From "Lying Low" to "Harmonious World": Changes in Chinese Foreign Policy from the 1970s to the 2000s

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From “Lying Low” to “Harmonious World”: Changes in Chinese Foreign Policy from the 1970s to the 2000s

Charles Monahan Murray Jr.
Falls Church, VA

Bachelor of Arts, College of William and Mary, 2005

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts

Lyon G. Tyler Department of History

The College of William and Mary
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This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Charles Monahan Murray Jr.

Approved by the Committee, May, 2014

Committee Chair
Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies Frederick Corney, History The College of William and Mary

Assistant Professor Eric Han, History The College of William and Mary

Associate Professor Hiroshi Kitamura, History The College of William and Mary
ABSTRACT

From the late 1970s to the early 2000s the People’s Republic of China (PRC) underwent a dramatic transformation in how it conducted foreign policy. Over these three decades China went from an almost isolationist country whose leader proclaimed that “China would never be a superpower” to a nation which sought to expand its influence around the world, commonly referred to itself as a “great power,” and openly discussed surpassing the U.S. in both economic and military strength within the next 50 years. This dramatic change in how Chinese officials conducted foreign policy was caused not so much because of a shift in Chinese officials’ goals, but rather because of a transition in generations of Chinese leadership, a changing international environment, an increased need for foreign sources of energy, and a new understanding of how China could use foreign policy to advance China’s longstanding development interests.

Although the ultimate goals for the second, third, and fourth generations of Chinese leadership remained similar, each generation of Chinese leadership approached foreign policy somewhat differently. Mao Zedong sought to support revolutionary causes around the world. Deng Xiaoping argued that China should “lay low” and devote all its energy to its own internal economic development. Jiang Zemin focused primarily on repairing relations with the U.S. following the fallout from the brutal crackdown at Tiananmen Square in 1989, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. Hu Jintao oversaw the beginning of a new truly global foreign policy strategy for China in which Chinese officials expanded China’s diplomatic horizons, sought to ensure access to foreign sources of energy, preached new concepts of international relations, and worked to reassure other nations that they had nothing to fear from China’s rise.

A shift in generations of Chinese leadership in the 1990s and 2000s had a profound effect on Chinese foreign policy as did the isolation China experienced following the government’s harsh crackdown at Tiananmen Square. China’s increasing need for foreign sources of energy, raw materials, and overseas markets further pushed Chinese officials to engage more countries. At the same time rising Chinese nationalism put pressure on Chinese officials to more forcefully pursue China’s interests.

Despite all these factors, and the drastic change in the conduct of Chinese foreign policy, at its core, the main goal for Chinese officials from the late 1970s to the early 2000s remained ensuring China’s continued development. The shift to a more active foreign policy in the 2000s thus was not the result of a shift in the overall goals of most Chinese officials; rather, it was a result of Chinese officials’ realization that a more active foreign policy was now necessary to ensure China’s continued economic growth.
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1. Introduction

As readers are well aware, over the past several years it has been almost impossible to avoid discussions of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) burgeoning superpower status and increased influence around the world. During the past year alone there were well over a thousand news articles which mentioned "China's rise." These discussions have not just been limited to Western observers as well. Starting primarily in the 2000s, Communist Party of China (CPC) officials themselves increasingly openly touted China's growing influence and became more comfortable with the idea of China as a major world power. As just one example of Chinese officials' growing confidence on the world stage in the 2000s, Lau Nai-keung, a member of the Basