalise relations with North Korea.⁶⁶ This can only contribute to stability on the Korean peninsula, which will be conducive to China's ongoing economic growth, as discussed in the earlier chapter. However, in beginning the process of turning the region's stability into a closer community, China and Japan will have to "work out their relationship's formidable security problems, just as France and Germany did forty years ago".⁶⁷ However, it is also clear that Japan's ultimate interest is either to avoid internal instability and chaos in China or to avoid fostering a China that is a strong military power threatening its neighbours.⁶⁸

Above all, China's strong interest in Northeast Asian stability is reinforced by Japan's alliance with the United States. This provides an indispensable basis for stability in the region at a time of uncertainty in the strategic landscape. Beijing's primary interest is to maintain a stable East Asia in order to sustain its economic growth, and Japan can contribute to this by continuing Tokyo's presence in the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, in a manner acceptable to the Chinese.

Conclusion

Japan has an important role to play in relation to China's security interests in the post-Cold War era. On the whole, Japan seems to enhance China's security interests more than it poses as a threat. This is partly because any potential manifestation of an aggressive Japanese foreign policy has hitherto been kept in check by the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty. In this regard, the United States can play a role in restraining the ascendancy of Japan into a regional hegemon and function as a check on any potential expansion of Japanese military power. Hence, from China's perspective, the future development of the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty is important. In the meantime, the China seems satisfied with manoeuvring between Japan and the United States in another "strategic triangle", for this will give China time to develop its economy and build up its military power.

To build up its economy and enhance its economic security, China needs Japan's assistance. China derives economic benefits from trading with Japan, especially in terms of capital loans. By using the "debt of history" as an argument, China has pressed for considerable Japanese contributions to its economic development. Furthermore, since Tokyo is less likely to link economic issues to human rights, Japan is regarded by China as a more reliable trading partner. Moreover, Tokyo's continuing alliance with the United States bolsters regional stability, helping to sustain a stable regional environment that will give China the space to build up its economic base. This will be a springboard for China to achieve truly great power status, after which Beijing will be able to cope with any future Japanese threats on its own.

¹ For an account of modern Chinese history, see Immanuel C.Y.Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

² This term is used by Takashi Inoguchi. See Takashi Inoguchi, *Japan's International Relations* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991), especially pp. 142-143.

³ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁴ Kenneth Waltz, "The emerging structure of International politics," *International Security*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Autumn 1993), p. 66. China adopts a Realist approach to international relations. See Rex Li, "China and Asia-Pacific security in the post-Cold War era," *Security Dialogue*, vol. 26, no. 3 (September 1995), p. 332; David Shambaugh, "Growing strong: China's challenge to Asian security," *Survival*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 43-59.

⁵ "Japan's reactionary views on history must be challenged," *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 37 (September 9-15, 1996), pp. 6-7.

⁶ "Chinese premier Li Peng says Japan should 'seriously examine itself' over wartime actions," Xinhua News agency, 12 Nov 97 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Far East*, 21 May 91, p. E/1.

⁷ Jin Ming, "Where is Japan heading?" *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 47 (November 18-24, 1996), p. 6.

⁸ Wang Guotai, "'Resolution' that fails to distinguish right from wrong," *Renmin Ribao*, 27 June 95, p. 1

⁹ Gu Ping, "Japanese politicians must make up for missed lesson," *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 34 (August 19-25, 1996).

¹⁰ "Spokesman says Japanese stance on Diaoyu Islands could have adverse effects on ties," Central People's Broadcasting Station, 8 Oct 96 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 10 Oct 96, p. G/1.

¹¹ "Japan: Don't do anything foolish," *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 39 (September 23-29, 1996), p. 7.

¹² “China lodges protest over Japanese parliamentary landing on disputed island,” Central People’s Broadcasting Station, 6 May 97, in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 8 May 97, p. G/1; and “Xinhua condemns Japanese landings on disputed islands,” Xinhua news agency, 9 May 97 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 10 May 97, p. G/1.

¹³ Taiwan activists set to land on disputed islands on 18 May,” Kyodo, 8 May 97, in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 10 May 97, p. E/2.

¹⁴ Zhong Yan, “China’s claim to Diaoyu island chain indisputable,” *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 45 (November 4-10, 1996), pp. 16-17.

¹⁵ The text of this law may be found in Xinhua news agency, 25 Feb 92 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Far East*, 26 Feb 1992, p. G/1.

¹⁶ Chalmers Johnson argues that Japan will have to re-acquire military power. See Chalmers Johnson, “Japan in search of a ‘normal’ role,” *Daedalus*, vol. 121, no. 4 (1992), pp. 1-33.

¹⁷ Takashi Inoguchi, “Japan in search of a normal role,” in *Asia’s International Role in the Post-Cold War Era: Part I*, Aldephi Paper 275 (March 1993), p. 59.

¹⁸ Kyodo, 28 Nov 95, in *FBIS Daily Report-East Asia*, 29 Nov 95, p. 16.

¹⁹ David Arase, “A militarised Japan?” *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3 (September 1995), p. 96.

²⁰ Zou Yunhua, “The relationship between TMD and the global and regional security,” *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu (International Studies)*, vol. 1 (January 1998), pp. 27-29.

²¹ See for example, Gerald Segal, “The coming confrontation between China and Japan?” *World Policy Journal*, vol. 10, no. 2 (Summer 1993), pp. 27-32.

²² Zhang Dalin, “The future of Japanese American alliance,” *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu (International Studies)*, no.1 (January 1996), pp. 29-30.

²³ Barry Buzan, “Japan’s defence problematique,” *The Pacific Review*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1995) p. 36.

²⁴ Zhang Zhenhuang, “Building a just world order,” *Beijing Review*, vol. 24, no. 32 (August 12-18, 1991), p. 8.

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- ²⁵ Zhang Dalin, "The future of Japanese American alliance," *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu (International Studies)*, no. 1 (January 1996), pp. 28-29.
- ²⁶ Chalmers Johnson and E.B Keehn, "The Pentagon's ossified strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 74, no. 4 (July/August 1995), p. 106.
- ²⁷ Michael Armacost, *Friends or Rivals? The Insider's Account of US-Japan Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 251.
- ²⁸ "Article says plot to contain China lies behind islands dispute", Zhongguo Tongxun She, 9 Sep 96 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 11 Sep 96, pp. G/1-G/2.
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- ³⁰ "Chinese spokesman says US comments on Diaoyu Islands 'unnecessary'", Zhongguo Xinwen She, 12 Sep 96 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 14 Sep 96, p. G/5.
- ³¹ "Spokesman says Diaoyu islands dispute a bilateral issue," Xinhua 15 Oct 96 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 17 Oct 96, p. G/1.
- ³² "China asks Japan not to expand security treaty with USA," NHK TV, 22 Apr 96 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 24 Apr 96, p. E/1.
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- ³⁴ Zhang Dalin, "On Japan -US Joint declaration on security," *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu (International Studies Quarterly)*, no. 4 (October, 1996), p. 25.
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- ³⁷ "Comment on Japan-US Defence Co-operation Guidelines," Zhongguo Xinwen She, 20 Jan 98 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 21 Jan 98 p. G/2.

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- ³⁹ Ren Xiao, “The current and future security situation in Northeast Asia”, *Guoji Zhanwang (World Outlook)*, no. 7 (April 1996), pp. 10-12.
- ⁴⁰ Reinhard Drifte, *Japan's Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 31 and p. 51. At that time, China even acknowledged Japan's right to provide for its own national security when the Japanese came up with the Report on Comprehensive National Security in 1980.
- ⁴¹ Michael Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific, 1945-1995* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 194-195.
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- ⁴³ Sun Yunjuan, “A review and forecast of Sino-Japanese relations,” *International Strategic Studies*, no. 1, (1996), p. 33.
- ⁴⁴ Shaun Breslin, “China in East Asia: the process and implications of regionalisation,” *The Pacific Review*, vol. 9, no. 4 (1996), p. 474.
- ⁴⁵ Hong Zhaoqui, “A survey of future Sino-Japanese relations,” *Shijie Zhishi (World Affairs)*, no. 11, (1996 June 1), p. 2.
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- ⁴⁹ Xiaoming Zhou, “Japan's ODA program” *Asian Survey*, vol. 31, no. 4 (April 1991), pp. 341-350.
- ⁵⁰ Shaun Breslin, “China in East Asia: The process and implications of regionalisation,” *The Pacific Review*, vol. 9, no. 4 (1996), pp. 463-487.

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- ⁵¹ Fu Hao, "China, Japan vital to Asia -Pacific region," *Beijing Review*, vol. 37, no. 44 (October 31-November 6, 1994), p. 21-22.
- ⁵² "Economic relations with US, Japan reviewed," *Guoji Maoyi Wenti (International Trade Journal)*, no. 5 (May 19, 1995), pp. 2-6.
- ⁵³ Leon Hollerman, "The headquarters nation," *The National Interest*, no. 25 (Fall 1991), pp. 16-25.
- ⁵⁴ China became a net importer of oil in 1994. See Michael Leifer, "Chinese economic reform and security policy: The South China Sea connection," *Survival*, vol. 37, no. 2 (Summer 1995), p. 44.
- ⁵⁵ See Kent E. Calder, "Asia's empty tank", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 2 (March/April 1996), pp. 55-69.
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- ⁵⁷ Takashi Inoguchi, *Japan's International Relations*, (London: Pinter publishers, 1991), p. 111.
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- ⁶⁰ David Shambaugh, *Beautiful Imperialist: China Perceives America, 1972-1990* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 81.
- ⁶¹ Quote by Li Shugang, legal scholar at the Chinese University of Political Science, Beijing, in *Business Week*, 10 Apr 95, p. 114.
- ⁶² Gerald Segal, *China Changes Shape: Regionalism and Foreign Policy*, Aldephi Paper 287 (March 1994), p. 49. The concept of Natural Economic Territories (NET) has been formulated by Robert Scalapino. See Robert A. Scalapino, "The United States and Asia: future prospects," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 5 (Winter 1991-1992), pp. 19-40.

⁶³ Fu Hao, "China, Japan vital to Asia-Pacific region," *Beijing Review*, vol. 37, no. 44 (October 31-November 6, 1994), p. 21-22.

⁶⁴ Samuel S. Kim, "Mainland China in a changing Asia-Pacific regional order," *Issues and Studies*, vol. 30, no. 10 (October 1994), p. 15.

⁶⁵ Tsuneo Akaha, "Japan's security policy in the posthegemonic world: Opportunities and challenges," in Tsuneo Akaha and Frank Langdon (eds.), *Japan in the Posthegemonic World* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1993).

⁶⁶ "Li Peng comments on Japan's failure to say that Taiwan not included in US Defence pact," NHK TV, 13 Nov 97 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Far East*, 14 Nov 97, p. E/3.

⁶⁷ Robert Manning and Paula Stern, "The myth of the Pacific community," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 6 (November/December 1994), p. 81.

⁶⁸ See the quote by General Tetsuya Nsuhimoto, chief of Japan's defence forces in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 April 1995, p. 5.

CHAPTER 6: THE TAIWAN ISSUE

This chapter looks at the Taiwan issue in relation to China's security interests. At the time of writing, Taiwan remains an unresolved security issue for China. This chapter looks at the challenge to China's military and political security posed by the "Taiwan independence" movement, and its connection to foreign involvement in Beijing's eyes. This is followed by an examination of China's economic interests in relation to Taiwan, which to some extent have gained greater prominence in recent years.

Political and military security

For China's leaders, the issue of Taiwan has been high on their security agenda since 1949. First and foremost, Taiwan is still regarded by China as a renegade province and more importantly, China has never renounced the use of force to reincorporate Taiwan under its rule. This might appear strange to Western observers, in a world where the unilateral use of force in international relations has lost some credibility as an instrument of foreign policy. This chapter attempts to give insights on the Taiwan issue from the perspective of China's security interests, and it will be argued that Taiwan represents a military, political and even economic security threat to China.

First, we need to begin by analysing China's political and military security in relation to the growing challenge of the "Taiwan independence" movement. The term "Taiwan independence" is a straightforward translation from the term *taidu* in Mandarin. Chronologically, the ascendancy of the "Taiwan

independence” movement roughly coincided with the end of the Cold War and it partly resulted from the democratisation of Taiwan’s domestic politics, associated with a new generation of political leaders such as President Lee Teng-hui. For example, in Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan elections in December 1989, independence became an issue in the contest. There is no doubt that greater political liberalisation has encouraged the discussion of the “Taiwan independence” issue in the island republic. Perhaps the critical moment, as far as China is concerned, came in October 1991, when the pro-independence opposition party Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) came to prominence in Taiwanese politics and adopted a resolution calling for an independent Republic of Taiwan, which ran counter to China’s goal of reunification. The legalisation of the advocacy of Taiwan independence and gains by the DPP were interpreted by Beijing as a security threat. As recently as November 1997, following the DPP’s resounding win in mayoral and county chief elections, Taipei Mayor Chen Shui-bian said that the DPP would not revise its pro-independence party platform and indicated that they would hold a referendum on the future of Taiwan”.¹

However, the DPP has since softened its stance on the independence issue. The closer the DPP came to assuming political power in Taiwan, the greater the difficulty the internal consensus towards Taiwanese independence. For example, DPP Chairman Hsu Hsin-liang has said that “Taiwan is already a de facto independent sovereign country” and added that “it is far more practical to protect Taiwan’s current independent status than to advocate the establishment a de jure independent Taiwan republic”.² Although he will not revise the DPP commitment to “promoting Taiwan independence”, which is enshrined in the party platform, he

has said that this principle will serve only as a symbol of the party's basic stance. This appears to be a departure from the outright pro-independence stance adopted by the DPP when it first emerged as a force in Taiwan politics. This has led to the party splitting on the issue. Most recently, a new party, the Independence Party, was formed by ex-DPP members who favour outright independence. Hence, the concept of Taiwan independence itself is incoherent and can mean different things to different people at different times.

As for President Lee Teng-hui of the ruling Kuomintang, it is worth noting that Beijing initially did not regard him as an advocate of "Taiwan independence". Lee, who became president in 1990, has generally adopted a centralist position between the extremes of independence advocated by the DPP and unification preached by the right-wing New Party, attempting to manoeuvre between the two extremes by maintaining the status quo and promoting peaceful coexistence. It was his actions in recent years, in particular those linked to the involvement of the United States, that led the Chinese leaders to associate him with the "Taiwan independence" movement. The involvement of the United States is extremely important and will be analysed in a later section. As for President Lee Teng-hui, China accused him and his party of encouraging the "fallacy of Taiwan independence":

the Taiwan authorities have, in effect, abetted this fallacy with their own policy of rejecting peace negotiations, restricting interchanges across the strait and lobbying for "dual recognition" or "two Chinas" in the international arena.³

More specifically, China's People's Liberation Army has stated that it will not "sit idle" over the "Taiwan independence" threat and has, in all aspects, indicated its preparedness and willingness to reunify China and complete what it regards as the "the final phase of the Chinese Civil War".⁴ On the Taiwanese side, according to the Ministry of Defence in Taipei, there are six possible situations in which Beijing may invade the island; namely:

- if and when the island declares itself "independent";
- if and when an internal upheaval occurs on the island;
- if and when Taiwan's armed forces become comparatively weaker;
- if and when any foreign powers interfere in Taiwan's internal affairs;
- if and when Taiwan protractedly refuses to talk with Beijing about the issue of unification; and
- if and when Taiwan goes nuclear.⁵

From the above analysis, it is clear that the "Taiwanese independence" movement, whether which interpretation one adopts, is regarded as an affront to China's security policymakers. At the same time, one must be aware that outside Taiwan, the largest pressure group seeking to influence Taiwan's internal political development is the Chinese leadership.⁶ By its threat to use force to reunify Taiwan, Beijing has inevitably limited Taiwan's options for future policies, while it seeks to achieve its security goal of incorporating Taiwan under its rule. In short, the "Taiwan independence" challenge is generated by the evolution of

Taiwanese politics as much as it is constrained or accelerated by the foreign policy of China. Having outlined the concept of “Taiwan independence” we can now turn to the challenges this movement has posed to the political security of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Political legitimacy

In terms of issues relating to the political security of the Chinese Communist Party, Taiwan is critical. The fact that the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has done much damage to the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party has already been discussed in Chapter 3. Since the demise of communism has seriously crippled one of the moral-philosophical bases of organising Chinese society, Chinese leaders need to compensate for the erosion of their political legitimacy. The Chinese leaders may look to nationalism as a possible solution and the Taiwan issue is a suitable arena for this to be expressed. Nationalism over Taiwan, especially linked with anti-imperialism, is summed up best by the term “reunification of the motherland” and could be used to unite the masses in China, especially since the United States is embroiled in this issue.

Moreover, nationalism is a sentiment shared by Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, given past Japanese occupation on the island. China’s leaders are aware that nationalism is a political resource that can be used to arouse Taiwan’s masses as well. For instance, on the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Shimoneseiki, China reacted strongly to the claims by certain sections of the Democratic Progressive Party that China had “betrayed” the Taiwanese in 1895

when Taiwan was ceded to the victorious Japanese after 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese War. An article in *Renmin Ribao* accused the proponents of Taiwan independence of “distorting history” as the theoretical basis for advocating independence, and criticised them for praising Japanese colonial rule, adding that they were a disgrace to the Taiwanese people⁷. By praising the Taiwanese resistance to Japanese occupation, Beijing hoped to arouse the nationalistic feelings of the Taiwanese people and weaken support for the “Taiwan independence” advocates. Perhaps equally important, Chinese leaders aim to heighten the awareness of a rising Japan in East Asia, which may pose a threat to its security, as the previous chapter had detailed. Therefore, the importance of the Taiwan issue is that this is related to nationalism, which in turn is linked to China’s political security. Nationalism in its anti-imperialist mode is particularly useful in its function as the glue holding the Chinese state together and appealing to the Taiwanese masses.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise when China, in its efforts to push forward its concept of “one country, two systems”, has adopted a more moderate stance since January 1979. Specifically, Beijing has sought to appeal to the Taiwanese people, as part of its plan to bolster its political security in relation to the masses at home, as well as the masses in Taiwan. Included under this new stance is the notion of Taiwan as a special administration region of China. Taiwan will be able to preserve its own social and economic system and maintain a more democratic form of government than the rest of the China; a degree of autonomy would be provided in internal affairs and Taiwan could even have the right to maintain its own armed forces.

In this vein, China is also very careful to point out that the advocates of “Taiwan independence” constitute only a minority of the Taiwanese people. Beijing has in fact stated:

It should be affirmed that the desire of Taiwan compatriots to run their own affairs of the island as masters of their own house is reasonable and justified. This should by no means be construed as advocating “Taiwan independence”. They are radically distinct from a handful of people who follow the road towards “Taiwan independence”.⁸

Beijing has stressed that this “handful” does not represent the majority of the Taiwanese people, and is very careful to note the difference between people in Taiwan and the “handful” who advocate independence. President Jiang Zemin himself assured the Taiwanese people that “reunification does not mean that the mainland will swallow up Taiwan”.⁹ Similarly, the former premier, Li Peng, assured the Taiwanese masses that “China’s right to the use of force” is not directed at the Taiwanese people but at foreign forces interfering in China’s reunification and at the forces of “Taiwanese independence”.¹⁰

China is careful to present itself as a tolerant and benign government to the Taiwanese as it hopes to take over the country eventually. It wants to win the hearts and minds of the Taiwanese masses and present itself as a good government. This is an indication of the importance of political security, for the ruling party on the mainland wants to enhance its political legitimacy, and this policy is also being applied to Chinese across the Taiwan Strait as well. During

the 1996 presidential elections, when China conducted military exercises in the waters close to Taiwan, Vice Premier Qian Qichen told the Taiwanese people not to “panic over military exercises” and should, instead, worry about the fact that “independence-seekers, with support from some international forces bent on splitting China”, will “continue on their wrong path”.¹¹

Furthermore, in its bid to undermine Taiwan’s political security, Beijing has also cast doubt on the political legitimacy of the Kuomintang. For example, China is keen to remind the Taiwanese people of the brutal actions of the Kuomintang on February 28, 1947 when it first imposed its rule on the island. Chiang Kai-shek’s troops launched a brutal crackdown on the native Taiwanese protesters who demanded political reforms to root out autocracy and corruption in the Kuomintang government. In 1996, on the 49th anniversary of that incident, a commentary in the *Renmin Ribao* viewed the incident in that year as the expression of the democratic political movement of the Taiwanese people and criticised the Kuomintang for its violent suppression.¹² In addition Beijing will be keen to remind the Taiwanese people that the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949 as an advocate of human rights over the corrupt dictatorship of the Kuomintang.¹³ It is clear this is an attempt by China to exploit remaining suspicions between the native Taiwanese and the mainlanders, who came to Taiwan in the 1940s. In its bid to discredit the legitimacy of the Kuomintang, the Chinese Communist Party is seeking to enhance its own political security in the process. From the above analysis, it is safe to say that the importance of political security to China, as far as Taiwan is concerned, should not be underestimated.

Apart from the Kuomintang, the current opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has also been targeted as China seeks to bolster its political security and undermine Taiwan's at the same time. For instance, China accused the DPP of attempts to disrupt the Ku-Wang talks, an unofficial consultation between China and Taiwan first held in Singapore in 1993. A Xinhua new agency commentary said that the DPP's activities fundamentally ran "counter to the will of the broad masses of Taiwan compatriots" and could not enjoy popular support.¹⁴ It criticised the DPP for attempting to become "closed-door emperors", that is, gaining power by sowing dissension between the Taiwanese. Beijing aimed to show the self-interests of the Democratic Progressive Party in pursuing independence, with the aim of discrediting the Taiwanese opposition because which China deemed it might become a major political and perhaps eventually military threat.

Isolating Taiwan

At a global level, China has sought to discredit Taiwan's leaders by adopting measures aimed at isolating the island republic. Of course, all these are done with the objective of bolstering Beijing's political security and undermining Taipei's. As for negating Taiwan's political legitimacy in the international arena, Beijing has systematically sought to eliminate attempts by Taiwan to present itself as an independent state. This is in line with China's strict adherence to the principle of state sovereignty in international relations, which were enunciated in its Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference into each other's internal

affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. It can be further argued that nowhere are these Five Principles more emphasised than in the case of Taiwan. Beijing has always insisted that most countries have recognised Beijing, not Taipei since 1972 after the switch of recognition by the United States. Beijing has also referred to formal agreements such as the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation made by the major powers during the Second World War, which stated that Taiwan should be “restored to China”.¹⁵ (see previous chapter)

China knows that in international relations, recognition of a state or government has been commonly regarded as crucial for the entity’s legitimacy and status. Since the concept of external sovereignty means that independent states are treated as equals in the international arena, Taiwan must therefore be denied the status of an independent state. To a certain extent, Beijing has achieved this goal of strengthening its political security on the international front, vis-à-vis Taiwan. From 1972, Taiwan’s diplomatic status in the world declined accordingly. For all intents and purposes, Taiwan was marginalised in world politics and reduced to the status of a pariah state from 1972 to the end of the 1980s. China has thus enhanced its political security at the expense of Taiwan.

China also rejects any comparison between the reunification with Taiwan and German reunification or Korean reunification, arguing that each of the two Germany’s and the two Korea’s have been independent and sovereign states. In Beijing’s eyes, Taiwan never existed as an independent and sovereign state. Furthermore, Beijing is against giving Taiwan “any international living space” such as representations in international organisations. Asserting that Taiwan has no legitimacy, Beijing argues that Taipei should not be permitted to join the

United Nations.¹⁶ In this regard, Taiwan was criticised for engaging in “dollar diplomacy” in the attempt to buy votes in the United Nations, as a Xinhua news agency commentary accused President Lee Teng-hui of offering other states portions of Taiwan’s one billion dollars in foreign exchange reserves in exchange for their support.¹⁷

However, it must be noted that, in contrast to the China, Taiwan has pressed its claims to legitimacy in the world community by stressing its identification with global trends towards democratisation and capitalism, as noted by George Yu and David Longenecker.¹⁸ Today, Taiwan has moved away from its Kuomintang-dominated authoritarian political system and has adopted democracy. It is also worth noting that the United States, has played a role in Taiwan’s democratisation.¹⁹ For example, the US Congress conducted hearings on the Kuomintang’s human rights abuses in Taiwan and the continuance of martial law in the 1980s. The former president, Chiang Ching-kuo, eventually lifted martial law in July 1987 and removed the ban on the formation of new political parties. Recently, President Lee Teng-hui has maintained that China will continue to undergo “peaceful evolution” because of the democratisation of Taiwan, emphasising that “what communist China fears most is the democratisation of Taiwan”.²⁰ This type of linkage is seen by the Chinese as more threatening, as Chapter 7 on “peaceful evolution” will argue. A more democratic Taiwan gains more recognition in international relations and simultaneously undermines China’s seemingly illiberal political system.

For our purposes here, Taiwan’s move toward democracy means that it is bound to gain greater legitimacy in the eyes of the international community,

particularly in the West. Clearly, this constitutes another basis that can be used by the “Taiwan independence” advocates to further their cause, a danger that has to be stopped as far as China’s security is concerned. After all, the Tiananmen Incident in 1989 had brought out the contrast between the two political systems across the Taiwan Strait. China is bound to have growing fears of the gradual acceptance of Taiwan as an independent state by the international community. That will definitely be a setback to Beijing’s objective of reincorporating Taiwan under its rule.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Beijing has adopted a tough stance against countries that recognise Taiwan. For example, between July 1989 and July 1991, Taiwan gained recognition by Grenada, Liberia, Belize, Lesotho, Guinea-Bissau, Nicaragua and the Central African Republic; and China withdrew its embassies in these countries within weeks of each event.²¹ The latest achievement for Beijing in its attempt to isolate Taiwan politically took place on January 1, 1998 when South African severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan and normalised its ties with China.²² Perhaps most importantly, in Northeast Asia, Beijing has succeeded in making Taiwan lose an important friend when it established relations with South Korea in 1992 (as Chapter 4 has stated). This was a huge blow to Taipei, which lost its biggest remaining ally in the region. From the above, the consistency in its approach shows the uncompromising attitude China in denying Taiwan external political legitimacy. By negating Taiwan’s external political legitimacy, China is enhancing its own, which is vital to Beijing’s political security.

Therefore, adhering to the strict notion of sovereignty, China is only willing to accept ties with Taiwan on an “unofficial” basis, such as in the form of the Ku-Wang talks held in April 1993. President Jiang Zemin himself described these talks as representing “an important, historic step forward in the relations between the two sides”, facilitating the quasi-official framework for further cross-strait exchanges.²³ Wang Daohan of China’s Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) and Ku Chenfu of Taiwan’s Strait Exchange Foundation (SEF) met in Singapore and three limited agreements were reached.²⁴ Nevertheless, the “unofficial” nature of the meeting reflects Beijing’s refusal to treat Taiwan as an equal sovereign state. An interesting point to note is that, recently, China has also stressed that communication channels between Beijing and Taiwan need not be necessarily limited to the ARATS and SEF.²⁵ China wants to achieve reunification, but not at the expense of giving up its sovereignty. To Beijing, Taiwan is still regarded as part of China, and Taiwan must never be treated as a sovereign state by other nations.

China wants to see the return of Taiwan under its rule, just as the British colony of Hong Kong did in July 1997, and the Portuguese of Macao will in 1999. This is in line with the rationale between the “one country, two systems” approach. The latter concept was indeed invented in the context of the Taiwan issue. China is adamant to resolve the Taiwan issue peacefully, lest the stable environment is threatened or any foreign powers might take the opportunity to interfere in Taiwan in the post-Cold War era. The most important foreign power in question is none other than the United States, which will also occupy our attention in the next two chapters.

Foreign involvement: The United States

Of Taiwan's relations with other states, none is as important as that with the United States. The Taiwan-US linkage is an important determinant of China's foreign policies in general and those pertaining bilaterally to Taiwan and the United States in particular. With the Soviet threat diminished and the American commitment in East Asia seemingly reduced, it is plausible to argue that this is the best time for China to incorporate Taiwan under its rule. However, the counter argument could be made that in the post-Cold War world, the United States can now be more accommodating to Taiwan's interests, as noted by Harry Harding.²⁶ This line of argument posits that China is needed less a strategic ally by the United States against Russia, for instance. At the same time, it appears that Taiwan is equally confident the United States can be more supportive of its policies.

As noted previously, the ascendancy of the "Taiwan independence" challenge coincided with the end of the Cold War and the concomitant American dominance in the post-Cold War era. Given China's concern with US involvement in Taiwan, the *Renmin Ribao* has accused the "Taiwan independence" protagonists of soliciting foreign support, claiming that these people "vilely rely on foreign patronage in a vain attempt to detach Taiwan from China":

Certain foreign forces that do not want to see reunified China have gone out of their way to meddle in China's internal affairs. They support the anti-

Communist stance of the Taiwan authorities of rejecting peace talks and abet the secessionists on the island, thereby erecting barriers to China's peaceful reunification and seriously wounding the national feelings of the Chinese people.²⁷

Similarly, an editorial by *Renmin Ribao* in March 1996 warned "some foreign meddlers not in interfere in China's internal affairs".²⁸ While the tone may appear propagandistic, there is no doubt that Beijing is warning the Chinese people of possible foreign intervention in its internal affairs. The call to oppose "certain foreign forces" has a nationalist tone that will accord with many Chinese who are keen to erase the painful memories of China's "century of humiliation". It is also an indication that the fear of foreign involvement is present among the Chinese leaders, lest Beijing's political and military security is threatened.

Of course, among the "foreign forces", the United States is seen as the key supporter aiding the cause of "Taiwan independence". To be sure, the Chinese regards this as a continuation of American involvement in Taiwan, which dates back to the 1945-1949 Chinese Civil War. The Chinese communists had been prevented from gaining control over Taiwan. The outbreak of the Korean War was in many ways the catalyst for American support to the Taiwanese under the Kuomintang, and the support was later further extended when the United States sustained Taiwan's existence by the 1954 Mutual Security Pact, which placed "China's Taiwan province under US protection".²⁹ Till this day, most of the Chinese leaders still regard this as an infringement on China's security and sovereignty.

Although the Mutual Security Pact was subsequently abrogated following Sino-American rapprochement, it was replaced by the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of April 1979, which assured a continuing American interest in Taiwan's security. Since then, the TRA has remained a thorn in China's flesh, for it included the US commitment to sell "defensive arms" to Taiwan. This is viewed by Beijing as a threat to its military security.

Therefore, it came as no surprise, when in February 1996, Beijing stated that US arms sales to Taiwan were a "most sensitive area" of Sino-American relations.³⁰ In the recent past, Chinese leaders were outraged in September 1992, when the Bush administration approved the sale of up to one hundred and fifty F-16s fighter planes to Taiwan. The Chinese claimed that his actions contradicted the 1972 Sino-American agreement limiting arms sale to Taiwan. More generally, China has always reiterated that the 1972 Shanghai communiqué is the basis of Sino-American relations. The Chinese are keen to point out that the United States, in 1972, had acknowledged:

All Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain that there is but one China and that Taiwan is part of China. The US government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all US forces and military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes.³¹

Hence, Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqiu has stated that the US arm sales to Taiwan in 1992 amount to an interference in China's internal affairs that "obstructs and undermines the great cause of China's peaceful reunification".³² The *Renmin Ribao* was stronger in its accusation, describing the US actions as "a concrete manifestation of hegemonism and power politics", accusing Washington of wanting to separate Taiwan from China once and for all and take Taiwan as an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" against China.³³ As far as military security is concerned, any strengthening of Taiwan's military capabilities is regarded by Beijing as a threat. Besides enhancing the military capabilities of Taiwan, the US arm sales is also seen as an encouragement to the "Taiwan independence" movement.

In addition, former president George Bush's actions appeared to have shattered the international taboo on major arms sales to the island republic. Washington's move was followed shortly by the decision of French companies to sell sixty Mirage 2000-5 jet fighters to Taiwan. The Xinhua news agency described the move as having "seriously encroached on China's sovereignty" and "undermined China's great cause - peaceful reunification".³⁴ From the Western perspective, one likely explanation could be defence contracts were shrinking in the Western countries at that time and wealthy Taiwan had become one of the major potential markets for Western defence industries. To the Chinese, the Taiwanese will become more confident to pursue independence with continuing arms supplies from the West. Therefore, it is evident, in Chinese eyes, that any foreign involvement in Taiwan, in addition to that of the lone superpower, is

regarded as an acute security concern. China's leaders are bound to view foreign arms sales to Taiwan as a serious political and, perhaps, military threat.

Furthermore, in relation to China's military security, a Xinhua news agency commentary actually accused President Lee Teng-hui of using military build-ups to support independence moves, alleging that Lee had sent his followers to foreign countries to purchase arms, while noting that "Taiwan still maintains a wartime military structure and its annual military spending accounts for a very high percentage of its total budget".³⁵ In Beijing's eyes, Taiwan's increasing military capabilities have emboldened the advocates of "Taiwan independence". Although one may argue that the possibilities of Taiwan actually attacking China are remote, it is safe to say that a Taiwan with stronger military capabilities is bound to act in a bolder manner and could in this way threaten China's political security.

China is also concerned about President Lee's overtures to Washington. A key event was the Taiwanese president's visit to the United States in June 1995. President Lee Teng-hui's unofficial visit to his alma mater, Cornell University, with US permission, caused concern among Chinese leaders. Although the signals emanating from Beijing to Taipei before the visits were apparently quite ambiguous, Beijing on the whole perceived that the United States had implicitly encouraged this move. An article in the *Renmin Ribao* has warned the United States that the Taiwan issue is "a barrel of explosive gunpowder" and concluded that "whether it is the United States or Lee Teng-hui, beyond a certain limit, those playing with fire will be burned".³⁶ Equating the Taiwan issue with national unification and territorial integrity, China has added that the "safeguarding of

national unification and territorial integrity is more important than anything else, far more important than Sino-US relations".³⁷ While some Western analysts may dismiss these strong words as mere rhetoric, it is important to note that President Lee's policy, which Beijing interpreted as a drift towards independence, does not seem to give the Chinese much room for manoeuvre. China had to respond in some way because Taiwan is a prime security concern. Despite the importance of its relations with the last remaining superpower, Beijing did not hesitate to maintain a firm stance on the Taiwan issue.

Another article in the *Renmin Ribao* even regarded President Lee as the "puppet" of the US "double-dealing policy", which consists of "active exchanges" in a bid to open China's market and to influence China's future development; and "multiple aspect obstructions" in order to build up rivalries around China's borders and to "stir up" China's internal affairs. In short, Lee's visit to America was seen as an "inevitable move on the US strategic chessboard".³⁸ It was viewed by Beijing as part of the US strategy to cope with a rising China in the post-Cold War era. Taiwan is intricately linked and entwined to China's perception of the United States. This is linked to the alleged attempt by the United States to "contain" China, a subject further explored in Chapter 8.

Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui himself suffered a string of verbal attacks from the Chinese. His speech in the United States, which was interpreted as implicitly suggesting that Taiwan should become an independent sovereign state, was strongly criticised by Beijing. *Renmin Ribao* denounced this as a manifestation of "Taiwan independence" by publishing four commentaries on successive days criticising him. The first commentary accused him of driving a

wedge in Sino-American relations and thus playing into the hands of certain people in the United States. President Lee's desire to enhance relations between Taiwan and United States was cited as appealing to these people in America who disregarded the Shanghai communiqués in an attempt to turn Taiwan into an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" against China.³⁹ The second commentary warned that there would be no "international living space" for Taiwan independence, adding that Lee's purpose to present Taiwan as a sovereign state to the international community would only lead Taiwan down a "blind alley"⁴⁰. The third commentary accused him of using the concept of popular sovereignty as a "political hallucinogen" and charged him with misusing this concept to justify the theoretical basis for Taiwan independence.⁴¹ The fourth commentary outrightly condemned Lee Teng-hui as guilty of causing the retrogression in relations between China and Taiwan that had become more relaxed.⁴² While one may dismiss the propaganda tones of these articles, it is important to view them in the context of wider security issues faced by China.

Linking to wider security issues, Lee Teng-hui's visit in 1995 seemed to indicate that nature of American intentions towards China and the potential damage these intentions could cause to China's security in the long run. There were those in China who opposed the Americans and those who favoured continuing relations with the US but to "reserve differences while seeking common ground".⁴³ From the above, it is clear that even a "private visit" by the Taiwanese president to America is perceived by the Chinese as an acute security concern. President Lee's visit appears to signify a certain degree of acceptance

and recognition of Taiwan by the United States, and Beijing is worried that the rest of the world may eventually follow suit.

Having analysed Beijing's underlying apprehension to this visit, it therefore comes as no surprise that the Chinese responded to event of June 1995 with a show of force. From July 21-26, 1995, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) launched six guided surface-to-surface missiles at targets in the East China Sea. These military exercises was apparently aimed at demonstrating that the PLA was determined and capable of "guarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity" and "defending the unity of China".⁴⁴ They indicated China's determination to deter any independence tendencies in Taiwan in the aftermath of President Lee's US visit. These military manoeuvres also amounted to telling the Americans not to interfere in China's internal affairs, that is, Taiwan. They were, above all, a symbolic demonstration of military force to vindicate China's security interests in relation to the Taiwan issue.

A further indications of what some might call sabre rattling was also evident in the run-up to the Taiwanese presidential elections in March 1996. China conducted military exercises in the Taiwan Strait. Although Beijing asserted that the exercises were routine, it was widely regarded as an indication that China was worried over the result of the election, and more specifically that this might entail a more daring policy on Taiwan independence. China's military security also appeared to be directly at stake at that time when the United States sent its aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait in a bid to counter Beijing's bullying tactics. One of the top leaders, Li Peng, characterised the tense situation "as a serious consequence resulting from the activities of some leaders of the Taiwan

authorities who go for ‘Taiwan independence’ overtly and frequently on the island and in the international arena”.⁴⁵ Although some may argue that the United States was merely showing its “commitment” to Taiwan and China’s military security was not directly in danger, it is worth noting that such incidents have often acted as catalysts for actual conflicts. Hence, knowing that the Chinese have always regarded Taiwan as a major security issue, such incidents are actually more serious than they look.

To be sure, the Chinese foreign ministry further condemned the resolution passed by the House of Representatives, which stated that “the United States should help to defend Taiwan”.⁴⁶ Specifically, China warned that sending aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait would be dangerous if the “Taiwan authorities interpret the US government’s actions as its support and encouragement for their activities to split China”.⁴⁷

As for the Taiwanese presidential candidates, it came as no surprise when China criticised them harshly, allegedly for pursuing Taiwan independence in different ways and to different extents. For instance, an article in the *Renmin Ribao* argued that the political views of President Lee Teng-hui and his views on Taiwan’s future actually derived from Peng Ming-min, presidential candidate of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party, who was once exiled from Taiwan for openly preaching Taiwan independence.⁴⁸ Essentially, China viewed the entire election process as a platform for “Taiwan independence” and thus severely criticised the Taiwanese politicians of all parties. Underneath it all, China was extremely concerned about what this might mean to its security interests.

Although, in 1996, China could not deter voters in Taiwan from supporting the eventual winner President Lee Teng-hui, Beijing once again demonstrated its determination to undermine the “Taiwan independence” process by a military show of force and verbal attacks on Taiwanese politicians, in order to counter what it perceives as a threat to its military and political security. China’s Taiwan Affairs Office issued a reaffirmation its stance, stressing that “changing the way Taiwan leaders are chosen and the results of this change cannot alter the fact that Taiwan is part of Chinese territory”.⁴⁹ While this reaction is to be expected from the Chinese, it is also important to note that Beijing is concerned about whether any new political leadership in Taiwan might further threaten its security interests.

In addition, one important ramification resulting from the military exercises was that it gave an actual indication of China’s military capabilities. In reality, China’s armed forces did not perform particularly well in their military exercises, for they had problems operating in bad weather. It became quite obvious just how far still China is behind the United States’ in terms of military capabilities. This type of feedback is bound to raise some military security concerns for Chinese defence planners, in addition to the political security concerns often associated with the “Taiwan independence” challenge.

Apart from the United States, Japan’s alleged involvement in the Taiwan issue has also come under China’s scrutiny. For instance, the Chinese were very concerned when, in August 1997, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiroku Kajiyama declared that the “surrounding areas” covered by Japan-US collaboration “should include the Taiwan Strait”; this was regarded by the

Chinese as the first time that a top Japanese official had openly interfered in Chinese affairs since normalisation of relations.⁵⁰ China was very wary of any deviation from Tokyo's pledge to honour its "one China" policy. Later, during his visit to Japan in November 1997, Chinese leader Li Peng commented on the new "Japan-US Defence Co-operation Guidelines", saying that he accepted the Japanese interpretation but thought that the explanation would have been more satisfactory if Prime Minister Hashimoto had added that the Japan-US security pact did not include Taiwan.⁵¹ On his part, Hashimoto then sought to calm Chinese nerves by assuring that the Japan-US security pact would not conflict the Sino-Japanese joint statement and the Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed in 1972.

Perhaps a more important Chinese interpretation of the new "Guidelines" was published on September 23, 1997 by the think-tank, China Strategy and Administration Research Society. It was pointed out that Taiwan was the most controversial concept of "periphery" among the countries mentioned in the "Guidelines", for the Chinese interpreted the "peripheral state of affairs" as actually including the Taiwan Strait.⁵² It was argued that Japan and the United States had intentionally done this with the purpose of forming a strategic line of deterrence joining South Korea, Taiwan and Nansha Islands (Spratlys) and they were also scheming "to leave leeway for expanding the scope of military actions in the future".

From the analysis above, it is quite evident that the Chinese are concerned about the increasing role Japan might play in the US-Japan alliance in the future, specifically if this is to be linked to the Taiwan issue. In Chinese eyes, Japanese

involvement in Taiwan will invariably magnify the threat Taiwan already supposedly poses to China's security.

As for the Chinese leaders, on the whole, one might argue that active military pressures on the "Taiwan independence" movement, as distinct from threats, do not appear to be a very promising option. A major international crisis will almost certainly erupt and possible American military intervention may follow. Most important of all, an unstable political environment would have catastrophic consequences for China's economic modernisation drive, thereby hindering its drive to global power status in the twenty-first century. We can now turn explore China's economic interests in relation to Taiwan in greater detail.

Economic security and Taiwan

In general, major arguments against China initiating a conflict over Taiwan lie in Beijing's economic interests in relation to Taipei. As argued in the previous chapters, the top priorities of China's leaders are to feed its continuing economic growth and raise the people's standard of living. In order to do, China needs resources and capital. To a certain extent, capital-rich Taiwan can enhance the economic interests of Beijing. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) chairman, Hsu Hsin-liang, has suggested that the three direct links of postal, trade and transport services between Taiwan and China constitute the best approach to improving relations with Beijing.⁵³ Further evidence of the importance of China-Taiwan economic relations can be found in President Jiang Zemin's speech on January 30, 1995 when he stated that "political differences should not affect or interfere with the economic co-operation between the two sides".⁵⁴ China knows

that Taiwan can enhance its economic security, and hence it has indicated a willingness to let bilateral economic ties grow.

To be precise, Taiwan has played a critical role not only as Beijing's trading partner, but also as a source of investment capital, technology and management skills. President Lee Teng-hui's policies have encouraged greater contact, trade and commerce between both sides, and economic ties between China and Taiwan have been expanding. The investment and business talent flowing into China from Taiwan have already made a major contribution to Beijing's economic development goals. Taiwan has provided China with both technology and financial resources that are a major contribution to the remarkable economic expansion in South China.

The "Natural Economic Territory (NET)", first outlined in Chapter 2, consists of the economic linkages between the southern province of Fujian with Taiwan. Such cross border trade and investment mitigates even the political hostility across the Taiwan Strait, and demonstrates the possible effects of leaders in both China and Taiwan actively co-operating for mutual economic benefits. However, it is worth noting that the current government in Taiwan is advocating a cautious approach, better known as the "no haste, be patient" policy. In addition, an opposition party member, former Taipei Mayor Chen Shui-bian, said in November 1997 that he would support the government's "no haste, be patient" policy towards economic ties with Beijing, adding that business executives should put overall national interests above their corporate interests.⁵⁵ In contrast to the cautious stance adopted by the politicians, Taiwanese businessmen have shown readiness to invest in China, in their bids to make profits in China's huge market.

This type of phenomenon suggests that mutually beneficial economic ties and economics in general may overshadow political rivalries in the future international system.

Hence, China appears to be more accommodating towards Taiwan's participation in regional economic organisations such as Asian Development Bank and the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation. Of course, such a stance is taken by China with bolstering its economic security in mind. China does not wish to jeopardise its role in these economic organisations by adopting hard-line policies against Taipei's membership.

These economic organisations are useful to fuel Beijing's own economic modernisation drive. For the sake of its own economic goals, China has tolerated, to a certain extent, Taiwanese participation in regional economic organisations. Nevertheless, it is equally important to point out that Beijing still insists that Taiwanese participation constitute only "ad-hoc arrangements and cannot constitute a 'model' applicable to other inter-governmental organisations or international gatherings".⁵⁶ In the interests of China's political security, which include negating Taiwan's existence as a sovereign state in the international system, Taiwan must never be allowed to gain further political recognition by other states.

Furthermore, one can also argue that China might see reunification, which could possibly include the appropriation of Taiwan's resources, as part of the solution to sustain its economic growth. Economic integration with Taiwan and a larger economy can certainly boost Beijing's economic security. This provides another incentive for Beijing to achieve reunification with Taiwan. In short,

Beijing hopes to reap economic benefits from integration with the Taiwanese economy and that, in turn, helps to justify the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party. It is felt that these types of economic and political security issues have been underplayed in most Western literature on this subject.

At a wider level, Beijing has concluded that the reunification of China will not only bolster the stability and development of the country itself, but also contribute to the further enhancement of the co-operation between China and other countries, as well as to peace and development in the Asia-Pacific region and the world as a whole⁵⁷. China has thus linked the reunification with Taiwan as inducing a more stable environment in the Asia-Pacific for Beijing to carry out its economic development programmes.

As for the Taiwanese, they realise that “economic strength”, which forms part of China’s security agenda, will be a major determinant in the outcome of cross strait rivalry.⁵⁸ In short, economics has become too important for states to ignore in international relations and in the case of the China-Taiwan rivalry, it might even decide the outcome.

However, it is clear that China realises that economic integration cannot be achieved by the use of force. Beijing will seek to avoid any damage to the stability in the region. China’s leaders perceive regional stability and the continuation of the region’s economic health as essential for its economic development. This is at the heart of China’s deepest security interests. Major disturbance of the international system, especially if close to home, will seriously undermine the long-term development goals upon which China’s future lies. Therefore, it is unlikely that

Beijing will use force to achieve reunification with Taiwan, for its economic security is at stake.

Conclusion

In the quest to enhance its security interests, China is determined to eliminate the “Taiwan independence” challenge as a step forward to achieving national reunification. In this process, it has associated the United States directly or indirectly with the issue of “Taiwan independence” and linked this issue to Chinese nationalism on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Beijing has also tried to isolate Taiwan in the international arena and discredit the government of President Lee Teng-hui. These manoeuvres have been aimed at bolstering China’s political security and undermining Taiwan’s.

Above all, we must always bear in mind that China seeks economic modernisation, and this will require a peaceful solution to the Taiwan issue. A stable environment, in relation to both sides of the Taiwan Strait, is vital to China’s economic security. Therefore, analysing security through the prism of economics has shown that China is unlikely to resort to the use of force in bolstering its security vis-à-vis Taiwan.

¹ “Opposition DPP would not sacrifice the people’s interests in talks with China,” Central News Agency, 8 Dec 97 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 10 Dec 97, p. F/2.

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³ Taiwan Affairs Office and the Information Office under the State Council, "The Taiwan Question and the reunification of China," August 31, 1993, published in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Far East*, p. S1/7.

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CHAPTER 7: “PEACEFUL EVOLUTION” AS A SECURITY THREAT

As mentioned in the introduction and evident in the preceding chapters, the United States is perceived as a major factor affecting China’s security. To be more precise, Beijing views a principal goal of US foreign policy in the post-Cold War era as seeking to subvert the few remaining “socialist” states of the world through a process of “peaceful evolution”. This threat to China’s political security has become even more pronounced in that, as the major remaining communist power, China sees itself in a position of providing the ideological bedrock in a international system that is increasingly abandoning communism. This chapter begins by discussing the “peaceful evolution” concept as perceived by the Chinese. Then the issue of human rights as a means to subvert the Chinese system is analysed. The chapter then goes on to explain the dilemma in China’s quest to modernise its economy, which means it will encounter “peaceful evolution”.

The concept and its potential dangers

In general, it can be stated that the alleged threat of “peaceful evolution” comes across as primarily a political security threat, rather than a military one. This threat relates to the Chinese allegation that aim of Western capitalist nations is to subvert the Beijing regime by non-military means. To the Chinese, the concept of “peaceful evolution” is seen as a specific challenge to the political security of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). For example, referring to international relations, the late Deng Xiaoping once referred to this as an

indication that “Western nations are waging World War Three, a war without the smoke of gunpowder”.¹ Chinese academics have also noted that the “imperialist nations, backed by the threat of a mighty military machine” are using non-military means, including the international mass media, to convert the socio-economic system, culture and thought in socialist nations to capitalism, ultimately incorporating these nations into the capitalist orbit.²

In general, the Chinese perceive that this strategy has been adopted by Western nations towards socialist countries after the Second World War. To be more precise, the origins of this concept were traced by one Chinese source to an alleged statement by the former US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in the 1950s during the Korean War. In this source, the “peaceful evolution” strategy of the “international monopoly bourgeoisie” formally came into existence when Dulles explicitly proposed in a speech “the use of peaceful means” to “accelerate the evolution of government policies within the Sino-Soviet bloc” and “shorten the expected life span of communism”.³ Western scholars such as Paul Godwin have commented that, in the Chinese view, “peaceful evolution” seeks to undermine the values of socialism through the political, economic, cultural penetration of socialist states that accompanies Western assistance and commerce”.⁴ The main components of this strategy include the transformation of socialist systems by urging the introduction of private ownership, free-markets and parliamentary democracy, which would eventually lead to the end of Marxism-Leninism as an official ideology and the Chinese Communist Party’s political leadership. The provision of economic assistance as a “bait” was mentioned as this can induce socialist countries to abandon Marxism. The aim, it

appears, is the gradual undermining of a communist system through interactions with the outside world, in particular the most advanced industrial capitalist nations. The United States certainly represents the threat most clearly, in the eyes of some leaders and academics in China.

However, Western academics such as Michael Yahuda have noted that the term “peaceful evolution” used by the Chinese is vague and all embracing; its meaning ranges from dark conspiracies involving the alleged plotters of the counter revolutionary rebellion (the official term for the Tiananmen events) to the broad spectrum of cultural, social and economic exchanges with the outside world”.⁵ The vagueness and comprehensiveness of the “peaceful evolution” concept has on many occasions allowed Chinese leaders to denounce threats to the Beijing regime as manifestations of bourgeois liberalisation. While one may debate the coherence of the “peaceful evolution” concept, there is no mistaking that it is taken very seriously by the Chinese leadership. This perceived threat has been further magnified by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Chinese government perceives itself as being the next target of the “peaceful evolution” strategy. After all, according to one Chinese view, the Soviet collapse was attributed to the West and America issuing “propaganda about the inferiority of socialism”; US statesmen denying “the worth of the Soviet Communist Party” and highlighting that economic difficulties had “come about because of the implementation of socialism by the Soviet leadership”.⁶ Once Russia has succumbed to this non-military strategy, China appears to be the next target. China has now become the sole significant socialist power, alongside countries such as North Korea, Cuba

and Vietnam, surrounded by capitalist nations. One may argue that this leaves China in a precarious position, for the socialist ideology that has sustained the Chinese Communist Party since 1949 is being undermined. In short, the political security of China is deemed to be at stake.

Moreover, with the use of military force seemingly unfeasible now, it appears to Beijing that most viable option for Western powers is to use “peaceful evolution” as an instrument of foreign policy. For example, an article in *Guangming Ribao* noted that instead of using force, it is more effective for powers such as the United States to spread “bourgeois ideas and way of life through educational, cultural and intellectual exchanges”.⁷ Therefore, in this vein, Western media are seen as threatening to socialist ideology at various levels. For example, Western radio, television, newspapers and magazines are seen as capable of influencing social psychology, social opinion and social thinking in non-capitalist countries while cultural exchanges and academic publications on the other hand are usually used to propagate the capitalist ideology and theories. The Voice of America, the British Broadcasting Corporation and other Western media are alleged to have contributed to the “corruption” of the Chinese people with “bourgeois spiritual pollution”; and this clearly reflects China’s fears of attempts to “subvert the socialist system through media propaganda” by confusing the people’s minds and weakening their “ideological commitment to communism”.⁸

Furthermore, one Chinese academic noted that on Mar 27, 1990, Radio Marti under the Voice of America stole the frequencies of Cuban Television Broadcasting in violation of the regulation of the International

Telecommunication Organisation in order to air programmes aimed at subverting the current regime in Cuba.⁹ China fears that such subversion tactics may culminate in a challenge to the communist party's orthodoxy and China's political security. The latest form of "peaceful evolution", known as "constructive engagement" enunciated by the Clinton administration, is seen as equally threatening to Beijing. Although most Westerners see Chinese criticisms of the United States and the West as propagandistic, non-military means can have negative effects on regime security in China, and the Chinese leadership has quite rightly taken this type of threat very seriously.

In short, it is true to say that the strategy of "peaceful evolution" has become more pertinent against the background of communism's demise in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This type of conclusion has been expressed in the *Renmin Ribao*, which warns that China may have to "bear greater pressure than before".¹⁰ Of course, one can denounce, as many Western scholars have indeed done, the concept of "peaceful evolution" as ambiguous and value-laden. While not professing to delve too deep into the semantics surrounding the term, the usefulness of employing this term is that it gives us a convenient way of analysing the political security threat perceived by the Chinese. This political security threat has been largely associated with the United States' China policy.

The United States and "peaceful evolution"

Above all, one main reason why "peaceful evolution" appears so threatening is because China regards it as part of post-Cold War American foreign policy. This type of argument can also be found in the writings of some Western

China analysts. For example, David Shambaugh has argued that Beijing is not incorrect in charging Washington with pursuing the “peaceful evolution” strategy as this has been the “underlying premise -if not the active policy guide -for America’s policy towards China since 1979” when China adopted reforms in its efforts to modernise.¹¹ As a post-revolutionary society, the United States is often seen by China as exporting its ideas and institutions abroad and China is a prime target. Harry Harding has also put forward the proposition that the United States is attempting “to remake China in its own image”, this time by exporting a secular philosophy rather than by religious teachings in the previous era.¹²

David Shambaugh further argues that America’s agenda is to change China, as evident in the century-long American “missionary complex” underlying policy towards Beijing; and this clearly indicates a strong “American paternalism towards China” that has been present since at least the 1920s.¹³ Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Chinese conservatives see the growing American economic and cultural presence in China as a dangerous interference in their internal affairs. An American-led coalition of Western industrialised states unfettered by a counterweight seems to be the most threatening component of the “peaceful evolution” strategy. The above analysis therefore highlights that “peaceful evolution” represents a threat to the political security of China, and the Chinese Communist Party in particular.

Today, in Beijing’s eyes, the American espousal of political liberalisation is seen as a concerted campaign to subvert the socialist system in China by peaceful means. This is accentuated by that fact the United States, as the most powerful democracy in the world, had “defeated” its principal ideological rival,

the former Soviet Union. For example, an article in *Beijing Review* argued that in the ideological sphere, “the United States is trying to sell American-style democracy, human rights and free market to countries in Asia”.¹⁴ This type of perception is also evident in the case of the former British colony of Hong Kong, which reverted to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, 1997. The Chinese news agency, Xinhua has noted that the United States’ Hong Kong Policy Act of October 5, 1992 contains provisions requiring regular reports to Congress by the US Secretary of State on conditions in Hong Kong, including the “development of democratic institutions”; and this indicates that Hong Kong may be “a possible vehicle of ‘peaceful evolution’”.¹⁵ It must be noted that this type of thinking still remains entrenched, despite the fact that Hong Kong’s reversion to Chinese sovereignty had largely developed in accordance with Beijing’s wishes. In short, the Chinese take the political security threat posed by “peaceful evolution” very seriously.

In addition, the Chinese are confounded by American commitment to pluralism in domestic politics. As noted by David Shambaugh, the coexistence of various channels of political participation in the United States is often interpreted as “a sign of the disintegration of the social order rather than as an expression of the internal dynamics of the system”.¹⁶ This is fundamentally different from the traditional Chinese desire for social order, mostly achieved by an authoritarian political system. It is precisely this type of aforementioned political expression that Beijing sought to suppress in Tiananmen Square in 1989. In this sense, Beijing sees the American political system as inferior and as one that should not be imported into China. More importantly, the communist regime is worried that

its political monopoly will be challenged if American political values become widely circulated among the Chinese masses. This will put the regime's political security at stake.

The perceived challenge of liberal democracy was taken seriously by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) throughout the 1980s. David Goodman argues that the CCP has countered such trends towards liberal democracy adopting a very high profile of authoritarianism and nationalism in order to bolster political security.¹⁷ In this sense, liberal democracy has been portrayed as a "Western pollutant" ill-suited for China's needs. Beijing is convinced that China's needs can be best met by an authoritarian political system and the absence of organised challenges to continued communist rule. At a time when the communist party's legitimacy is increasingly being undermined, charging the West, especially the United States, with political subversion may be one way to deflect attention from issues of domestic legitimacy. The notion of liberal governance, which provides a space for societal autonomy, is less accepted by China. For centuries, China has taken the stance that the state should be privileged over society and American efforts to stress the latter's legitimacy are seen as domestic political interference.

Hence, as far as the political security of the Chinese Communist Party is concerned, it is quite clear that the authorities in Beijing will be horrified by the prospect of a devolution of power. This will almost certainly invoke a challenge to the party's position, such as another Tiananmen or resistance to the state that includes demonstrations by students, workers, the urban middle classes, or in the most threatening case, splinter groups of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), People's Armed Police or other state security organs. Hence, siege mentality of

the Chinese leaders is bound to intensify as these leaders come to the conclusion that radical political reform is out of the question for this must surely represent a slippery slope to extinction of the party itself.

However, despite the rejection of Western-style democracy, it must be noted that China does not reject democracy per se. In fact, Beijing is keen to correct misperceptions of “Chinese democracy”. The Chinese argue that “democracy for every country in the world is always relative and specific” and “it must conform to and be compatible with the national conditions of every country”.¹⁸ The aim, for China, therefore, is to carry out political reform for the purpose of developing a “socialist democracy suited to its national conditions”. This type of argument serves to reinforce the role of the communist party, while at the same seeking to reject Western-style liberal democracy as of little use to China’s status as a developing country. Of course, one may point out the flaws in this type of argument, but for our purposes here, the crucial point is that Chinese leaders have never rejected democracy entirely, but they reject democracy imported from abroad, which is perceived as a threat to Beijing’s political security. The same can also be said for the Western concept of human rights.

Human rights as a political threat

Of the various forms that the alleged “peaceful evolution” strategies may take, human rights issues are perceived to be extremely dangerous in recent years, as far as Beijing’s political security is concerned. This is accentuated by the fact that, in general, with the end of superpower rivalry, human rights issues have increasingly come to greater prominence on the agenda of international relations

in the post-Cold war era. To a certain extent, it is also possible to argue that the end of the US-Soviet-China “strategic triangle” means that human rights issues have come under closer scrutiny, occupying a more prominent place in international relations, in particular Sino-American relations. For instance, during the strategic Sino-American alignment to counter the Soviet threat in the 1970s and the 1980s, moral issues such as human rights received less attention. The strategic alignment between China and the United States also accounted for the fact that China did not face severe criticism compared to other communist states such as the Soviet Union and those in Eastern Europe. Moreover, many of the Third World countries with which Washington had close relations were right-wing dictatorships and human rights issues were largely not raised by mutual tacit agreements.

In the 1990s, China suddenly finds that most of the countries it wants to deal with are democracies and human rights issues are mostly on the agenda. Non-governmental organisations have also become an important international lobby, obliging Western governments to take up the issue of human rights in China. For example, enjoying greater access to US Congress and the media, groups such as Asia Watch and Amnesty International have succeeded in placing political repression, imprisonment for political activities, torture and prison labour exports on the agenda of Sino-American relations.

Above all, for China, the catalyst of human rights issues was the June 4, 1989 Tiananmen Incident. Therefore, it is important to analyse the implications of this event for China’s political security. Many in the West view this event as the antithesis of the liberating events during the same year in Eastern Europe, as

repressive communist regimes toppled one after another. The brutal suppression of the pro-democracy movement in China has shattered, to a large extent, the positive image of China as a reform-minded socialist country. It also means that Chinese leaders have come to realise that human rights issues do pose a threat to the political security of the communist party.

Equating human rights with state sovereignty

This perceived threat engendered by the Tiananmen Incident is given further prominence because the Chinese regard human rights issues as an issue of sovereignty. The Chinese are among the most ardent advocates of sovereignty in international relations, largely due its experience of Western and Japanese imperialism in the recent past. For example, one of the top leaders, Li Peng, has stressed that human rights issues fall “within the sovereignty of each country”.¹⁹ Undoubtedly, at the heart of this huge debate is the compatibility of the Westphalian concept of sovereignty and the concept of human rights enunciated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The former has fused with China’s acute concern with state sovereignty and strict non-interference in its internal affairs.

It is also important to bear in mind that the concept of sovereignty actually came to China relatively late in the nineteenth century. As a victim of Western imperialism, China was subjected to the forceful “opening” to the West through the Opium Wars (1840-1842 and 1856-1860) and the defeat of the Boxer Uprising in 1900-1901. It is not surprising, therefore, as Hedley Bull has noted, countries such as China, which have experienced imperialism and suffered human

rights abuses themselves, “cling to the rhetoric of sovereignty as one of the means available to them of defending it”.²⁰ Hence it is only natural that Chinese communists later embraced the concept of sovereignty with a vengeance after taking power in 1949. Once human rights are equated with sovereignty, any attempts by external powers to impose a certain standard on China are viewed as threats to Beijing's political security and sovereignty.

To the Chinese, state sovereignty and political security must come before human rights. This type of reasoning has been expressed a *Beijing Review* article, which argues that “state sovereignty is the basis for the realisation of human rights, and if a state is not safeguarded, the human rights of its citizens cannot be protected”²¹. Placing sovereignty over human rights in its hierarchy of values, China is, therefore, against linking the United Nations Security Council to human rights.²² President Jiang Zemin has said that China remains “opposed to interference in the internal affairs of other countries on the ground of protecting human rights”.²³ China has also argued that to preclude human rights as a state's internal affairs is contrary to international law.²⁴ While such statements may seem untenable to Western human rights experts, it is true to say that when viewed from China's modern experience as a victim of Western and Japan imperialism, one can see why the Chinese are so adamant that no foreign power should intervene in Chinese affairs again, be it in the name of human rights or any other issues.

Specifically, China has blamed the United States for practising hegemony when advocating human rights as part of its strategy of “peaceful evolution”. A Chinese commentary has questioned the status of Washington to be the “global

judge of human rights”, which implies that America is “empowered to place itself above all countries of the world”.²⁵ Hence, China has criticised US laws that instruct American representatives in intergovernmental lending organisations, such as the World Bank, to oppose loans to countries guilty of human rights abuses. In addition, China sees this as a potential stumbling block to its quest for economic modernisation. There are those in China who believe that the human rights issue is a weapon used by foreign governments attempting to weaken and control China. An extreme view is that defending China’s human rights practices is part of larger battle against Western imperialism, led by the Americans. In this view, defending human rights records is equal to defending China’s nationalist pride and the survival of the Chinese Communist Party.

Moreover, Beijing has pointed out that China and the United States have different social systems, values, levels of development and historical traditions. It is inevitable that both countries will adopt different approaches to human rights. China tends to view the concept of human rights as a “Western package” thrust upon it by foreigners. An extreme Chinese view sees the attack on Chinese human rights as “merely the latest statement in the 150-year history of intrusions into China’s internal affairs in the name of international standards”.²⁶

To a certain extent, China is right when it points out the West has violated the concept of human rights and sovereignty when they colonised the world. It is with history in mind that the Chinese see human rights as an instrument used by the West to pursue its own foreign policy objectives. The Chinese government views human rights not as a legitimate issue for Sino-American dialogue but as a means used by Americans to subvert its political system. However, the

conventional Western view is that linking human rights issues to state sovereignty is merely an attempt by the Chinese Communist Party to stave off any challenges to its political monopoly, specifically challenges to its authoritarian way of governing China.

With regards to the 1989 Tiananmen Incident, which represented a real challenge to the security of the Chinese regime, the United States is held partially responsible for fomenting the demonstrations and contributing to their sustenance. An article in the *Guangming Ribao* has accused “leading political figures of the US monopoly capitalist class” of training “some so-called fighters for democracy” and giving “economic aid” to them so that they can to “play an important role for the US government’s strategy of ‘peaceful evolution’ on various occasions”.²⁷ The late Deng Xiaoping himself had identified the “counterrevolutionaries” as “agents of Western subversion”.²⁸ It was reported that, at that time, Chinese students in Tiananmen Square quoted Jefferson, Paine, Nathan Hale and other American revolutionaries. Not surprisingly, at that time when the survival of Communism in other parts of the world was under threat, the political liberalisation that accompanied the opening up to the West was seen as part of the plot by the capitalist states to undermine China’s political security.

China’s response to the Tiananmen Incident was predictable. To avoid being further isolated in the international community. Beijing sought to cultivate the hard-line East European states with high level visits, which produced joint statements warning of the need to guard against the Western strategy of “peaceful evolution”.²⁹ The few governments that supported China included hard-line Communist states such as North Korea, Romania, East Germany and Bulgaria

although most of these communist states were soon to disintegrate.³⁰ It is clearly evident that the Tiananmen Incident emphasises China's concern for its political security and has led Beijing to seek allies in its crusade against the capitalist democracies.

On their part, Western governments, led by the United States, imposed sanctions on China immediately after the June 1989 events. At that point in time, China felt being cornered and its security being threatened. Among other measures, Washington cancelled all high-level exchanges with China, cut off arms transfers and military-related sales, suspended financial credits and economic assistance, and conditioned their restoration on substantial evidence of Chinese progress toward political reform.³¹ Much to China's dismay, the US State Department's annual human rights report also took the Chinese government to task over the post-1989 political persecution.³² China's response to these Western actions was rather forceful because it deemed that its security interests were being undermined. For instance, the Chinese National People's Congress, meeting in February 1990, condemned America imposing sanctions after the June 4 event, criticising "the short-sighted anti-China act of certain members of the US Congress" as an "interference in the internal affairs of other countries".³³

It is worth noting that the United States adopted a tougher stance against China compared to other Western nations. For instance, David Shambaugh has argued that the United States, to a certain extent, pursued a China policy at extreme variance with its allies in the G-7 (now G-8), embarking on "peaceful evolution" while its partners have tried to distance themselves from this policy

and instead opted for a policy of “peaceful coexistence”.³⁴ What the actions of the United States did was to trigger a strong reaction from the Chinese leaders.

As a result, China took pains not to give the impression that it had bowed to foreign pressures in managing its internal affairs, for doing so would have severely undermined the party’s legitimacy and authority both at home and abroad. Domestically, the crackdown put a stop to the impetus of political reform in China, in the name of political security. For the rest of 1989 and the first half of the 1990, the door to the outside world was mostly closed, primarily due to the fear of Western and, in particular, American political and cultural influence. Later, the demise of the Communism in the former Soviet bloc further confirmed the view of Chinese hard-liners that their forceful responses represented the correct way to deal with threats to the party’s political security, irrespective of American or world opinion.

Apart from the charges against political repression in China, many Americans also took a sympathetic view of Tibet, regarded by Beijing as a part of China itself. The Chinese have been accused of violating human rights in Tibet, and this is compounded by the fact that the US Congress had on previous occasions passed resolutions affirming that Tibet is an “occupied country”. To be sure, the Tibet issue has historical roots. In the 1950s, Beijing blamed the Americans, in particular the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), for assisting the Tibetan separatists in the 1959 armed rebellion. These allegations have constituted an important component of China’s security thinking on Tibet. Although US policy towards Tibet had changed during the Nixon administration, with the

recognition that Tibet is now part of China, the issue has still remained a thorn in China's flesh, and more importantly, a threat to its security.

In addition, apart from the United States, Western countries such as Germany recently provided strong support for resolutions in the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva that are sharply critical of China's record in Tibet. China has responded to these criticisms by highlighting "the dark, savage and cruel feudal serfdom" existing in Tibet before communist rule, stating that the Tibetan people had been deprived of all human rights by the serf-owners.³⁵ Emphasising the principle of non-interference in a state's internal affairs, China has rejected the Dalai Lama's 1988 "Strasbourg proposal", which suggested China-Tibet relationship as one "between a suzerain and a vassal state", and "between a protector and a protected state".³⁶ Beijing sees the Dalai Lama's move as a denial of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. On the issue of Tibetan independence, which is in many ways similar to the Taiwan issue, Beijing is fearful of foreign involvement. For instance, the 1992 White Paper has noted that Britain and Russia interfered in Tibet by signing a convention in 1907 that changed China's sovereignty over Tibet into "suzerainty".³⁷ Beijing has attributed the problem of Tibet to the work of imperialists, and at the same time played up the fear of "foreign forces" in order to trigger nationalist feelings at home. China is fearful of any foreign forces using the pretext of human rights to interfere in Tibet because this will threaten its political security.

In general, as Denny Roy has pointed out, it is clear that human rights issues represent a threat to "regime security, for they represent attack on the Chinese Communist Party's legitimacy and monopolisation of political power".³⁸

What is more debatable is whether the human rights threat pertains to the entire Chinese nation rather than the Chinese Communist Party. For instance, the Chinese Communist Party may be more secure but at the same time, a more liberal regime with more political representation can actually help China in its economic development. While not needing to delve too much into this debate since it is not the subject of this thesis, it is fair to say that the distinction between the Chinese regime and the Chinese state has not yet developed to the extent that we need to distinguish them in great detail. This is one of the fundamental assumptions of this thesis, which was outlined in Chapter 1. While some Western academics may beg to differ, it is fair to say that most Chinese equate the Chinese Communist Party with the birth or rather, re-birth of modern China.

On a positive note, one can see that Beijing has not rejected the idea of an international human rights regime altogether. China has stressed the progress it made in advancing economic, social and cultural rights. It is possible that foreign pressures, such as those arising from Western nations and international human rights organisations, may have indirectly induced the publication of the 1991 White Paper.³⁹ The White Paper, despite not adding much substantial evidence of human rights progress in China, is seminal in that it amounts to an implicit acknowledgement that human rights issues have become too important in international relations for China to ignore.

Emphasising positive rights to enhance political security

For our purpose, China's overall response to the West's criticism of its human rights record is worth analysing, since it relates to Beijing's political

security. Beijing has distinguished between different categories of human rights in order to bolster the communist party's political security. As James Seymour has pointed out, China responded to the attack on its political security by distinguishing between "positive rights" (economic, social and cultural rights); and civil, political rights.⁴⁰ While there is no need for us to delve into the theory of human rights, it is important to note that, whereas civil and political rights require governments to refrain from taking actions that violate them, "positive rights" require government to make provision for citizens. China is definitely more comfortable doing the latter.

Moreover, it is generally acknowledged by Western experts that "positive rights" are less subject to theoretical controversy. Predictably, the 1991 White Paper has stated that "the human rights advocated by China encompass not only include the right to subsistence, civil and political rights, but also economic, cultural and social rights".⁴¹ Jiang Zemin has gone even further by linking the issue of human rights to China's current economic reform and political system, stressing that social stability is a prerequisite for achieving economic development; which in turn provides the opportunity to enhance human rights in China.⁴² Such statements indicate that, in the eyes of the Chinese leaders, the practice of human rights have to be compatible with Beijing's needs and must be in line with its political security requirements.

To be precise, separating rights into the two categories of "positive rights" and civil, political rights raises the question of their relative priority. Clearly, China does not treat political rights as equally important as social and economic rights. Being concerned about its economic well-being, which in turn provides

legitimacy for the regime, Beijing has stressed this point, as argued in previous chapters. In the past, the communists' social contract with the people was that the peasantry surrendered their political power to the party, who would use this power to serve and protect the masses. This is similar to Rousseau's social contract theory in the West. As a consequence, the Chinese Communist Party has since assumed that it acted on the behalf of the people, aiming to achieve the goal of generating economic prosperity for all.

Therefore, it is only natural that, as Denny Roy has pointed out, the broad view of human rights that Beijing subscribes to is extremely suitable for authoritarian states experiencing high growth rates as this serves as a way to emphasise a regime's achievement in terms of raising living standards and de-emphasising its defects such as lack of political liberties.⁴³ These states have even argued that increasing political liberties impede socio-economic progress, although the Asian financial crisis has in some ways expose the flaws of this argument, as political events in Indonesia have shown. Human rights issues do represent a challenge to the current successful status quo in the eyes of the current regime in China, as the communists seek to hold on power and strengthen its political security.

In terms of concrete action, China did try to show the world that it was not isolated by the Western sanctions after the 1989 Tiananmen Incident. Beijing sought the tacit support of other Third World countries. Capitalising on the relative silence from the Third World after the 1989 event, China stepped up its diplomatic contacts with these countries and in some cases even repaired ties.⁴⁴ It was a policy of necessity at that point in time, as China faced a closed door from

the West. Interestingly, one of the side effects of the Tiananmen Incident was that China now turned to its Asian neighbours to avoid being isolated. In order to counter the human rights threat to its security, China sought support from other states that supported it on human rights issues. For instance, China received support from Third World states in opposing a draft resolution against Beijing at the 51st session of the United Nations Commission of Human Rights.⁴⁵ One Chinese leader, Li Peng, stressed that the difference between developed and developing countries, stating that “the rights to independence, subsistence and development are of paramount importance to the large of number of developing countries”.⁴⁶ This is bound to strike a chord with most developing states while indirectly serving as a means to bolster China’s political security. We can now come to the question of what constitute the actual avenues for “peaceful evolution” and how these might impinge on China’s political security.

The actual basis for “peaceful evolution”

The question of why “peaceful evolution” was allowed to filter into China, given its perceived destructive potential to China’s political security, is a critical one in this thesis. Fundamentally, the reason lies in the interaction between the political and economic dimensions of China’s security. In actual fact, the “peaceful evolution” strategy is able to threaten the Chinese Communist Party precisely because China needs to open up its economy and trade with the West. Beijing is driven by the conditions of its economy to continue the policy of soliciting foreign loans, technology and expertise; and it also requires access to markets in the industrialised states. China needs Western economic inputs to

develop its economy in order to enhance its economic security. Despite its current rapid economic progress, China's educated manpower base remains small and its scientific and technological levels are generally still below world standards. China's economic growth must rely on science and technology as an "equaliser" to catch up with the West, and one way of solving its problem is to import Western technology in order to strengthen the economy..

The Chinese are equally aware that such economic relations with the West will eventually constitute avenues of subversion. It is inescapable that in the process, trade contacts with the West will serve as a conduit for "bourgeois" influence and all the dangers of "peaceful evolution" will accompany such contacts. As noted by Michael Yahuda, this reflects the wider dilemma all Chinese leaders face in striking a balance between the two extremes of opening up to the West or relying on themselves.⁴⁷ To be sure, this dilemma has existed before this century. Since the mid-nineteenth century, there have been debates among Chinese leaders over the degree to which modernisation requires China to import technology, institutions and values from abroad. As Harry Harding has pointed out, some leaders see relations with the outside world as necessary for China to strengthen itself while others fear that these foreign influences will contaminate Chinese society and reduce China's independence and sovereignty.⁴⁸ Today, this dilemma still exists and there is no doubt that China's political security is at stake in this dilemma.

What Beijing wants is to adopt the "positive" aspects of Western science and technology while keeping it populace free from Western "bourgeois influence". China will not allow an uncritical acceptance of foreign values. All

foreign imports must be tailored to suit Chinese conditions. As David Goodman has pointed out, the pressure today is to achieve a “Chinese” modernisation, not simply the “transplant of the Atlantic culture”.⁴⁹ At the global level, China needs a continued relatively open international economy and most-favoured trading nation status with all the major trading partners in order to continue to grow rapidly. To facilitate these economic exchanges with the developed world, China will need to continue remodifying its internal institutions in order to become attractive to foreigners. In the process of trading with foreigners, China is bound to be subjected to significant external influences, thereby inadvertently putting its political security at some degree of risk.

However, one can also argue that tyranny of the markets poses little risk to China’s political security. The international markets are known to be quite comfortable dealing with authoritarian regimes and financial markets are keener on the credit worthiness of a particular regime rather than the internal politics of a debtor state. For instance, James Shinn has pointed out that China’s premium on long term sovereign debt (measured in terms of its pricing over the United States Treasury debt of comparable maturity) is still less than 100 basis points, or one percent, adding that there is some evidence that this risk premium widens in response to external tensions between China and its trading partners rather than in response to internal political repression, apart from the Tiananmen Incident.⁵⁰ In fact, it may be argued that financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank are relatively unconcerned with China’s internal political behaviour. For the Chinese leaders, what they must determine is how to maintain close economic ties with the United States and the West while at the

same time not allowing them to “wantonly interfere with China’s internal affairs and violate its sovereignty”.⁵¹

In today’s Information Age, with information flows being disseminated more easily and on a wider scale than before, it clear that foreign ideas can penetrate into China more readily. It is true to say that organising ideologies of the Chinese state are now more likely be penetrated, distorted, corrupted and eventually undermined by contacts with foreign ideas. Hence, to counter the threat of “peaceful evolution”, China can adopt the same approach as other communist governments did in the past, defending themselves by restricting the circulation of contrary political ideas. This type of reaction will entail making the Chinese state secure by returning to isolationism, as China did during the Cultural Revolution era to keep out undesired foreign influence.

However, this type of isolationist policy is difficult to put into practice in the Information Age. Today, governments around the world, especially authoritarian ones, can no longer easily control the flow of information across their borders. This has led some analysts, such as William Overholt, to point out that “the Chinese have bitterly denounced ‘peaceful evolution’ but has in fact evolved peacefully at rates that have revolutionised the society in only 17 years (1979-1996)”.⁵² China has to cope with using Western inputs to its economic development goals while remaining free from the spread of Western values and concepts, which it deems as unsuitable for Beijing and potentially threatening to its political security.

Beijing clearly does not want market reforms to be followed by political reforms in which the people or organised interests may replace the dominant role of

the Chinese Communist Party. While maintaining a large public sector, the Chinese Communist Party wants to orchestrate the creation of a private economic sector. The energy of the people can be channelled into supporting new private enterprises. To the communist party, a China that creates a larger space for private activity in commercial affairs and social life must not lead to Western-style democracy. This is at the heart of Beijing's deepest security interests. China does not tolerate political change that may come with economic liberalisation. Most Chinese leaders still believe that the authoritarian political system based on the leadership of the communist party is the only way forward. They are perfectly happy to see it side by side with the market reforms, as long as China's political security remains intact.

In addition, China's leaders insist that in an era of rapid social change, a strong government will be required to maintain domestic order. In opposition to those advocating democracy, defenders of the communist regime have even argued that "an anarchical China would pose a genuine threat to the outside world".⁵³ In its search for economic security, partly through trade, China has to deal with the US "constructive engagement" strategy. It is also worth noting that the uncertainties about the extent and nature of the engagement are often most acute among China's conservative forces. They are most concerned that the engagement is really a form of "peaceful evolution" intended to transform Chinese society and politics. American "constructive engagement" is deemed to be predicated on the assumption that spill-over effects from economic interdependence will moderate and then modify the Beijing regime. This is seen as a danger to China's security policymakers, who are learning to cope with the ramifications of economic interdependence.

Coping with dependence and interdependence

As David Shambaugh has pointed out, the Chinese are among the most ardent proponents of the doctrine of state sovereignty and they have difficulty in coming to terms with the interdependence of the modern world.⁵⁴ However, it is clear that, today, autonomy carries the risk of costly isolation for China in all aspects - diplomatic, economic and technological. For example, it is generally acknowledged that during Mao Zedong's reign when autarky was the goal, as exemplified by the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution; autarkic policies have actually set the country backwards economically, until the policy reversal by the late Deng Xiaoping in 1979. Given that China has placed top priority on economic development, an isolationist policy is unlikely to be put in place today. To be precise, withdrawing from international financial systems and the pursuing an autarkic path of development is no longer an option. China knows it has to come to terms with the realities of global interdependence in the 1990s.

The Chinese leadership wants to reap the benefits of interdependence or dependence but avoid the costs. While knowing that dependency will be too high a price to pay for foreign assistance, Beijing has drawn the conclusion that the way forward is to extract whatever it can from the outside world for the objective of building itself up economically. Beijing hopes to find a way of resolving the costs-benefits dilemma, that is, maximising the benefits of interdependence while minimising the risks associated with being more closely integrated with the world economy and bolstering its economic and political security in the process.

From the above analysis, one thing seems certain. Irrespective of the potential risks, China is set continue its open-door policy. This type of thinking is evident in an article published in the *Beijing Review*, which concludes that no nation can close its doors to the world and hope to survive.⁵⁵ Since 1979, China's economic policies represent a departure from those enunciated in the past during Mao Zedong's reign. Self-reliance still remains an important principle but it must take second place to using foreign trade, technology, loans, grants and investments in order for China to achieve its modernisation goals and bolster its economic and political security in the long term.

Conclusion

Today, China still perceives itself as facing political security threats when Beijing analyses the objectives of the "peaceful evolution" strategy. China's leaders want to open up their society to stimulate economic growth. In the process, Beijing is bound to be increasingly confronted with the influx of democratic ideas, which are largely incompatible with the rule of the Chinese Communist Party. In addition, China's human rights practices have also come under criticism from the West. In order to bolster its political security, China has identified the United States as the chief threat. By stressing the dangers of foreign interference in its internal affairs, Beijing is able to charge the West with trying to impose the "peaceful evolution" of China, while at the same time drumming support for the communists' legitimacy from the masses. However, the real crux of the matter is that Beijing must determine how to maintain close economic ties with the United States and the West while at the same time not allowing the

Chinese political system to be subverted and China's political security be threatened. To all intents and purposes, therefore, it is inevitable that Chinese leaders will continue to regard "peaceful evolution" as a real political security threat in the foreseeable future.

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³ Qu Quansheng, "Beware if the 'peaceful evolution' scheme by hostile international forces," *Jiefangjun Bao*, 7 November 1989, p. 2.

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²⁰ Hedley Bull, "Introduction," in Hedley Bull (ed.) *Intervention in World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 3-4.

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- ⁴⁶ Li Peng, "Chinese views on a new world order," *Beijing Review*, vol. 35, no. 7 (February 17-23 1992), p. 10.
- ⁴⁷ Michael H. Hunt, "Chinese foreign relations in historical perspective" in Harry Harding (ed.) *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 4.
- ⁴⁸ Harry Harding, "China's changing roles in the contemporary world," in Harry Harding (ed.) *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s* (London : Yale University Press, 1984), p. 202.
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CHAPTER 8: PERCEPTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

In addition to the alleged American-led strategy of “peaceful evolution” discussed in the previous chapter, China is also apprehensive of US hegemony in Northeast Asia, and in the international system in general. With a major military threat to China’s security essentially removed by the collapse of the Soviet Union, Beijing’s perception of the future Asian security environment has been focused on US security policy in the region. US security policy in Northeast Asia is also of fundamental concern to Beijing, primarily because of Washington’s links to and influence over the future role of Japan in the region and developments on the Korean peninsula. The objective of this chapter is to explore the United States as a perceived threat to the political, military and economic dimensions of China’s security.

Military and political security; and the “new world order”

After the end of the Cold War, China, like all the other states, now faces new security challenges. Of particular interest for our analysis here is the fact that China has to come to terms with what may be termed as a unipolar world, specifically, an American inspired “new world order” as declared in former President George Bush’s speech in the aftermath an American “victory” in the Cold War and the Gulf War.¹ The United States is now a lone superpower, with the capacity to structure a world order potentially detrimental to China’s security interests.

China needs to reassess the cost and benefits of dealing with the United States in the new international environment. China now does not face the classical balance of power which it had sought to manipulate for the previous two decades, but instead finds itself in a new situation where the United States stands as the only superpower in the world and as well as in Northeast Asia. It is also important to put this in historical perspective, for China's past perceptions of the United States are bound to shed light on its current security policy towards the United States.

Overall, since the Second World War, China's perceptions of the United States have been somewhat ambivalent, containing both positive and negative attitudes. Chronologically, China had viewed the United States largely in a negative light until the 1969 move toward Beijing by the Nixon administration. Since the Second World War, China had viewed the United States in the context of an international system largely defined by the global rivalry of the superpowers, with Beijing's military and political security considerably entwined to this rivalry. To be sure, the Chinese have always viewed the United States as a threat dating from the onset of the Cold War. In Northeast Asia, China had fought in the Korean War in order to keep the United States away from its border and sustain the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as a buffer against the American-backed Republic of Korea (ROK). The American threat had also been real in the Taiwan Strait, when Harry Truman ordered the US Seventh Fleet to protect the survival of the Chiang Kai-shek regime. In all these cases, Chinese leaders were fearful of an American presence in close geographical proximity to

China's heartland and there were indications that the United States had the capability to encroach on China's military security.

However, it is equally important to note that China tilted to the United States as the Cold War unfolded. In the early 1970s, parallel concerns about the rise of Soviet global power led the Chinese to align itself with the United States. At this time, as Michael Yahuda rightly pointed out, Beijing regarded the Soviet Union as the more dangerous and aggressive of the two superpowers and there was an urgent need to deter the threat of "social imperialism" posed by the Soviet Union.² The hostility between China and the Soviet Union at that time provided an opportunity for rapprochement between China and the United States, giving the two sides a chance to reassess their relations in terms of mutual military security interests.

Notwithstanding this change in Chinese military threat perception, it must still be emphasised that even then, leaders in Beijing defined Sino-US security relations in terms of a coalition, not an alliance. China would undertake parallel mutually supportive action with the United States to counter the Soviet threat. Harry Harding has noted that Mao Zedong and Zhou En-lai's overture to the United States reflected classical balance of power calculations, which in fact sat uneasily with the ideological pronouncements on Third World revolutions that Beijing issued during the 1960s.³ From the Chinese perspective, co-operation with the Americans was largely tactical. As noted by Jonathan Pollack, China never sought a permanent alliance with the United States; formal ties would perhaps be seen as too binding, and would restrict China's room for manoeuvre in international affairs.⁴ Today, Sino-US relations is in seen in terms of a

“constructive strategic partnership” (*jianshexing zhanlue huoban guanxi*), following President Jiang Zemin’s visit to the United States in October 1997.⁵ General Fu Quanyou, chief of general staff of the Chinese army, also met Admiral Joseph Prueher, commander in chief of the US Pacific Command, in 1997; and this helped to further military relations between the two nations.⁶

China, like other nations, had grown accustomed to the Cold War power structures and patterns of relations. For instance, in his study of Chinese foreign policy, Jonathan Pollack has argued that the China’s relationship to the Cold War global political system is pivotal.⁷ China had learned how to manoeuvre to its advantage. It was adept at manipulating the situation to secure its own military security, which is a reflection of the ancient policy of playing one barbarian off against another. However, China now has to adapt to a new set of security relations and arrangements in the post-Cold War era.

In fact, by the late 1980s, relations between China, the Soviet Union and the United States had evolved to the point where it was no longer feasible for Beijing to sustain the Sino-American strategic alignment against the Soviet Union. Changes in the leadership of both the Soviet Union and the United States, combined with changes in China’s interpretation of the global balance of power, led to yet another permutation in China’s basic security strategy. Gorbachev’s ascension to power in the Soviet Union brought in a new Soviet foreign policy. At the same time, China itself had already started opening up to the outside world, as a result of Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms. China moved from tilting toward the United States to a position emphasising self-reliance and independence

in the late 1980s, which is a foreign policy that Beijing has always wanted to pursue when circumstances allow.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the bipolar international system finally collapsed and along with it China's strategic importance in global affairs. As détente between the superpowers progressed in the 1980s, China became increasingly marginal in global strategic relations. For instance, Michael Yahuda has argued that China had been marginalised in world politics even before the Soviet collapse, since the strategic triangle effectively ended in 1987 with the signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) arms control agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁸ As China declined as a major player on the world stage largely because its room for manoeuvre between the two superpowers had shrunk, Beijing had become aware that important changes on the global scene would reduce its strategic importance in the eyes of the Americans. These dramatic events, taken together with the 1991 Gulf War, left China in a precarious international position. From China's perspective, in the 1990s, because the United States has fewer occasions when it needs China's co-operation on strategic issues and regional issues, it has adopted a more hard-line policy towards Beijing.⁹ It is therefore only normal for the Chinese to be constantly worried that a more "ideologically-dominated" US foreign policy, such as adoption of the "peaceful evolution" strategy, is potentially capable of triggering a new Cold War".¹⁰

In concrete terms, the reduction of Russian power in the post-Cold War era meant that China now faces the might of the United States on its own, without any counterweight. For instance, as Lowell Dittmer argues, the Soviet Union had

in the past been strategically important as it provided extended nuclear deterrence in the face of Western hostility during the early years of the People's Republic of China (PRC).¹¹ The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union finally dissolved the "strategic triangle", which had been losing its relevance since the late 1980s. Taken together with China's economic reforms, this has created the urgency for China to rethink its policy towards the United States.¹² In general, from Beijing's perspective, these post-Cold War changes mean that the United States has subsequently been needed more as a partner in trade and China's economic development rather than for strategic reasons.

China's "new world order"

Apart from China's perceptions of the American-inspired "new world order", it is important for us to be aware that China has its own conception of a "new world order", and this is a revealing reflection of its security agenda. First and foremost, one of the central Chinese assertions about the "new world order" is that it should be multipolar rather than unipolar. One official proclamation came when former Chinese foreign minister Qian Qichen put forward four principles on the establishment of a new international order, these being "seek common ground while putting aside differences"; "mutual respect", "non-interference in the internal affairs of various nations" and "equality and mutual benefit".¹³ These principles were later expressed in greater detail by Qian Qichen at the 46th General Assembly of the United Nations in September 1991, when he stated that a new international order should be established on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence:

Facts have proven that the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territory integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence comprise the most fundamental norms governing international relations; they are in keeping with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and reflect the characteristics essential to a new type of international relations.¹⁴

These statements, apart from portraying China's vision of what the twenty-first century international order ought to be, also reveal the security concerns of China's leaders.

In fact, the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" had already been enunciated by Chinese leaders in a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements, including at the end of the 1955 Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian states. One Chinese assessment, stressing the construction of a new international order to be based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, has added that it will be fundamentally different from the old Cold War order characterised by "hegemony of big powers"¹⁵. It appears that China's greatest concern is that it may become marginalised by the emergence of a united Europe and Japan as new global powers. This indicates the desire for China not only to ensure its security in any new structures that may emerge, but also the desire to play a greater role in regional and perhaps even global security issues. The latter would be explored in greater detail in the next chapter.

Hence, the Chinese have their own views, with the prevailing one arguing that so long as states abide by the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, friendly relations can be developed between them.¹⁶ Hu Sheng, the president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, has also argued that a new world order should be based on the Five Principles of Coexistence because these can best promote peace and development, which are the “trends of history” in the post-Cold War era.¹⁷ To the Chinese, these Five Principles were intended to serve as minimum rules of coexistence in the relations among sovereign states who acknowledged few common interests beyond safeguarding their own sovereignty. While these statements do not add very much to what China had officially proclaimed in the past, it does show that China do have an ambition to play greater role in the new post-Cold War security structure, even if this is partly triggered by the need to counter the threat supposedly posed by the lone superpower, the United States.

It is also important to note that China wants the principle of sovereignty, which is one of the set of rules declared by the West and that has been universally binding in international relations, to be fully applied to China.¹⁸ The principle of sovereignty is clearly enshrined in China’s “new world order” and, in fact, also an extension of China’s security outlook. As noted by Gerrit Gong, China’s acceptance of principles such as sovereignty in European international society can be found in the evolution of its perceptions of “unequal treaties”, as it began to join international society.¹⁹ For example, in the 1940s, China had argued for the revision of the “unequal treaties” and extra-territoriality on the grounds of formal legal terms; that these treaties were signed under duress or were an encroachment

on sovereignty. This stands in sharp contrast to attitudes held in the previous century, when China maintained a “Middle Kingdom” posture and refused to deal with the “barbarians”. Such types of argument lend support to the case that Beijing’s “new world order” must not be dismissed entirely as rhetoric or propaganda, it indicates that China seeks to uphold the principle of sovereignty in international relations, to bolster its security and to counter US hegemony in the post-Cold War era.

Fear of US hegemony

Above all, China is very suspicious of the US hegemonist tendencies in the post-Cold War era. The Chinese concept of hegemony actually dates back to ancient times. As David Shambaugh points out, Chinese character *ba*, the term from which *ba quan zhu yi* (hegemony) is derived, can be found in historical Chinese political thought and has appeared in a variety of ancient historical records.²⁰ Usage of the hegemony concept as a key element in Chinese theory of international relations is in many ways directly linked to the history of modern China and the portrayal of the West. Today, China is adamant that its sovereignty must never be encroached upon by any foreign powers such as the United States, and this is foremost on its security agenda. Without doubt, “the century of humiliation” has been impaled in the minds of China’s security policy-makers and left an indelible mark on the Chinese masses. Today, opposing any form of international hegemonism is regarded as an important principle and a key to ensure China’s security in the post-Cold War era.

To the Chinese, the first indication of US dominance in post-Cold war global affairs took place in the Gulf War. China, traditionally apprehensive about superpower intervention in Third World states, saw the conflict as a “conflict between a little hegemonist in Baghdad and a bigger one in Washington”.²¹ One of the leaders, Li Peng, described the 1990 Gulf crisis as “an indication of the unbalanced global pattern of relations between states following the relaxation of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union”.²² Furthermore, when Iraqis attack the Kurds in September 1996, China still opposes US threats to launch new military attacks against Iraq.²³ This opposition was also reiterated in the 1998 weapons inspection crisis in Iraq, when American-led forces launched missiles on Iraqi military sites. Beneath criticisms of US military actions against Iraq, the underlying Chinese concern appears to be the realisation that American military might and political clout have become a lethal combination that China needs to contend with in the coming years.

Moreover, the easy American victory over the Iraqis in the Gulf War, which demonstrated the military prowess of the US war machinery, was a source of concern for the Chinese, especially those directly involved in Beijing’s military security apparatus. The United States and its multilateral coalition of Arab and Western powers crushed the armed forces of Iraq in a brief and successful campaign. The Chinese became concerned about the technological gaps between their armed forces and their principal threats from the West, in particular the United States. For instance, Major General Wang Pufeng, deputy director of the Department of Research on Strategy in the Chinese Academy of Military Science, concludes that “high-tech weapons will have a great bearing on the world’s future

military situation” and foresees that “whoever possesses high-tech weapons will have a bigger say in world military affairs, which in turn will promote those countries’ political and economic development”.²⁴ Here, we can detect a clear linkage between the military, political and economic aspects of security; for military superiority is perceived as necessary to bolster China’s political and economic interests.

Furthermore, Washington’s success in mobilising a broad international coalition during the Gulf War suggested that Beijing simply could not afford to oppose the United States directly in the global arena, without risking international isolation or marginalisation. To be sure, international pressure was the key to China’s public pledge to cease arms transfers to Iraq and China’s positive vote on the first UN Security Council resolution intended to force Iraq’s withdrawal from Kuwait.²⁵ In addition to the objective of defeating the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, China perceives that another objective of American foreign policy is to create a coalition of Western powers dominated by the United States that will be capable of controlling the international system. To the Chinese, the Gulf War must certainly epitomised this post-Cold War trend to a large extent, for the waging of a victorious war in Chinese eyes, brought together the four major power centres, the United States, Russia, Japan and Europe. Of particular importance is Japan’s role in the overall American strategy for this new world order. In the view of one Chinese analyst, the United States was attempting to structure a tripartite coalition with Japan and Europe to create “new world order”.²⁶ This means that in Northeast Asia, China has to face the Americans backed by an economically powerful Japan, as discussed in an earlier chapter.

These type of issues are bound to affect China's security thinkers for some time to come as they try come up with a security policy appropriate for the post-Cold war world.

Chinese concerns over American desire to dominate the world are also evident in one classified Chinese analysis, which states that "the United States may be running out of energy, but it has never abandoned its ambition to rule the world, and its military interventionism is becoming more open".²⁷ The US-led coalition that defeated Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War also provided an example of what American military intervention in the 1990s would be like, with specific implications for China. Other Chinese security analysts fear that China will replace the Soviet Union as the justification for a continued US military presence in Asia.²⁸ China is clearly concerned that the existence of a single superpower seeking an alignment with the advanced industrialised democratic states is part of a global strategy designed to replace the East-West bipolar system with an American-led unipolar structure. Entering into the 1990s, China faces a strategic environment where the United States and its coalition of industrialised Western democracies, including Japan, are pre-eminent in the international system. Hence, referring to the American invasion of Panama to capture General Noreiga in 1989 as "a glaring act of hegemonism", an article in *Beijing Review* criticised the United States for "openly violating the norms governing international relations".²⁹ In essence, the Chinese sees such American actions as nothing but a smokescreen for pursuing hegemony.

Therefore, Chinese leaders are unwilling to give unqualified endorsement to American-led military interventions in other parts of the world. Fortunately for

them, during the Gulf War, the United States resorted to the United Nations to provide international legitimacy for the campaign against Iraq. As one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, China was in a position to deny Washington the United Nations umbrella by vetoing the resolution authorising the use of force against Iraq. China's ambassador to the United States stressed that China was "not in favour of using force in the name of the United Nations in handling the Gulf crisis".³⁰ By abstaining on the critical UN vote, Beijing succeeded in maintaining an independent stance in its foreign policy. At the same time, it also appeared that China did not exercise its UN veto as that would have tarnished its image in the international community; for Beijing realised that, with world opinion on the Americans' side, China would be the odd one out.

China itself had, after all, been the target of UN military action in the Korean War. In both Korea and the Gulf, the military actions were led by the United States. China clearly fears a US "new world order", especially when this is linked with a global security organisation, the United Nations. An article in *Beijing Review* has even noted that the United States attempted its "superpower status" in the United Nations by threatening to use its veto power if necessary to block the UN Secretary-General at that time, Boutros-Ghali, from securing a second term.³¹ To the Chinese, an attempt to impose American political values on the world, including a strong element of American leadership in international politics, undesirable. One Chinese source argues that the American "new world order" pays more attention to "the role of big and developed countries, avoiding the North-South problem" and dismisses this as an attempt to "create a structure

and world order that can maintain the US dominant position and promote US interests in the world”.³²

It is clear that the important element of the US “new world order” that Beijing fears is hegemony. In the light of this, the late Deng Xiaoping’s 1974 “Three Worlds Theory” has not totally lost its importance.³³ During the Cold War, China viewed itself as a leader of the Third World against an imperialist West and a “social-imperialist” Soviet Union, concluding that the “contradiction” between the superpowers is “irreconcilable” and either they will fight each other or the people in the Third World will rise in revolution.³⁴ Today, Beijing appears to retain a remote hope that the US “new world order” may cause resentment among the international community, in particular the developing countries, but also possibly America’s Western allies. Hence, to a certain extent, China’s “good neighbourliness” towards the Asian countries, particularly in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Incident, has been “globalised into an instrument to fight what was perceived as the American attempt to vilify it as a pariah regime”.³⁵

In one of the strongest criticism of US China policy after the end of the Cold War, former Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, speaking at the 48th General Assembly of the United Nations, stated that China opposed “the all too frequent arbitrary use of sanctions by one country to bring pressure to bear on another” and “the hegemony conduct of a self-style ‘world cop’ who tramples upon international law and norms of international relations”.³⁶ It is evident that Qian’s analysis had a nationalistic undertone, with possibly the domestic audiences in mind as well; this “anti-hegemonism” reveals China’s concern about its security interests.

In geographical terms, China is particularly worried about the prospect of US hegemony in Northeast Asia, her “backyard”. Some writers such as Xiaoxiong Yi have argued that “a contrast exists between the entire international system, dominated by the sole remaining superpower, the United States; and a relatively peaceful and stable regional environment where the United States is only one of the several major players in the region”.³⁷ More importantly, removal of the East-West confrontation dimension from both historical and incipient conflict in Northeast Asia is often interpreted by Beijing as causing more instability. Once the “superpower overlay” has been lifted, regional conflicts might resurface.³⁸ The absence of superpower conflict may engender local conflicts, such as those between China and Japan, which had previously been suppressed by the dominant superpower rivalry. However, China will still be determined to keep the United States at bay in its “backyard”, Northeast Asia. In the long run, Beijing’s ultimate aim is to stand up to the United States globally.

Therefore, in interpreting Beijing’s security environment, Chinese strategists continue to pay attention to the balance of power, hoping it will move toward multipolarity rather unipolarity. Beijing hopes that there will be a transition to a multipolar world system, in which regional powers such as itself can play defining roles in their regions and are able to resist external intervention and interference in its internal affairs. Many Chinese leaders continue to view the United States’ post-Cold War foreign policy as a significant political, if not direct military, threat to Beijing’s security and its future role in Northeast Asia. Beijing also feels that the United States is out to “contain” China, in the so-called “China Threat Theory” to be discussed later.

Currently, China has no alternatives but to work within the existing international order, for it is impossible to return to a Sino-centric conception of a world order. In the past, as a vast political entity forced unwillingly to take part in the world of modern states, China has struggled to find out how to use modern institutions to work to preserve its traditional integrity. The situation today remains the same. This time, China has to adapt to the emerging US-led international order, primarily to ensure that its economic security is not being compromised.

Economic Security

The importance of economic security to China has already been discussed in the preceding chapters, and it is a dominant theme in this thesis. As a global economic power, the United States and its trade policies are bound to affect China's economic security. American interests remain considerable in Northeast Asia, for this region has increasingly become a significant market and supplier for the US economy.

Since the late 1980s, the United States has been the largest market for Chinese exports. To the Chinese, one main focus of contemporary Sino-American economic relations is on America as a market for their goods. A natural complementarity existed between the world's most powerful state and the largest developing economy. China also wants access to the vast American market, advanced technology, and American financial investment and capital. On the American side, Harry Harding has rightly observed that American interest in promoting Chinese economic modernisation appeared to have replaced strategic

co-operation as a mutually acceptable basis for Sino-American relations.³⁹ Moreover, since 1979, Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms have transformed China from a typical state socialist economy with minimal foreign trade to a mixed economy in which foreign trade is growing in importance, and economic and trade relations between China and the United States have developed swiftly.

To be sure, trade frictions have existed between China and America for quite a while. By the late 1980s, the growth of China's exports to the United States, which had followed the earlier path taken by Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, began to elicit accusations of unfair trading practices similar to those which Americans regularly voice against its other Asian trading partners. The Chinese export surge turned a positive American trade balance with China into a growing trade deficit in the mid-1990s.⁴⁰ China's huge trade surplus has led to charges that this resulted from unfair trade practices such as bureaucratic practices, closed markets, dumping, evasion of quotas, violation of copyrights and currency manipulation. In the early 1990s, the United States had even threatened to impose exorbitant tariffs. For instance, a trade war was averted in 1995 when China reached an agreement with the United States to protect intellectual property rights in order to counter piracy in products such as computer software.⁴¹ This represented a major step made by both Beijing and Washington in avoiding a trade war that could threaten the larger bilateral relationship between the two powers.

China has also identified that the United States is becoming more aggressive in its current trade policy, as Western countries in general are seeking to reinvigorate their economies in the 1990s. The Clinton administration has, after

all, made economic security a priority of its foreign policy and even proposed the establishment of a “New Pacific Community” for trade in 1993.⁴² In order to speed the opening of Asian markets and increase the vitality of its own Asia policy, the United States took numerous major diplomatic actions in 1994, and formulated strategic plans that emphasised the opening of new Asian markets, including China, as well as Taiwan and Hong Kong. In Chinese eyes, Bill Clinton’s proposal to establish a “New Pacific Community” is largely attributed to that fact that the Asian-Pacific region is now becoming increasingly important to US economic interests”.⁴³ Economic interests are vital to China who see Asia as its domain in which United States is attempting to intrude in a bid to further strengthen the American economy.

Moreover, China sees the aggressive American policy of “free trade” as a form of pressure on the Asian states to accept US traders’ unfair advantages.⁴⁴ An article in *Beijing Review* has also pointed to the “large gap in economic strength between developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region and the United States and Japan”, and warned Asian countries that the Washington might “indulge in economic expansionism in the name of liberalisation of trade and investment, to the detriment of the interests of the developing nations”.⁴⁵ The United States had also previously been perceived by China as attempting to sabotage regional economic associations that exclude Washington. For instance, while acknowledging that US “oxygen” facilitated the East Asia economic boom during the Cold War era, one Chinese assessment warns that the current economic crisis in Asia presented Washington an opportunity “to hit Asian economies”.⁴⁶ From the above analysis, it is clear that China is worried that its economic security

might be jeopardised; and economic issues will continue to dominate its security agenda into the twenty-first century.

Perhaps what is reassuring for the Chinese is that, despite the recent recovery in the US economy, one Chinese assessment still reckons that growth rates in the developing world will be greater than that of the United States in the long run.⁴⁷ The relative decline of American economic power, especially in comparison to Germany, is apparently reassuring to the Chinese, for this means that although the United States remains the only superpower, it may not have the full range of economic resources required to play a larger role globally.⁴⁸ A similar view was echoed in another article in *Beijing Review*, which argues that “the United States dreams of a unipolar hegemony, but it cannot afford it economically”.⁴⁹ We can extrapolate from here that in order to be able to maintain a strong military posture, that United States must strengthen its economy. This type of analysis is also applicable to China when it emerges as a truly global power in the future; further giving support to the thesis that economic strength leads to a state’s ascendancy in the international hierarchy.

However, it is equally true that the decline of the US economy implies that Americans may take an increasingly hard-line position on trade issues with China. For example, domestic budget deficits have limited the United States’ ability to give Beijing economic assistance or even to help finance American firms exporting to China. Moreover, as Harry Harding argues, a United States that suffers from an international balance of payments deficit will be less willing to tolerate an increase in Chinese imports, barriers to American exports and the

growing Chinese trade surplus.⁵⁰ Perhaps more pressing though, for China, is the issue of the Most-Favoured Nation status.

Most-Favoured Nation status

First and foremost, it is important to note that the Most-Favoured Nation (MFN) status issue is intricately linked with the human rights issue, which was discussed in the previous chapter. To be precise, the United States president has the right to decide each year whether to renew the status to China and non-market economies; and the Jackson-Vanik amendment stipulated that the president must consider how much freedom of emigration citizens in those countries enjoyed. Specifically, the US president must certify that the Chinese government permits free emigration of its citizens or a renewal of the MFN status will substantially promote freedom of emigration. Needless to say, China has always viewed this issue as an obstacle to the furtherance of its economic interests.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that, referring to the Jackson-Vanik Act, an article in *Beijing Review* argues that “the annual examination of China’s MFN status is discriminatory” and “the laws the current practice is based on were enacted during the Cold War years”; adding that “the issues examined by the US president and Congress on China’s MFN status are not only related to trade and economy, but also to security matters and ideological differences, which are largely China’s internal affairs”.⁵¹ Hence, the United States is often seen the Chinese as “using trade relations to impose its own will upon China and meddle in China’s internal affairs”. Such strong statements attest to the fact that China is seriously concerned when its economic security is at stake.

More importantly, a critical element that transformed this ordinary trade dispute into an explosive political issue between the two countries was the change in American public perception of China that the 1989 Tiananmen Incident evoked. Until 1990, the renewal of MFN status was on the whole a routine event. Since then, mutual economic relations have become more closely intertwined with political considerations and the annual question whether to renew China's MFN status has become a central issue in the eyes of the American public. In the recent past, American presidents such as George Bush had supported the unconditional extension of the status, arguing that trade was mutually beneficial to both and would indirectly help China to the path toward reforms by the growth of its non-state sectors. Advocates of this "open door" policy of "constructive engagement" in the United States also argue that isolating Beijing will be counterproductive in bringing political change in China. Linked to this fact is that the prosperity of Hong Kong and, to a lesser extent, Taiwan is dependent on Sino-American trade.

On the other hand, "closed door" constituencies argue for hard-line policies to pressurise China to change. While the debate in the US Congress is not the subject matter of this thesis, it is important to note that the "open door" policy advocated by some US officials provides a better framework for China to enhance its economic security. However, this policy also means China's political system, amongst other things, will become more susceptible to undesirable US influence as economic exchanges take place. The key for China's leaders, therefore, is how to balance its economic security objectives without jeopardising its political security.

With its economic security in mind, it is clear that China does not wish to suffer the severe and long-term consequences of international sanctions, which were imposed after the Tiananmen Incident. As a direct consequence of China's "co-operation" in the Gulf Crisis, these European, Japanese and American economic sanctions were rescinded and a major obstacle to China's desire to pursue economic development had been removed. Interestingly, in return for China's tacit co-operation, the United States worked to end the moratorium on further World Bank loans to China that had been in place since the Tiananmen Incident. Therefore, there is a linkage in both events. Beijing now realises it has to learn how to deal with this type of complicated interconnection in international relations if it is to cope successfully with the sole remaining superpower. The major short-term challenge facing China's foreign policy-makers is how to accommodate to American power without totally submitting to it.

Most important of all to China, the MFN issue pressed upon a sensitive national issue. It is regarded as interference in China's internal affairs. Hence, the Clinton administration's decision in 1996 to delink the MFN status from human rights issues and renew it, despite acknowledging that the Chinese had failed to make the necessary progress in human rights, was welcomed by the Chinese. The reversal of policy was due in part to pressure from American business lobbies, but it was also due to President Clinton's recognition that the United States could not subordinate all dealings with a country of China's significance to the human rights factor alone. Economic interests have become too important for states to totally ignore in the post-Cold War era.

Moreover, according to Denny Roy, the US “surrender” on the MFN issue indicated the power of the economic imperative and the decline of American economic power, especially when other nations stand to take over the market should the United States pull out.⁵² In fact, China is already using its rising global economic influence to punish the nations that criticise it and reward those that support it. For example, former premier Li Peng has stated clearly in an interview with the *Financial Times* that China will turn to European and Japanese firms if the United States continue to criticise Chinese policies.⁵³ This means that China can seek to enhance its economic security by trading with other states, apart from the world’s strongest economic power.

The US and the international economic system

In order to explore the importance of the United States to China’s economic interests, we need to look at the US role in the international economic system. Given that the international trading system is very much dominated by the Americans, it will be useful to look at the wider historical perspective. During the 1970s, it was generally recognised that China’s delegates to the United Nations strongly supported the Third World calls for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), backing the view put forth by the Third World that the industrialised and richer countries should provide more aid and better terms of trade and finance. By the 1980s, as Samuel Kim correctly points out, Beijing appears to be seeking to become part of the global economic system rather than challenge the system.⁵⁴ Deng Xiaoping’s policies mean that, instead of rejecting or seeking to reform international economic institutions such as the World Bank, the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) or the former General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (now the World Trade Organisation (WTO), China should join these organisations to extract whatever resources it needs. China also realises that it is more cost-effective to absorb foreign investment to hasten its modernisation than to try to pursue an autarkic development program, as it did during Mao Zedong's reign. Basically, China's strategy has become "if you cannot beat them, join them".

Therefore, in Chinese eyes, the IMF and the World Bank are viewed as valuable sources of international funding. Beijing also needs to remain on good terms with the world at large and its Asian neighbours in particular, as far as economic relations are concerned, for it has to keep the door open to absorb more investment and technology from abroad. To be sure, China is already a member of many of the most important international trade and political institutions, the WTO being the major exception. China had participated as a non-voting observer in the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, which started in 1986 and ended in December 1993. Beijing sees membership of the WTO as a logical step in its efforts to participate fully in the global market economy and also to help China reduce bilateral threats of trade restrictions.

However, it is important to point out that, although China is eager to join the WTO, it still has not entirely accepted certain entry criteria, especially when this might have ramifications on its political security. For instance, Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation Wu Yi stresses that China will "never sacrifice the fundamental interests of our country for the sake of re-entering GATT [WTO] and will not "barter away principles" despite "external pressure".⁵⁵

In reality, it must be said that Beijing's application to enter the WTO has been held up by China's unwillingness to pledge to complete the transition to a full market economy and, in particular, reform certain trading practices that currently failed to meet WTO trade and membership rules. The United States is, in Beijing's eyes, often seen as the country maintaining certain trade principles that make China's desire to join the WTO unachievable. In fact, the WTO issue was high on Premier Zhu Rongji's agenda when he visited the United States in 1999.

In addition, it is interesting to note that while China rejects any multilateral approach to security in the region, it is more willing to agree to multilateral economic co-operation and accordingly more interested in playing a larger role in various economic organisations. The reason, as argued in Chapter 2, lies in China's need to sustain its economic growth. Beijing believes that it will benefit from these organisations because as China develops economically, it will be able to exercise greater leverage in international investment, finance and trade. China's policy is to rely on bilateral trade arrangements while at the same seeking to participate in a global market system through membership in the WTO. This represents one way for Beijing to enhance its economic security.

To date, China has gained entry to several major international economic organisations. Beijing joined the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 1980, the Asian Development Bank and the Pacific Economic Co-operation Conference (PECC) in 1986 and became a member of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) process at the APEC III meeting in November 1991. Although China is not yet a member of the less formal but perhaps more

important international grouping, the Group of Eight (G-8), which consists of the United States, Canada, Japan United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and Russia.

However, international institutions such as the G-8 will almost certainly require China to satisfy various membership criteria. China will then be subjected to international pressures to alter its internal and external arrangements and policies to keep in line with most of the developed world. This is a price that China will have to pay for extracting resources and benefits from the international system for its own growth. Beijing will have to balance the needs for economic modernisation with perhaps a partial abdication of its much-treasured sovereignty. It will also have to deal with any unintended consequences that may affect the communist party's political security, as a result of membership in certain international economic institutions.

More importantly, China knows that the leading Western trading nation, the United States, is the key to a more general acceptance of China into the prosperous world of capitalism and international trade. China's accession to most international economic organisations will need American support, overt or tacit.

However, it must be said that the world capitalist economic system is not without its problems. One good example is the Great Depression in the 1930s. Of great relevance to our analysis here is the fact that growth rates in the developed world have stagnated in the early 1990s, and trade imbalances are creating protectionist sentiments as the emerging potential trade blocs in Europe and North America threaten the expansion of free trade, which is an essential element of the capitalist system. A combination of recession and protection in world trade can paralyse Chinese export growth while domestic demands for employment and

higher living standards continue to rise; and the leaders in China may find it increasingly difficult to satisfy the demands of the population.

In short, China needs to reassess the benefits and cost of interdependence, in an international economic system dominated by its perceived political opponent, the United States. China will tolerate interdependence with America for the sake of its own economic goals because at present, this appears as the best way forward rather than pursuing autarkic policies. China has always been interested in international trade but only as a means to build up its economic power. In short, as Xiaoxiong Yi has pointed out, in an era of economic interdependence, growth is best seen not as an end in itself but as a necessary tactic to develop to truly great power status.⁵⁶

However, what must be reassuring for China's leaders is that Beijing is not currently dependent on any particular imports or sets of imports for its economic well being, and it has in fact become a leading exporting nation. However, China needs outside assistance to modernise, particularly in the areas of technology and management skills, and to overcome the overall shortage of capital for investment . China has also relied on external sources, using foreign actors to serve its own needs. World Bank and Japanese government assistance to build China's infrastructure is one example, and Hong Kong investment in building highway networks in South China is another. The use of international capital markets, sale of shares abroad and other sources of international finance will increase, primarily as a means to enhance Beijing's economic security.

For the foreseeable future, Beijing will continue to seek concessional loans from financial institutions dominated by the West, in particular by the United

States. It will attempt to attract venture capital and technology transfers. In order to do that, China will have to repay loans and finance the purchase of advanced technology. Chinese industry must meet the international standards of price and quality control measures as well as personnel policies. Management expertise will become necessary if China's products are to find a market share in the increasingly competitive global market place. China's economic growth and modernisation have, to a large extent, become dependent on the world economy for trade and technology. Hence, there is no doubt that China's leaders perceive regional stability and the continuation of the economic dynamism in the Asia-Pacific region as essential for its economic development. This is at the heart of China's deepest security interests.

Conclusion

After the Cold War ended, China has to come to terms with an unipolar international system with the United States being the lone superpower. This raises new concerns for China's security planners. From China's perspective, in the 1990s, because the United States has fewer occasions when it needs China's co-operation on strategic and regional issues, there are possibilities that Washington may adopt a more hard-line policy towards Beijing, thereby perhaps threatening its political and military security directly or indirectly. There is no doubt that China is clearly apprehensive about a US "new world order", which is likely to include an American-led coalition of Western industrialised states and Japan unchecked by a counterweight.

In the economic sphere, relations between China and the United States have been strained as well, with controversy over renewal of the Most-Favoured Nation status being a case in point. Nonetheless, China has tried to enhance its economic security by extracting whatever resources it can from the international economic system dominated by the United States. On the whole, it plausible to argue that future China perceptions of its own security, encompassing the military, political and economic aspects, will to a large extent depend on its perceptions of the American threat. Ultimately, China hopes that it can achieve great power status through a strong economic base, which will bolster its security. This subject will be explored in the next chapter.

¹ Pan Tongwen, "New world order- according to Mr Bush," *Beijing Review*, vol. 34, no. 43 (October 28-November 3, 1991), p. 9.

² The term "social-imperialist" meant "an imperial power masquerading as a socialist one". See Michael B. Yahuda, *China's Role in World Affairs* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), p. 240.

³ See Harry Harding (ed.), *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 153.

⁴ Jonathan D. Pollack, "China and the global strategic balance," in Harry Harding (ed.) *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 159.

⁵ "A new phase for the development of Sino-US ties - we congratulate President Jiang Zemin for attaining a complete success in his state visit to the United States," *Renmin Ribao*, p. 1.

⁶ "Army leader meets US Pacific Commander," Xinhua news agency, 13 Dec 97 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 12 Dec 97, p. G/1.

⁷ Jonathan D. Pollack, "China and the global strategic balance," in Harry Harding (ed.) *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 146.

⁸ Michael Yahuda, "China: will it strengthen or weaken the region?" T.B. Millar and James Walter (eds.), *Asian-Pacific Security After the Cold War* (London: University of London, Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 1992), p. 218.

⁹ Gu Dexin, "Three factors affecting Sino-US relations," *Beijing Review*, vol. 35, no. 39 (September 20-October 6, 1992), pp. 30-31.

¹⁰ Yan Xuetong, "Dangers of Neo-McCarthyism," *Beijing Review*, vol. 40, no. 27 (July 7-13, 1997), pp. 7-8.

¹¹ Lowell Dittmer, "China and Russia: new beginnings," in Samuel S. Kim (ed.) *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Relations in the post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1994, 3rd ed.), p. 94.

¹² Xiaoxiong Yi, "China's US policy conundrum in the 1990s: balancing autonomy and interdependence," *Asian Survey*, vol. xxxiv, no. 8 (August 1994), p. 689.

¹³ Qian Qichen, "Current international situation and China's relations with Western Europe-speech made by Chinese foreign minister at the Centre of Studies of Foreign Policy of Spain on 26 Feb 91," in *Beijing Review*, vol. 34, no. 10 (March 11-17, 1991), p. 12.

¹⁴ Qian Qichen, "Establishing a just and equitable new international order," *Beijing Review*, vol. 34, no. 40, (October 7-13 1991), p. 9.

¹⁵ Zhang Zhenhuang, "Building a just world order," *Beijing Review*, vol. 24, no. 32 (August 12-18, 1991), p. 9.

¹⁶ See Wan Guang, "World pressed for new political order," *Beijing Review*, vol. 32, no. 1 (January 2-8 1989), p. 7.

¹⁷ Hu Sheng, "For world peace and development," *Beijing Review*, vol. 24, no. 38, (September 23-29, 1991), p. 12.

¹⁸ Yongjin Zhang, "China's entry into international society: beyond the standard of 'civilisation'," *Review of International Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, (January 1991), p. 15.

¹⁹ Gerrit W. Gong, "China's entry into international society," in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 183.

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- ²⁰ David Shambaugh, *Beautiful Imperialist: China Perceives America, 1972-1990* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 81-82.
- ²¹ Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: the United States and China since 1972* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1992), p. 49.
- ²² Li Peng, "Gulf Crisis should be resolved by peaceful means," *Beijing Review*, vol. 33, no. 37 (September 10-16, 1990), p. 4.
- ²³ "China opposes new US threat of attack on Iraq," Xinhua news agency, 12 Sep 96 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 14 Sep 96, p. G/1.
- ²⁴ Li Deshun, "Post Gulf War world strategic pattern," *Beijing Review*, vol. 34, no. 47 (November 25-December 1 1991), pp. 8-9.
- ²⁵ Lillian Craig Harris, "Myth and reality in China's relations with the Middle East," in Thomas Robinson and David Shambaugh (eds.), *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 339.
- ²⁶ Song Yimin, "Temporary accomplishments of US have not changed the further development of the trend of multipolarisation," *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu (International Studies)*, vol. 1 (January 1998), pp. 7-10.
- ²⁷ Cited in Nicholas D Kristof, "The rise of China," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 5 (November/December 1993), p. 72.
- ²⁸ See Bonnie S. Glaser, "China's security perceptions: interests and ambitions," *Asian Survey*, vol. 33, no. 3 (March 1993), pp. 259-261.
- ²⁹ Rui Chang, "US invasion of Panama a glaring act of hegemonism," *Beijing Review*, vol. 33, no. 2 (January 8-14, 1990), p. 10.
- ³⁰ "Why China votes for resolution 665?" *Beijing Review*, vol. 33, no. 36 (September 3-9, 1990), p. 7.
- ³¹ Tan Xinmu, "Why against Boutros-Ghali?" *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 29 (July 15-21, 1996), p. 9.
- ³² Pan Tongwen, "New world order- according to Mr Bush," *Beijing Review*, vol. 34, no. 43 (October 28-November 3, 1991), p. 9.

³³ It is interesting to note that the Chinese conception is different from common usage. The First World consists of the United States and the Soviet Union instead of the developed world. The Second World consists of the Western democracies and the Eastern European communist regimes, instead of the Communist states. Of course the Third World is roughly similar to common usage. "Speech by Deng Xiaoping, Chairman of the delegation of the People's Republic of China," *Peking Review*, no. 15 (April 12, 1974), Special Supplement, p. 6-11. Mao's version of the "Three World Thesis" is outlined most extensively in "Chairman Mao's theory of the differentiation of the three worlds as a major contribution to Marxism-Leninism," *Peking Review*, no. 45 (November 4, 1977). See also Michael B. Yahuda, *China's Role in World Affairs* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 235-266.

³⁴ Cited in Michael B. Yahuda, *China's Role in World Affairs* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), p. 242.

³⁵ James C. Hsiung, "China's omni-directional diplomacy: realignment to cope with monopolar US power," *Asian Survey*, vol. xxxv, no. 6 (June 1995), pp. 576-577. China's diplomacy extends to areas such as South Asia, Central Asia, Europe and Latin America, which are not outside the scope of this thesis.

³⁶ "Speech at the United Nations 48th General Assembly September 29, 1993 - Qian Qichen on major international issues," *Beijing Review*, vol. 36, no. 41 (October 11-17, 1993), pp. 8-11.

³⁷ Xiaoxiong Yi, "China's US policy conundrum in the 1990s: balancing autonomy and interdependence," *Asian Survey*, vol. xxxiv, no. 8 (August 1994), p. 679.

³⁸ For the concept of overlay, see Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the post-Cold War era* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, 2nd ed.)

³⁹ Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: The United States and China since 1972* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1992), p. 215.

⁴⁰ Chong Zhongying, "Major changes in international relations - East Asia financial crisis," *Shijie Zhishi*, no. 2 (1998), pp. 24-26.

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- ⁴¹ "Sino-US trade agreement - Wu Yi hopes copyright agreement 'a new turning point' for relations with US," Xinhua news agency, 26 Feb 95 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 28 Feb 95, p. G/1.
- ⁴² Yang Yuanhua, "United States: new trade policy more aggressive," *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 8 (February 19-March 3, 1996), p. 10.
- ⁴³ Ge Yang, "China's rise: threat or not?" *Beijing Review*, vol. 38, no. 5 (January 30-February 5, 1995), p. 23.
- ⁴⁴ David Shambaugh, "Growing strong: China's challenge to Asian security," *Survival*, vol. 36, no. 2, (Summer 1994), pp. 50-51.
- ⁴⁵ Cheng Qizhen, "Clinton's Asia policy faces a head-on challenge," *Beijing Review*, vol. 38, no. 32 (August 7-13, 1995), pp. 26-27.
- ⁴⁶ Chong Zhongying, "Major changes in international relations - East Asia financial crisis," *Shijie Zhishi*, no. 2 (1998), pp. 24-26.
- ⁴⁷ Song Yimin, "Temporary accomplishments of US have not changed the further development of the trend of multipolarisation," *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu (International Studies)*, vol. 1 (January 1998), pp. 7-10.
- ⁴⁸ Qimao Chen, "New approaches in China's foreign policy: The post-Cold War era," *Asian Survey*, vol. xxxiii, no. 3 (March 1993), pp. 239-240.
- ⁴⁹ Chen Xiaogong, "The world in transition," *Beijing Review*, vol. 35, no. 5 (February 3-16, 1992), p. 15.
- ⁵⁰ Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: the United States and China since 1972* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1992), p. 12.
- ⁵¹ Sun Zhengao, "China's MFN also a benefit to the United States," *Beijing Review*, vol. 36, no. 21 (May 24-30, 1993), p. 9.
- ⁵² Denny Roy, "Human rights as a national security threat: the case of the PRC," *Issues & Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2 (February 1996), p. 80.
- ⁵³ Tony Walker, Peter Montagnon and John Ridding, "Li Peng backs trade with 'more lenient' Europeans," *Financial Times*, 11 June 1996, p. 1.

⁵⁴ Samuel S. Kim, "China and the third world in the changing world order," in Samuel S. Kim (ed.) *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Relations in the post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Westview Press: 1994, 3rd ed), p. 152.

⁵⁵ "Trade minister says China will not yield to pressure on GATT re-entry," Xinhua news agency, 14 Dec 1994 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 17 Dec 94, p. G/1.

⁵⁶ Xiaoxiong Yi, "China's US policy conundrum in the 1990s: balancing autonomy and interdependence," *Asian Survey*, vol. xxxiv, no. 8 (August 1994), p. 690.

CHAPTER 9: DRIVE TO GREAT POWER STATUS

As alluded in the previous chapters, it has become clear that the ultimate goal for Chinese security planners is to achieve great power status in the next century. Achieving this will no doubt mean that China will then enhance its security in a more comprehensive manner. However, this is bound to raise doubts about whether China's search for security might ultimately impinge on the security of others. There is currently a plethora of writings on this debate, which in the view adopted here, has grown out of proportion to the more critical task of assessing China's security agenda. Nevertheless, for our purposes here, we can conveniently sum up the debate by using the term “China Threat Theory” in order to explore this notion in greater detail.

This penultimate chapter examines the implications of China's drive to great power status. In its search for ultimate security, China does raise some concerns for the security of other states. We first look at China as a great power. Then we assess the “China Threat Theory” and China's contribution to regional stability. It must also be noted from the outset that this chapter will not assess the China threat from the perspectives of its individual neighbours. What this chapter aims to achieve is to highlight China's longer-term security agenda and what this might mean for the region as a whole. We first turn to China's security interests as a great power, as a thorough analysis is likely to shed light on China's current concerns.

Security of a great power

Historically, China sees itself as a regional power, if not a global power, partly due to the Sino-centric order Beijing used to impose on vast areas of eastern Asia. China is the world's most populous country and it has a long civilisation that can be traced back more than two thousand years. This is further reinforced by China's rise as a communist giant that even rivalled the Soviet Union at certain periods in the past. Therefore, writers such as Michael Yahuda states that it may be possible to argue that China's "weight" or perceived importance in world affairs is that of a major power.¹ According to this line of argument, China is therefore regarded as of greater significance than "middle powers" such as Great Britain or France in international affairs. During the Cold War era, although significantly weaker than either of the two superpowers, China was adept at playing its role in the great power triangle, even managing to extend its influence considerably in global affairs. The above indicates China's great power ambitions and these will to be held continue in the post-Cold War era.

However, it must also be pointed out that China, at various points in time, does not want to be seen as a great power. For example, during the Cold War, China viewed itself as the champion of the Third World in the struggle against the hegemonism of the two superpowers, rather than as a great power. This is also relevant to the fact that top leader Li Peng has noted that the rise of Asia would led to the end of Western domination.² Although China may relish the prospect of sharing permanent membership in the Security Council with other Third World states, it is plausible that in the longer term, China may eventually seek leadership

of the Third World. Such issues are likely to form part of China's security agenda.

Yet, today, at a time when the power vacuum associated by the decline of American military forces in Northeast Asia is regarded an incentive for regional powers such as China to assert themselves, Beijing has repeatedly denied its plans to fill up the power vacuum in the region created by the ending of the Cold War. In addition, China states that it will not seek hegemony even when it becomes "economically developed."³ The conclusion that can be drawn from the above is that Chinese leaders do wish to restore China's dominance once again, but they feel that, at the moment, they do not want China to be seen as a rising hegemon, especially since China has yet to build a solid economic base.

Moreover, it is generally recognised in a world of sovereign states with no central political authority, states will defend their territories with the use of force if necessary, often irrespective of what one's views on the use of force may be. In this respect, China is no different from any other states, as it seeks to maintain its sovereignty and bolster its security. As writers such as Rex Li and David Shambaugh have noted, this is hardly surprising given that the Chinese had been the victim of foreign aggression in the recent past, and they tend to adopt what one may label as a realist approach to international relations.⁴ As far as the use of force is concerned, John Baylis points out that China has traditionally used its military forces largely in Clausewitzian, political terms, and above all, in a defensive manner.⁵ For example, China had participated in the Korean War and supported the North Vietnamese to guard its frontiers. Beijing "punished" Vietnam in 1979 for its invasion of Cambodia, an action indirectly aimed at the

Soviet threat building up at Cam Ranh Bay. It was above all, a demonstration that China would no longer be weak as it had been during the first half of this century, and an indication of its security agenda as a great power.

In addition, the acquisition of nuclear weapons can be seen as an indication that China has emerged as great power, a supreme symbol of self-reliance as a means to elevate its status in the world and defend its sovereignty, and as the means to pursue an independent foreign policy. Moreover, as Robert Norris points out, the Chinese hope to catch up in marginal weapons improvements was the rationale for the Chinese testing in 1995 during the moratorium by the other powers and in the face of widespread global disapproval.⁶

Interestingly, although China has been regarded by many as a great power or potential great power, there are those that regard China as a weak state at the same time. Analysts such as Barry Buzan have distinguished between the terms “state” and “power”.⁷ The term “power” is used to refer to the relations among states, which are largely seen in terms of their military strength, although criteria such as political cohesion within a state and the level of economic development, are also important. The term “state” specifically refers to issues such as the degree of social cohesion and it is a view from inside the state. The political security of China, or more specifically that of the Chinese Communist Party, was dealt with earlier; there is still a question mark over the fate of the party although it is safe to say that China’s economic and military strength is growing by the day.

The “China Threat Theory” (*Zhongguo Weixie Lun*)

To China’s leaders, one unintended consequence of its search for security must be the “China Threat Theory”, as developed by Western observers. The term itself, *Zhongguo Weixie Lun*, is used here as a convenient heuristic device to look at the alleged threats that China’s rise might pose to its neighbours and perhaps even to the wider world. The Chinese “threat” is a term used widely by Western analysts and policymakers when they debate on ways to keep a rising China in check. While debates on the value-laden nature and conceptual problems of this term need not bother us here, it is worth noting that Chinese academics and policymakers have often put forth counter arguments in a rather vehement manner. As Paul Kennedy argues, since military power stems from economic power, economic growth will enhance China military power projection in the region.⁸ This will undoubtedly give Beijing a wider choice in the pursuit of its national security interests. Furthermore, in Robert Gilpin’s formulation, a state dissatisfied with the status quo will seek changes through territorial, political and economic expansion until the marginal costs of further changes are equal to or greater than the marginal benefits.⁹ In many ways, China appears to be such a state, especially when one takes into account its past support for Third World revolutions that challenged the international status quo.

However, it is equally plausible that revolutionary states can be in a process of what J.D. Armstrong describes as “socialisation” into international society.¹⁰ A supporting example for this argument appeared in a joint statement issued by President Jiang Zemin and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

(ASEAN) at the China-ASEAN informal leaders' meetings in December 1997, which the *Renmin Ribao*, described as having "profound significance for the future development of East Asia and China-ASEAN friendly co-operative ties".¹¹ Nevertheless, at this point in time, it is true to say that China has been fully socialised into international society, although this process is steadily gaining momentum as China seeks to bolster its security simultaneously.

More importantly, China has also attributed its negative image as a potential regional hegemon to US foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. For instance, an article in *Beijing Review* states that the end of the Cold War deprive many countries of their most specific strategic aim, and many potential threats, such as the so-called "China threat", were soon brought to the fore in order to "fill the vacuum of the strategic structure".¹² The article further argues that this type of thinking is well rehearsed in some American academic and policy circles. From the above, it is true to say that this type of thinking in America has been given a further impetus by the flux in the current international system.

To the some Chinese, the perception is that there is a foreign attempt to "line up the different fractions of American society, an even the whole West, to fight an imaginary enemy".¹³ Furthermore, a *Renmin Ribao* commentary argues that this foreign attempt aims to "sow discord" between China and its neighbouring countries so that benefits, such as those through arms sales, can be reaped, and China's development can be "restricted and obstructed".¹⁴ Interestingly, this Chinese statement has come amidst some Western analysts such as Samuel Huntington predicting a neo-Confucianism ideological challenge to the West.¹⁵ While there may be a "clash of civilisations" in the future, one must

question the coherence of an unified Confucian challenge. For example, one can point out differences in the economic cultures that existed among the Japanese, Koreans and the Chinese. At present, no semblance of an unified Confucian challenge has appeared in real terms yet, apart from the so-called “Asian values”, which are better seen as a justification for the continuation of specific strands in Asian political culture rather than as a stern challenge to the West. One Chinese assessment suggests that the “clash of civilisations” analysis is in actual fact a reflection of “growing uncertainty and lack of confidence about the future of Western civilisation” and is “an attempt to explain the dilemma facing the West”; considering it “will be dangerous if the clash theory finds its way into policy making” and concluding that “the notion of a ‘China threat’ is based on assumptions similar to Huntingdon’s”.¹⁶ Another Chinese assessment compares US “containment” policy with McCarthysim of the 1950s, dismissing claims of the chairman of the US Senate Governmental Affairs committee, Fred Thompson, that the Chinese government used money to influence the 1996 US presidential and congressional elections.¹⁷ Such statements shed light on the thoughts of China’s security policymakers, in particular how the United States is being perceived.

To a certain extent, the Chinese sees the West as trying to “contain” China from developing into a great power and Western analysts such as Gerald Segal have also warned the Western world against treating China like the Soviet Union during the Cold War.¹⁸ Interestingly, one of the Chinese leaders, Li Peng, claims that the “China Threat Theory” is, in fact, an “U-turn” from suggestions of China’s “collapse”, arguing that “the two extreme ideas reflect some people’s

ignorance about China's real situation".¹⁹ In this sense, the "China Threat Theory" appears to stand in sharp contrast to the predictions of an imminent collapse. There is, of course, another way of interpreting the above analysis, for a China on the point of collapse will try to use an aggressive nationalistic foreign policy as a form of internal cement. In short, a situation whereby China is facing a collapse can also magnify a China threat. While we need not really delve into this debate, what we can say is that the "China Threat Theory" does have the utility giving policymakers in the West a convenient framework for formulating their China policies.

Above all, China's drive to great power status is influenced by anti-imperialism and fears of the hegemonist potential of America, as discussed in the earlier chapter. Indeed, as noted by Robert Scalapino, China's efforts to sustain growth in the economy in order to continue its ascendancy to great power status is in many ways reminiscent of certain aspects of the policy that Japan's Meiji reformers adopted for the goal of "a rich country, strong soldiery".²⁰ Although it was Japan's rise in the early part of this century that encroached on China's sovereignty, it is an open secret that China does want to emulate Japan's rise in Asia. Unfortunately for Beijing, this posture has often been misinterpreted by smaller Asian states as the rise of a hegemonic China that harbours expansionist objectives. It is true to say that, currently, the end of the Cold War has provided a relatively peaceful environment for China to redefine its military strategy and modernise its weapons systems. Indeed, the 1990s can be seen as the "take off" phase in a military build-up that will enable China to challenge for supreme leadership in Asia in the next century.²¹

It is also important to note that China's defence modernisation is affected by the increase in defence spending in the region as a whole. At present, there is an arms build-up in East Asia closely linked to regional concerns that an American military and perhaps even political retrenchment from the region may expose East Asian states to various tensions and confrontations. Anticipating such challenges, in the 1990s, most countries in the region embarked on arms spending, which is often veiled under the explanation of "catching up" or "ongoing modernisation" of their forces. In addition, there are also other factors driving the arms race, such as the need to police the extra-territorial economic zones and sea lines of communications as well as to defend offshore territorial claims. In some cases the additional factor is prestige conferred by the possession of certain advanced weapon systems. Also, the arms race is fanned by the growing wealth of these countries, at least before the financial crisis. China is affected by this process and, in turn, is increasing its military spending in reaction to this trend. As noted by Weixing Hu, keeping up with the regional arms build-up has influenced the thinking of China's military leaders.²²

Another point to note is that while the imperatives of the regional and global market place have helped to forge improved relations among the nations of East Asia, their occasionally competing political and security agendas limit the degree of economic co-operation and raise the potential for new conflicts as they may pursue joint endeavours with different (and often potentially conflicting) long term objectives. In fact, history shows that at least to date, increased economic co-operation and interdependence, in themselves, provide no guarantee against conflicts. True, they can increase the stakes and thus raise the consequences to the

point where a potential aggressor will have to think twice before choosing a military option in order to achieve its aspirations, but they can also create a false sense of confidence which may cause states to push too hard or too fast.

For example Paul Dibb has pointed out that there is “no evidence to support the theory that economic interdependence leads to peace”.²³ In addition, reviewing China’s military actions in the Spratly Islands, Gerald Segal concludes that economic interdependence is not enough to make China moderate its behaviour, hence its “neighbours and powers farther afield” must use “elements from a strategy of engagement as well as the balance of power” in order to “constrain” China from expansionism.²⁴ Interestingly, Dale Copeland posits that a state’s expectations of future trade are crucial determinants of whether interdependence causes war.²⁵ This may be China’s agenda, as its trade problems with the United States remain unresolved, drawing similarities to the suggestion that Japan and the United States may one day even be involved in a conflict over trade disputes.

In terms of its status as a nuclear power, China’s testing of its nuclear weapons has often been misinterpreted as a sign of its increasing aggressiveness. It is important to note that China became a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in March 1992, and also reached a tacit agreement in 1991 to abide by the Missiles Technology Control Regime (MTCR).²⁶ China was among the first Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) signatories in September 1996 at the fifty-first United Nations meeting.²⁷ However, in the eyes of many, China does not go far enough in its commitment to the NPT; for although China no longer openly opposes these non-proliferation regimes, it does not yet seem to have taken

effective steps to prevent the export of missile and nuclear technology to countries such as Pakistan.²⁸

Perhaps more importantly, the Chinese argue that strategic independence is still required because “hegemonism and power politics still exist” and because “the two major powers [United States and Russia] still possess the largest [nuclear] arsenals with the most sophisticated weapons”.²⁹ This attests to China’s desire to maintain nuclear weapons primarily as a means to maintain its military security. Former foreign minister Qian Qichen has reiterated that the nuclear weapons developed by China are solely for self-defence, and Beijing never meant to pose a threat to any specific country.³⁰

For the ultimate goals of its drive for great power status, China needs to have a modern and strong military establishment, including nuclear capabilities, in order to achieve its political objectives. Samuel Kim argues that, above all, the real driving force for Beijing’s current military expansion has little to do with any current military threats, but stems from “a century of humiliation” by the Western powers and the need to become a great power in world politics.³¹ China’s military and political security had been violated in the past by foreign powers. Therefore, Beijing is determined to ensure this must never happen again.

Economic power house

As noted by Vincent Cable and Peter Ferdinand, the fear that China’s economic success is likely to be translated into an offensive military capability has fuelled much of the debate on the “China Threat Theory”.³² In China itself, it is quite clear that the leaders want Beijing to emerge as an economic powerhouse.

In concrete terms, China is now a major player in many commodities markets, for both agricultural and mineral products, and also for industrial intermediate products. For example, in the December 1995 issue of its *World Commodity Forecasts*, the Economist Intelligence Unit lists China's presence as one of the factors most affecting, or likely to affect, price trends in all but one (zinc) of the industrial raw materials it covers, and in virtually all food, foodstuffs and beverages markets (the exceptions are coffee, cocoa and copra/coconut oil).³³ China was mentioned in most cases as a major producer, consumer and trader and often as having a destabilising effect on world markets because its non-market practices means its involvement is often determined by arbitrary and non-market based administrative decision making. Moreover, as the World Bank points out, restructuring of the economies of developed countries that are necessary to accommodate China will involve some difficulties, although, these are small relative to the enormous changes happening in China anyway.³⁴

In addition, the leaders in China are aware that other countries need Beijing as a trading partner. For instance, although most countries remain displeased with much of the Chinese government's domestic and international behaviour, companies throughout the Asia-Pacific region are rushing to trade with and invest in China. After an interval in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Incident, trade with China has largely returned to a more normal level. Part of the reason why states do not restrict their investors is the fear of losing out in profiting from China's economic growth. Since foreigners benefit from doing business with China, the incentive is for more investment. Moreover, the fact that one government refuses to do business with China does not stop other countries from

grabbing their share of the huge Chinese market.³⁵ This, of course, serves China's long term security objectives. China's leaders believe that western investors prefer investing in countries that offer political stability as long as they get a good return on their investment.³⁶ In addition, China offers cheap labour and a large consumer market for Western goods. Ironically, it is thus the trade and investment of Western capitalist countries that constitutes one of the main reasons why China is expected to achieve high growth, enhancing Beijing's economic security in the process.

As for the wider implications, in the search for resources to sustain its economic growth, China has shown its assertiveness over claims to potential energy resources, such as in the Nansha Islands (Spratlys). As Michael Leifer points out, China is seeking for the prospect of discovering oil, which Beijing must now import.³⁷ In addition, energy needs of the rapidly growing Northeast Asian region means that other rival nations such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are likely to become rival importers of oil. Therefore, writers such as Kent Calder have argued that the United States needs to take the lead in assisting the development of energy reserves in the region with the aim of reducing regional tensions.³⁸ The latter might stem from clashes of requirements for economic development. At the same time, it is equally likely that the China will continue to choose a peaceful and mutually beneficial relationship with its neighbours.

The fear of China is also evident in the concept of Greater China, described by Harry Harding in geographical terms as comprising China, Taiwan and Hong Kong.³⁹ To many Asians, the usage of "Greater" connotes hegemonist tendencies and might evoke memories of the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity

Sphere, the Japanese-imposed regional order in the 1940s. In reality, this concept of Greater China emanates from the economic realm rather than the political. The growing economic integration of Hong Kong, South China and Taiwan can be expected to affect the international political economy and more importantly serve China's security interests. This will enable China to gain technology and capital from Hong Kong and Taiwan, and in the long term help China's economic development drive. Indeed, the overseas Chinese, including those in Southeast Asia, through their investments, are propelling China's economic revolution.⁴⁰ Common ancestry and ties of kinship origin form the world's oldest civilisation and the economic impact of the overseas Chinese (*Huaqiao*) is most evident here, all of which can play a role in enhancing China's security interests.

However, although economic integration is moving at a faster pace, it is true to say that the political emergence of a Greater China is still in its infancy. Political tensions between Beijing and Taiwan remain far from resolved. As Michael Yahuda points out, the Greater China concept is "based on looser informal ties rather than within strict legal or political frameworks and would above all, depend very much on the course of domestic politics in China and Taiwan and Hong Kong".⁴¹ What is unquestionable is that the emergence of Greater China in any form is likely to help China further its economic security interests and thereby its drive to great power status in the region.

In Asia and around the world, China's growing economic, political and military strength is the focus of much interest and some anxiety. From a negative viewpoint, it is contended that China's continuing emergence from political and economic isolation is likely to be marked by increasing and potentially dangerous

friction with its near neighbours, with trading partners and others, and with international institutions. More hopefully, it is held that China's large and growing market and productive capacity offer enormous opportunities to add to the sum of world prosperity, and that it is also partly the job of the international system to find ways to accommodate China that accord with the importance which Beijing thinks it deserves and will increasingly demand.

An analogy can be made to Japan, which has recently risen to be a major power while accepting the constraints of the international system, primarily due to the restraint encapsulated in the American-Japanese alliance. In previous century, the rise of the United States as a global power took place largely within the existing rules and was accompanied by a willingness to work within those constraints with the objectives of changing the international order from the inside. For China, as Edward Friedman quite rightly noted, the current challenge to enhance state security and achieve global power status is to make itself anti-imperialist, not through self-reliance and mobilisation for wars but through economic growth.⁴² To do that, China will need a stable environment.

Quest for a stable environment

As discussed in the previous chapter, China frequently argues that it needs “to maintain a peaceful international environment so that its limited resources and energies can be concentrated on construction and development”.⁴³ Following this line of argument means that “it is hard to imagine that China would harm the existence of a peaceful international environment at the risk of its own development program”.⁴⁴ This is, of course, not only a refutation of the “China

Threat Theory” but also an indication of China’s desire to carry out its economic development. The Chinese are not doing this out of altruism. It is the central argument in this thesis that economics play an increasing role in the formulation of a state’s security agenda. In other words, China wants a stable regional environment to sustain its economic growth, above all else.⁴⁵ Therefore, one can say that China needs an international environment of co-operation rather than confrontation.

Furthermore, history shows that, as China progressed through the years, it had to abandon the inevitability-of-war thesis in its strategy in order to use the world capitalist system to achieve internal economic growth. On the whole, the concept of global interdependence appears to have replaced the Leninist theory of imperialism, constituting the theoretical justification for China’s growing dependence on the world capitalist system. At the end of the 1990s, the use of force, if ever applied, is likely to be rational, calculated and limited in scope. Chinese military thinkers are still influenced by ancient military thought; as the famous Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu wrote around 400 B.C. that the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting. To most Chinese, winning a war, be it economic conflict or a total war, is best achieved by manoeuvres and deception, without bloodshed. In the foreseeable future, therefore, it is unlikely that China will embark on all-out war to achieve its security objectives. China will not want to be seen as the first to initiate a large-scale conflict because this will risk hurting its economic ties with its neighbours. These economic ties and a stable environment in Northeast Asia are too important for its economic modernisation and its domestic stability.

In addition, it is worth noting that the Chinese military has done its part to calm the nerves of its foreign counterparts. For example, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has stepped up its exchanges with foreign forces. In 1992, the PLA received an unprecedented one hundred and ten visiting military delegations.⁴⁶ Such moves will in the long run foster a better understanding with other countries and bring about greater transparency of the intentions of the PLA. In addition, it has also been argued by writers such as Chong-pin Lin that modernisation, as advocated by the late Deng Xiaoping, will increase general interdependence with the outside world and a strong PLA may become a regionally stabilising force.⁴⁷

Therefore, former Foreign Minister Qian Qichen emphasised to the ASEAN Regional Forum in Brunei in August 1995 that Beijing's decision to cut its military strength by one million was a significant step taken unilaterally by the Chinese government as the scope and volume of this cut was rarely seen in the international arms control and disarmament arena.⁴⁸ In the past, the Chinese had refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968, which they viewed as Soviet-US agreement in collusion to prevent erosion of their dominant positions as the world's nuclear powers. Beijing had interpreted both the Test Ban Treaty and NPT as attempts by the two superpowers to prevent other states from acquiring nuclear weapons. China's defensive attitude to nuclear matters was largely due to its vulnerable position in relation to the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1960s.⁴⁹ The end of the Cold War has to a certain extent altered China's threat perception, which resulted in a more positive attitude to nuclear arms control.

Above all, China's political economy and domestic reform program have profoundly shaped its involvement in the international economic system. Economic interdependence with the outside world has restricted Chinese behaviour. Complying with a set of international norms and standards in the realm of economics is to a certain extent a way of restraining Chinese political behaviour and may, in the long-term, be an influence on the political liberalisation of the country itself. For example, to be able to obtain developmental loans from Europe, Japan, the United States and international institutions, China will need to gain a degree of acceptance in the eyes of the developed nations.

If China is enmeshed in a network of international ties, it will fear its losing major trading partners. As Keohane and Nye put it, "as a result of increased communications, movement of people across international borders, foreign investments and changes in export and import practices", significant changes in attitudes and conduct of states, such as those of China, can take place without the Chinese realising it.⁵⁰ China might, therefore, become more constrained in its actions in the political realm, conducting itself in a manner more acceptable to the international community. In such circumstances, an aggressive foreign policy will be less likely. Therefore, it is in the interests of the outside world and in particular China's immediate neighbours to attempt "tying China into the international system" based on China's reliance on the world economic capitalist order; and this is even more important because China "remains unique among the great powers in having little experience of genuine multilateral interaction with the international community".⁵¹ In addition, one Chinese academic insists that "the absorption of foreign investment, technologies, management skills,

entrepreneurship and other market mechanisms nurtures a new generation of officials and professionals with more cosmopolitan, less nationalistic outlooks”.⁵² All these mean that China can, ironically, in actual fact play a constructive role in regional security.⁵³

Role in regional security

In discussions on regional order, one must take note of the constructive roles of great powers can have in a regional system. China can, for example, play a great power role in Northeast Asia. As for the specific definition of a great power, Hedley Bull argues:

Great powers are powers recognised by others to have, and conceived by their own leaders and peoples to have, certain special rights and duties. Great powers, for example, assert the right, and are accorded the right, to play a part in determining issues that affect the peace and security of the international system as a whole. They accept the duty, and are thought by others to have the duty, or modifying their policies in the light of the managerial responsibilities they bear.⁵⁴

It can be argued that the role of great powers is more crucial as the structure of “international society” in Northeast Asia, where no effective multilateralism exists, is still relatively weak compared to Europe. At the same time, it is interesting to note that Chinese scholars in discussing international relations have increasingly used the concept of “international society”.⁵⁵

Following Hedley Bull and Adam Watson's distinction between an international "system" and an international "society",⁵⁶ one may argue that that Northeast Asia still represents only an international "system". This argument is further supported by the fact that there exists a diversity of political systems operating in Northeast Asia, with the totalitarian state of North Korea still holding out on one side and Japan, a "Westernised" democracy on the other. In the middle of the spectrum are Russia and China themselves, whose fates in democracy still hang in the balance. The diversity of political systems certainly makes it difficult to institute some form of collective defence structure such as the likes of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Europe. Moreover, the lack of a common cultural homogeneity and commonality weakens the attempt to institute some security structures along the lines of Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). In the economic domain, the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) is the most developed and China is a member. Economic interdependence is advancing in Northeast Asia, but is still relatively underdeveloped. For example, trade between Japan and Russia, and between Russia and China is limited. Grand schemes of multilateral co-operation are not a realistic option in Northeast Asia, and it must be pointed out that the development of powerful international institutions in Europe took many years.

Given this context, for any attempts at confidence building measures or forming security regimes to have any chance of success, they must involve the great powers such as China. It is worth noting that collective security had failed in the past as not all the great powers were involved, a good example being the case of the League of Nations where the United States was not actively involved.⁵⁷

It is therefore plausible to say that China's role in Asia will be crucial to the security of the region. In fact, China's outlook on regional security issues is bound to shape the post-Cold War strategic landscape in Asia.

On its part, it is interesting to note that China has acknowledged that the founding of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in July 1994, which, in many ways, marked the beginning of security co-operation the region.⁵⁸ In December 1996, China joined the non-governmental Council for Security Co-operation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP), a multilateral grouping of regional research institutes, security specialists and former and current government officials. As Gerald Segal points out, China apparently sees a virtue in regional multilateralism as a way to exert counter-pressure against the United States.⁵⁹

In addition, in July 1996, China ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which must surely represent a willingness on its part to get more involved in security issues on the basis of a global consensus. Furthermore, the Chinese have largely accepted that problems such as the Korean issue, discussed in Chapter 4, must be resolved through dialogue. Nevertheless, as Michael Yahuda points out, China still prefers to deal with security issues on a case-by case, bilateral basis before embarking on multilateral dialogues.⁶⁰ Western analysts such as Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser argue that one reason for China's reservations in multilateral schemes is that Beijing fears they will simply serve to single out China for criticism, in particular for its military build-up, and internationalise the Spratly disputes.⁶¹ In the Asia-Pacific region, China anticipates the gradual establishment of "bilateral, sub-regional and regional multi-layered, multi-channel security-ensuring dialogue mechanisms".⁶²

However, China's general unwillingness to subordinate its security interests to regional organisations, especially those initiated by the United States, has also contributed to fears of China being a threat to the region. In this sense, general Chinese suspicion of the Western goal of "peaceful evolution" has carried over into regional security discussions. For example, Beijing is intent on limiting any interference by the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in China's military development. China is particularly reticent about publicising its military doctrines and order of battle to accommodate ARF transparency requests, implying that such demands are really "thinly disguised quests for intelligence".⁶³ However China cannot remain completely aloof from these regional activities. At this moment, it appears that China's agreement to participate in certain dialogues is to ensure that any solution to regional issues will be to its advantage. In the future, it is possible that China will play a leading role in Northeast Asian security, as its participation in the talks on the Korean issue indicate. Furthermore, China certainly has an important role to play in international affairs. In many ways, its co-operation in international sanctions against Iraq has already marked a new beginning in China's integration into the world community.

Conclusion

It is clear that in the search for its own security, China, even without expansionist ambitions, might encroach on the security interests of its neighbours. This is primarily due to China's sheer size and potential for global power status. Essentially, this thesis would argue that the appearance of the "China Threat Theory" is best regarded as a consequence of its rapid economic growth, as China

seeks to bolster its economic security. Most important of all, it accords with China's aspiration to be a great power as accorded by its economic strength and size. This definition of Chinese search for its ultimate security- the drive for great power status - is in many ways, reinforced by anti-imperialism and what Beijing perceives as the hegemonist ambitions of the United States. There is a need to avenge "the century of humiliation" and Chinese leaders believe that building up sufficient economic strength and military might to counter the perceived American threat is of paramount importance. Hence, the "China Threat Theory" has become inevitably linked to United States containment policy in the eyes of China's security policy makers.

It must also be emphasised that in the anarchical international system, China also needs to be competitive with the other great powers in the uncertain post-Cold War era. In doing so, China has to rely on its economic base and control of economic resources. It would not serve the interest of the Chinese leaders to alter or damage the environment in Northeast Asia in any dramatic fashion. That would only hinder its economic development objectives and the drive to truly great power status in the twenty-first century, which is foremost on China's security agenda.

¹ Michael B. Yahuda, "The People's Republic of China at 40: Foreign relations," *The China Quarterly*, no. 119 (September 1989), p. 521.

² Li Peng, "The impact of China's development and the rise of Asia on the future of the world - A prospering Asia benefits the world," *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 40 (September 30-October 6, 1996), p. 7.

³ Qian Qichen, "China never seeks hegemony," *Beijing Review*, vol. 36, no. 31 (August 2-8, 1993), p. 11.

⁴ Rex Li, "China and Asia-Pacific security in the post-Cold War era," *Security Dialogue*, vol. 26, no. 3 (September 1995), p. 332; David Shambaugh, "Growing strong: China's challenge to Asian security," *Survival*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 43-59.

⁵ John Baylis, "Chinese defence policy," in John Baylis et al (eds.), *Contemporary Strategy II: The Nuclear Powers* (Holmes & Meier: New York, 1987, 2nd ed.), pp. 115-121.

⁶ Robert S. Norris, "French and Chinese nuclear weapon testing," *Security Dialogue*, vol. 27, no. 1 (March 1996), p. 51.

⁷ For the concept of weak state, see Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An agenda for International Security Studies in the post-Cold War Era* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, 2nd ed.), chapter 2, especially pp. 96-102.

⁸ This line of argument can be found in Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988) pp. 447-458. Paul Kennedy has also argued that China will become a superpower.

⁹ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 106. This is of course, a key concept in economic theory with marginal costs equalling marginal benefits as the optimum.

¹⁰ David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

¹¹ "Promoting good neighbourliness, mutual trust, jointly building a bright future - congratulating President Jiang's complete success in attending ASEAN and China - ASEAN informal leaders' meetings," Xinhua News agency, 17 Dec 97 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 22 Dec 97, p. G/4.

¹² Ge Yang, "China's rise: Threat or not?" *Beijing Review*, vol. 38, no. 5 (January 30-February 5, 1995), p. 23.

¹³ Wang Jisi and Zou Sicheng, "Civilisations: clash or fusion?" *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 3 (January 15-21 1996), pp. 11-12.

¹⁴ "Commentary derides Western theory of military threat from China," *Renmin Ribao*, 27 Oct 94, p. 1.

¹⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, "The clash of civilisations?" *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 22-49; Samuel P. Huntington, "If not civilisations, what? Samuel P. Huntington responds to his critics," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 5 (November/December 1993), pp. 186-94. See also Francis Fukuyama, "Social capital and the global economy," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 74, no. 5, (September/October 1995) p. 97.

¹⁶ Wang Jisi and Zou Sicheng, "Civilisations: clash or fusion?" *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 3 (January 15-21 1996), pp. 11-12.

¹⁷ Yan Xuetong, "Dangers of Neo-McCarthyism," *Beijing Review*, vol. 40, no. 43 (July 7-13, 1997), p. 7.

¹⁸ Gerald Segal, "Tying China into the international system," *Survival* vol. 37, no. 2 (Summer 1995), pp. 72-73.

¹⁹ "Li Peng denies 'China threat', says uneven development will not divide nation," Xinhua news agency, 2 Jan 94 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 4 Jan 94, p. G/7.

²⁰ Robert A. Scalapino, "China in the late Leninist era," *The China Quarterly*, no. 136 (December 1993), p. 961.

²¹ David Shambaugh, "Growing strong: China's challenge to Asian security," *Survival*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer 1994), p. 44.

²² Weixing Hu, "China's security agenda after the Cold War," *The Pacific Review*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1995), p. 132.

²³ Paul Dibb, *Towards a New Balance of Power in Asia*, Adelphi Paper 295 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1995), p. 23.

²⁴ Gerald Segal, "East Asia and the 'constraint' of China," *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Spring 1996), pp. 107-135.

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- ²⁵ Dale C. Copeland, "Interdependence and war: a theory of trade expectations," *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Spring 1996), p. 23.
- ²⁶ "China accedes to nuclear non-proliferation Treaty," *Beijing Review*, vol. 35, no. 123 (March 30- April 15, 1992), p. 12.
- ²⁷ Tang Hua, "Background to China's suspension of nuclear testing," *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 49 (December 2-8, 1996), pp. 15-16.
- ²⁸ For full details of China's efforts in non-proliferation see Z.S. David, "China's non-proliferation and export control policies," *Asian Survey*, vol. 35, no. 6 (1995), pp. 592-597.
- ²⁹ Liu Huaqiu, "Promoting security in Asia-Pacific region," *Beijing Review*, vol. 35, no. 15 (April 13-19, 1992), p. 10. This article is a reprint of Liu's speech to the Conference of Security and Disarmament Research Institutes in the Asia-Pacific held on March 23, 1992 in Beijing.
- ³⁰ "China proposes nuclear package - statement by Qian Qichen, vice-premier and foreign minister and chairman of the delegation of the People's Republic of China, at the 49th session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 28, 1994," *Beijing Review*, vol. 37, no. 41 (October 10-16, 1994), p. 30.
- ³¹ Samuel S. Kim, "China and the world: Theory and practice," in Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Relations in the post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1994, 3rd ed.), p. 14.
- ³² Vincent Cable and Peter Ferdinand, "China as an economic giant: threat or opportunity?" *International Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 2 (April 1994), p. 258.
- ³³ World Commodity Forecasts, *Food, Feedstuffs and Beverages (December 1995)* (London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1995); and World Commodity Forecasts, *Industrial Raw Materials (December 1995)* (London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1995).
- ³⁴ World Bank, *World Development Report 1995: Workers in an Integrating World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- ³⁵ Denny Roy, "Consequences of China's economic growth for Asia-Pacific security," *Security Dialogue*, vol. 24, no. 2 (June 1993), p. 189.

³⁶ John R. Faust and Judith F. Kornberg, *China in World Politics* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), p. 90.

³⁷ China became a net importer of oil in 1994. See Michael Leifer, "Chinese economic reform and security policy: The South China Sea connection," *Survival*, vol. 37, no. 2 (Summer 1995), p. 44.

³⁸ See Kent E. Calder, "Asia's empty tank," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 2 (March/April 1996), pp. 58-59.

³⁹ See Harry Harding, "The concept of Greater China: Themes, variations and reservations," in David Shambaugh (ed.) *Greater China: The next Superpower?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 12-34.

⁴⁰ Maria Hsia Chang, "Greater China and the Chinese 'global tribe,'" *Asian Survey*, vol. xxxv, no. 10 (October 1995), pp. 956-958.

⁴¹ Michael Yahuda, "The foreign relations of greater China," in David Shambaugh (ed.) *Greater China: The Next Superpower?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 58.

⁴² Edward Friedman, "Anti-imperialism in Chinese foreign policy," in Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Relations in the post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1994, 3rd ed.), p. 70.

⁴³ "Commentary derides Western theory of military threat from China," *Renmin Ribao*, 27 Oct 94, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Ren Xin, "'China threat' theory untenable," *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 6 (February 5-11, 1996), p. 11.

⁴⁵ This was the central theme in the article entitled: "China as a regional power: Constructive role in regional security", which I presented at the "Regional Security in a Global Context" Annual Conference funded by the John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation at Wilton Park, April 21-25, 1997.

⁴⁶ "PLA in close touch with foreign armies," *Beijing Review*, vol. 36, no. 33 (August 6-22, 1993), p. 7.

⁴⁷ Chong-pin Lin, "Chinese military modernisation: perceptions, progress, and prospects," *Security Studies* vol. 3, no. 4 (Summer 1994), p. 742.

⁴⁸ “Qian’s speech at the ASEAN Regional Forum,” Xinhua news agency, 1 Aug 95 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part 3 Asia-Pacific*, 3 Aug 95, p. S1/3.

⁴⁹ Gerald Segal, *The Great Power Triangle* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 122. China exploded the atomic bomb in 1964 and the hydrogen bomb in 1967.

⁵⁰ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence* (Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman and Company, 1989, 2nd ed.), pp. 3-37.

⁵¹ Gerald Segal has stated that it was only in April 1994, some 23 years after China assumed the UN seat, that China drafted an important Security Council statement. See Gerald Segal, “Tying China into the international system,” *Survival*, vol. 37, no. 2 (Summer 1995), p. 72.

⁵² Jisi Wang, “Pragmatic nationalism: China seeks a new role in world affairs,” *The Oxford International Review* (Winter 1994), p. 29.

⁵³ This was the central argument in the article entitled: “China as a regional power: Constructive role in regional security,” which I presented at the “Regional Security in a Global Context” Annual Conference funded by the John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation at Wilton Park, April 21-25, 1997.

⁵⁴ See Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1995, 2nd ed.), p. 196.

⁵⁵ Cited in David Armstrong, “Chinese perspectives on the new world order,” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, vol. viii, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 1994) pp. 470-471.

⁵⁶ Bull and Watson made the definition and distinction in the following words: “By an international society we mean a group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognise their common interests in maintaining these arrangements.” See Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). For the international society approach, see Martin Wight, (Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter eds.) *International Theory: The Three Traditions* (London: Leicester University Press, 1991); Barry

Buzan, "From International system to International society: Structural realism and regime theory meet the English School," *International Organisation*, vol. 47, no. 3 (1993), pp. 327–352. Buzan argues that international society suggests a broader term the specific notion of regimes. It suggests "a situation in which a whole set of regimes, multilateral organisations and rules exists which enables states to communicate on a regular basis, to establish modes and habits of consultation and co-operation, to co-ordinate and manage their relations, and to prevent their disputes escalating into conflict of war."

⁵⁷ For an excellent account of the failure of the League of Nations as a collective security system, see E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939* (London: Macmillan, 1961).

⁵⁸ Guo Zhenyuan, "Asian-Pacific Region remains peaceful," *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, no. 6, (February 5-11, 1996), p. 9.

⁵⁹ Gerald Segal, "How insecure is Pacific Asia?" *International Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 32 (April 1997), pp. 235-249.

⁶⁰ Michael Yahuda, "China: Will it strengthen or weaken the region?" in T.B. Millar and James Walter (eds.), *Asian-Pacific Security After the Cold War* (London: University of London, Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 1992), pp. 35-35.

⁶¹ See Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser, "Multilateral security in the Asia-Pacific region and its impact on Chinese interests: Views from Beijing," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 16 no. 1 (June 1994), pp. 25-27.

⁶² Liu Huaqiu, "Promoting security in the Asia-Pacific region," *Beijing Review*, vol. 35, no. 15 (April 13-19, 1992), p. 10. This article is a reprint of Liu's speech to the Conference of Security and Disarmament Research Institutes in the Asia-Pacific held on March 23, 1992 in Beijing.

⁶³ Luo Renshi, "Progress and further efforts to be made in establishing confidence-building," *International Strategic Studies*, no. 2 (1995), p. 24.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

This chapter will summarise the conclusions drawn from the study of China's security interests in the post-Cold War era. I shall first recapitulate the security situation that China faces in this period. Then I move on to look at the political and economic aspects of China's security, restating the salience of economics in China's security agenda. Next, I shall look at the role of China in regional security. Lastly, I shall look at the wider theoretical implications arising from this thesis.

China in the post-Cold War era

Today, it is quite clear that Beijing cannot enhance its security interests on the basis of manoeuvring between superpowers in a state of continued confrontation. China's leverage was lost as a consequence of Soviet and now Russo-American rapprochement after the Cold War. The collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, which had structured China's relations with the states in Northeast Asia since 1949, has spurred policy-makers in China to re-examine their existing international relationships. Old enmities have evaporated and time-tested friendship dissolved as Chinese leaders struggle to come to terms with the fluid and dynamic regional environment in the post-Cold War world. China's leaders must now learn to adapt to emerging security structures.

In one way, the end of the Cold War brought about a situation in which the Chinese leaders can address regional problems in Northeast Asia without having

to subordinate them to the larger strategic context of meeting the potential threats of both the superpowers. As noted by Steven Levine, the relationship with Russia is less central to China than in the past because of the altered international environment in the region.¹ For Beijing, the decline of the Russian threat is definitely a major gain in the military realm. A northern border secure from any major military threat has long been a primary security objective of Beijing. This goal has been achieved, however, within a rapidly changing and unanticipated international security environment. Today, Beijing can point to what it considers the best security environment since the Chinese communists took power in 1949. Chinese leaders now face a security environment in Northeast Asia that is less likely to be disrupted by a major international power than at any time in the past. Moreover, regional security trends have been generally compatible with China's primary focus on internal economic modernisation and political stability.

For China, what now seems the most important factor in the post-Cold War era is its security relationship with the extra-regional power, the United States. The United States is perhaps the only country in the world that has the combination of military capabilities and political will to constitute a threat to the state security of China. Japan has the economic and technological potential to do so, but, at present, Beijing is protected from that possibility by the Japanese Constitution and the continued strategic subordination of Japan under the provisions of the US-Japan Security Treaty. Beijing believes that restraining Japan's potential military is likely to require the continuation of Washington's security ties with Tokyo. Similarly, American co-operation will be essential for a peaceful reunification of the two Koreas, which China wishes to support, not only

to sustain stability in Northeast Asia but more importantly, to demonstrate its intentions toward its own reunification with Taiwan. China fears that the end of East-West conflict may permit the United States to be more supportive of Taiwan, now that the need for a strategic alignment with Beijing to counter Russia has evaporated.

At a wider level, it is worth noting that, if the objective situation in the external world - contradictions, configurations and balance - is in a perpetual motion, China does not see the need to keep certain permanent alignments. In Chinese eyes, “adjustments” in domestic and foreign policies are only natural as long as principles and goals remain unchanged.² Due to external circumstances over which they have no control, Chinese leaders believe that those who can “adroitly guide action according to circumstance are great leaders”³. They still look for differences among the major powers that can be exploited to advance China’s interests. Some American analysts suggest that as the relations between Washington and Beijing continue to unravel, China may see Russia or Japan as a viable partner if it finds itself at odds with US policy in the region”⁴. There is a possibility of some form of Sino-Russian or Sino-Japanese alliance emerging in the twenty-first century.

More importantly, while Chinese leaders today are frequently able to determine their country’s strategic direction, they have much less control over the country’s economic affairs. As China seeks greater trading links with the outside world, it must come to terms with the concept of economic interdependence. Economic strategies are in general much more difficult to ascertain in an increasingly interdependent world, and quite often not as clear-cut as geopolitical

strategic initiatives. This is what this thesis hopes to highlight, in the hope that future research will give more focus on China's economic security.

The political aspect of China's security

However, as evident throughout this thesis, economic issues will also affect the political security of the Chinese government. In fact, most of these internal political security threats are directly or indirectly related to the issue of economic development. The volatility of China's international relationships is in many ways a product of considerable ambivalence over a cost-benefit analysis of its interaction with foreigners. While the Chinese need to absorb economic inputs from the outside world, at the same time, they are increasingly apprehensive of interdependence and submitting their national interests to those of the international system.

More importantly, political threats engendered by Western-style capitalism and democracy are perceived to be linked with the United States. Hence, US actions, such as the response to the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, led to Beijing interpreting that America's "new world order" threatens the Chinese leadership's core values. In Beijing's eyes, American efforts appear to be directed against the very stability of the Chinese government. In the process of opening up its economy, China will be subjected to the infusion of Western ideas that could have negative influences on its political system. Ironically, as Robert Scalapino put it, "the economic imperatives upon which the Marxist creed rests now threaten the political edifice that the Marxist-Leninists constructed."⁵

On the whole, the end of the Cold War is seen as the triumph of Western values such as democracy, human rights and the market economy. The contrary organising ideology is so deeply ingrained in China that any drastic changes would have catastrophic consequences, as the collapse of the Soviet Union has indicated. The ideas underpinning the Chinese state are now themselves subject to “peaceful evolution.” Hence, when the United States condemns China for abusing human rights, Beijing responds by charging Washington with interfering in its internal affairs and attempting to subvert its socialist system. Whereas threats in the earlier era took a military dimension, today, threats to China’s security have taken a more political dimension. Chinese leaders feel that they have to cope with what they see as a continuous attack on their political system by the US-led Western democracies. In fact, equated with anti-imperialism, nationalism has served as the most fundamental of all factors in the Chinese view of the world and has guided their analyses of international relations.

This perceived attack by the Americans is also linked to tendencies towards decentralisation, leadership issues and a possible split between the military and the party which all points to the existence of a “weak state.”⁶ According to Barry Buzan, the defining feature of a “weak state” is the high level of internal threats faced by the government. This certainly becomes more obvious when one considers the fact that the Chinese communists face a legitimacy crisis as their ideological basis has been eroded by the collapse of communism across the world. Such political issues have been explored in great detail in this thesis, as it is felt that they have not been given sufficient attention in traditional writings on China’s security.

As with most communist regimes, the prime goal of the Chinese Communist Party is to hold on to the reins of power. The current regime's central problem is how to run a closely controlled political system in concert with an open economy while ensuring that there is no spill-over effects from the open economy, in the direction of political pluralism, which will challenge the regime's monopoly of political power. To a certain extent, therefore, it appears that the most serious threat to China's security is not an external military challenge (there are none at the time of writing) but Western schemes to promote "peaceful evolution", a coded phrase denoting the subversion of the communist party leadership by political and cultural infiltration designed ultimately to make China a Western dependency. Having outlined the importance of political security to China's overall agenda, we can now turn to look at an equally important aspect, the economic.

The economic security agenda

In addition to the military and political aspects, economic dimensions are also important to China's security, as stated in various points in this thesis. Indeed, the transition to being an economic power has become increasingly important in defining China's national security agenda. Chinese leaders now give prominence to national well being by taking economic construction as the central line, persisting in reform and opening up.

Without having to subordinate to the larger strategic context of meeting potential threats of both the superpowers, the termination of the Cold War has also brought about a situation long desired by the Chinese who can now

concentrate on economic development. China's security agenda has become increasingly economically driven, as exemplified by its growing economic ties with countries such as Japan, South Korea and the United States. For instance, China and Japan are now being pulled in to each other's economic and political orbits. China wants to engage Japan's economic muscle in its development and Japan endeavours to help China develop as a "responsible power" in the region through the course of bilateral economic relations. Therefore, Chinese foreign policy has inevitably become somewhat more driven by economic relations with other states than in the past.

Above all, Beijing's philosophy on achieving of comprehensive national security is based upon the notion of a powerful state underpinned by economic, technological and military strength. In many ways, economic power is regarded as the crucial element in achieving comprehensive national security because it is essential to provide the necessary industrial base to support a military establishment sufficiently robust to deter would-be aggressors. This has been the guiding force behind Chinese foreign policy in recent years and is likely to continue being so in the foreseeable future. Beijing has therefore sought a peaceful external environment in which it can pursue domestic reforms and expand trading and investment opportunities with as many states as possible.

China understands the urgent need for economic development and the strengthening of its own military might, the alternative being vulnerability from potential aggressors. Therefore, China has put forward a plan for "seizing opportunities, and developing itself". In a world where world market competitiveness seems to define success, economic success is vital for national

survival. Moreover, China's leaders need to guarantee material success to keep its large population satisfied.

These Chinese leaders also believe that the security agenda in the 1990s calls for certain changes in Beijing's economic development strategy. The economy must serve domestic priorities and work for China's modernisation programmes. Beijing is relying on the growth of the economy as a basis for the Chinese Communist Party to rule over the long term. Beijing realises that the future security of its country requires cultivation of close relations with Northeast Asian neighbours and indeed Asia as a whole. This does not mean that China's leaders have ceased to conceptualise their country in global terms, but it is a recognition of the importance of the region to China's economy in particular. Moreover, since Asia is still widely regarded as the engine of growth for the world economy, despite the current financial crisis, China's growing strength within the region will also serve to enhance Beijing's global significance, and help it achieve great power status in the twenty-first century.

Furthermore, like their counterparts in the West, Chinese realists also see the world in terms of power politics. In the most systematic account of national interests, the criteria for judging them are said to include the international environment, national capabilities, technological development and the subjective assessment of these factors; the first three factors essentially refer to world power configurations and China's position therein, the last refers to the "objective" assessment of China's position in that power distribution.⁷ It appears that Chinese realists differ slightly from classical realists in the West with respect to the hierarchy of issues. While the traditional Anglo-American realists consider

military security as “high politics” and social economic issues as the domain of “low politics”, Chinese contemporary realists tend to place greater emphasis on economic and technological development. This difference is attributable largely to China’s recent conviction that international politics is now characterised by “the competition for comprehensive power” (*zonghe guoli de jiaoliang*) on a wide range of battle grounds in, inter alia, military, political and economic areas.⁸ It is true to say that most Chinese analysts believe that with the end of the Cold War, “bloc politics” and ideological difference are less important; instead national interests, especially economic interests, will rise to prominence.

At a conceptual level, one can raise questions regarding the extent to which economic and security issues were truly divorced in the past, and China’s security is also subject to such questions. This thesis seeks to provide a comprehensive account of China’s security agenda in the post-Cold War era. In the world in general and Asia in particular, it is practically impossible and may even be dangerously naïve to try to separate economic, political and military security issues. Almost all political or military security decisions have some economic implications, and economic considerations are increasingly influencing political and military security decisions.

Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that by no means does this thesis imply that various aspects of state security should be analysed distinctly from one another. One must recognise the inter-linkages among the various aspects of security. These various aspects of security can be regarded as constituting some sort of cost-benefit analysis. Enhancing one aspect could mean diminishing another. The task for Chinese leaders is to balance and weigh the importance of

security concerns on a case by case basis rather than adopt a straightforward approach. China's leaders need to enhance Beijing's comprehensive national strength constantly and this involves bolstering military, political and economic security simultaneously. In the process of doing so, China is bound to have a significant impact on regional security issues.

China's role in regional security

On a wider arena, an important implication reached in this thesis is that in its search for comprehensive security, China is likely to bolster regional security since it seeks a peaceful environment to pursue its modernisation goals.⁹ If the environment in Northeast Asia becomes turbulent, Beijing's drive for economic development and to truly great power status in the next century will be hindered. It is clear that the Chinese need a stable international environment in which they can expand their commerce and maintain access to technological and financial resources. These resources will come largely from the industrialised powers and international financial institutions as China seeks to reap the benefits from the world economy without becoming overly dependent on it.

Studying China's security interests is also important because China shapes the security environment in Northeast Asia. At the same time, the regional system also constrains Chinese foreign policy objectives. No state makes its foreign policy in a vacuum: foreign policies are at least as reactive as they are proactive. The questions of how China relates to the countries in Northeast Asia in the post-Cold War era; and to what extent, and in what specific ways has the nexus

between China and Northeast Asia remain constant will also have implications for China's security interest pertaining to the world at large.

One consistency in Beijing's security agenda compared to earlier periods in its history is the quest to restore China to its "rightful" place in the world as a great power. China's security agenda is shaped by modern China's historical experience and its approach to international relations, which is in many ways derived from a mixture of Marxist doctrines, its identification with the Third World and its historic Sino-centricism.

China's policies are characterised first by stability and second by practical realism. China's economic development requires a stable and peaceful international environment, and Northeast Asia is an important part of that environment. China needs to sustain good relations with both the countries in Northeast Asia and the United States in order to avoid disruptions around Beijing that can complicate its drive towards modernisation.

For those with an interest in thinking strategically about the modern international relations of the Asia-Pacific region and indeed international relations in general, there is no more important challenge than to understand the nature and implications of a rising China's search for comprehensive security. As this reality dawns on the public policy community, the debate has often been simplistic. The exchange seems to be between those who assert that China will soon rise to be the world's largest economy and those who argue that it cannot sustain current levels of growth. Some suggest that China will "muddle through" difficulties in developing its economy, while others suggest it will face a major crisis of governance. On the policy towards China, some argue that China can only be

wrapped in the arm embrace of “engagement” whereas others stress the need to contain Chinese power. While the issues raised by these questions are undoubtedly important, the debates about their accuracy have rarely been sufficiently sophisticated. Various participants have made references to a range of deep uncertainties about the basics of continued growth and stability. It is fair to say that no one has any great confidence in the reliability of the judgements made about this very fluid society.

To be sure, there are more numerous debates embedded in this thesis, which will not be resolved in the near future. It is clear that these debates are maturing and that they will take place in a number of different contexts. The evidence needed to make progress in these debates will come from both China’s internal affairs, especially its economic interests and development, and also the way it behaves and is being treated in the international system. It is hoped that this thesis, using the concept of comprehensive security, can provide the platform for further research and debate on this topic. Through analysing China’s search for comprehensive security, it is hoped that this study can also offer some clues on the security of the Asia-Pacific region in the near future. We can now turn to the theoretical implications that arise from this thesis.

Theoretical concepts of security

On the whole, theoretical implications for the discipline of Security Studies/Strategic Studies arising from this thesis are well worth noting. Specifically, a wider implication stemming from this thesis is that security cannot be conceived in narrow military terms any more. A more comprehensive

definition must be adopted by security analysts in order to enhance our understanding of a state's security interests in the post-Cold War era. Military power combined with a vibrant economy is viewed as indispensable for China to regain its status as a great power and to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

To be precise, the economics-security interrelationship is one of the wider implications of this thesis and it is hoped that more research will be done on this by scholars who analyse the security agenda of states in the post-Cold War era. It is clear from the literature survey, especially in Chapter 2, that the relationship between economic and security interests has already engendered considerable debate in academic circles. On one hand, it is sometimes argued that economic interactions exist only as a result of a nation-state's security interests. Certainly, while markets may ease the ways towards a state's relations with others, these cannot be sustained without governments agreeing to the bargain. Some, such as Louis Paul, argue that global financial flows ultimately do not undermine a state's decision-making authority, since "if a crisis increases their willingness to bear the consequences, states can still defy the markets".¹⁰

On the other hand, governments that attempt economic co-operation based solely on political motivations are bound to fail, if that co-operation is not grounded in economic rationality and cost-benefit analysis. While not getting into the extremes of this debate, what this does mean is that the salience of economic security has become all too important for analysts to ignore. As economic interdependence increases over time, domestic economic policy decisions will become more interconnected and the need for states to co-ordinate an array of fiscal

and monetary policies alongside political considerations will become more important.

The above analysis is also in line with the concept that in international politics, foreign policy is very intertwined with internal factors. As former Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen's has pronounced, "foreign policy is an extension of China's domestic policies".¹¹ The concept of Chinese security does not, however, come across as being entirely internally generated, it is also influenced and shaped by the evolving dynamics of the Asia-Pacific region and the wider world in general. The conventional wisdom in International Relations is that foreign policy analysis does not take place in a vacuum. Hence, future developments in China's security policy will to a large extent depend on the evolution of Chinese economic priorities and Beijing's interactions with the international system.

To the extent that economics are regarded as part of the domestic agenda, in the post-Cold War world, we can detect a closer link between domestic stability and external threats in China's security thinking. It is evident that states like China need to employ both traditional military defence and non-military actions in order to safeguard their territorial integrity. The linkage between the economic, political and military aspects of a state's security policy also leads to the problem of where to place the emphasis. To concentrate on one aspect at the expense of the others will be misleading and unrealistic. The three aspects are intricately linked. For instance, to insist on the separation of economics from politics in a state's relations with other countries or vice versa would be untenable. Therefore, analysts must weigh the importance of the military, political and economic aspects in their analysis of states' security agendas.

In general, the end of the Cold War has signified the end of strategic conflict and heralded the end of viewing international politics purely through the geopolitical perspective. The economic dimension of China's security has raised some interesting questions on a wider level. The nature of conflict today can take many forms and economic competition can become sources of tension. Offshore territorial conflicts can be generated by a scramble to control energy resources, fisheries and raw materials. In addition, issues such as maritime passage and seabed boundaries need to be taken into account, especially since offshore conflicts may prove more likely than onshore wars in Northeast Asia.

Conclusions

This thesis has sought to give more emphasis to the economic and political dimensions in China's security, in addition to the traditional military dimension. We can now recapitulate and reinforce some of the key conclusions drawn at the end of the various chapters. The first relates to the fact that China's security agenda is increasingly economically motivated as Beijing drives to great power status. The second relates to the fact that threats to China's security interests posed by other states, such as the United States, is increasingly taking the form of the political rather than the military. These conclusions lead to the wider implication that, in the post-Cold War era, security agendas of states tend to be comprehensive and broad. Therefore, security analysts today must incorporate economics and politics into their analysis of China's security agenda, and that of other states' as well.

¹ Steven Levine, "Second chance in China -Sino-Soviet relations in the 1990s," *Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 519 (1992), pp. 26-38.

² Wang Jisi, "International relations theory and the study of Chinese foreign policy: A Chinese perspective," in Thomas Robinson and David Shambaugh (eds.), *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³ Lucian W. Pye. "China: Erratic state, frustrated society," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 69, no. 4 (Autumn 1990), p. 71.

⁴ Charles W. Kegley, Jr., and Gregory Raymond, *A Multipolar Peace? Great Power Politics in the Twenty-first Century* (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1994), p. 207.

⁵ Robert A. Scalapino, "The foreign policy of the People's Republic of China: A balance sheet," *Asian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 2, no. 2 (December 1995), p. 25.

⁶ For the concept of the "weak state", See Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An agenda for International Security Studies in the post-Cold War Era*, (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, 2nd ed.).

⁷ Yan Xuetong, *Zhongguo Guojia Liyi Fenxi (Analysis of China's National Interests)* (Tianjin: Tianjin Remin Chubanshe, 1996), Chapter 2.

⁸ See for example, Zhao Xiaochun, "On new changes in national interests in the post-Cold War era," *Guoji Guanxi Xueyuan Xuebao (Journal of the Institute of International Relations)*, vol. 1 (1995), pp. 1-7.

⁹ This is the central theme in the article entitled: "China as a regional power: Constructive role in regional security", which I presented at the "Regional Security in a Global Context" Annual Conference funded by the John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation at Wilton Park, April 21-25, 1997.

¹⁰ Louis W. Paul, "Capital mobility, state autonomy and political legitimacy," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 48, no. 2 (Winter 1995), p. 373.

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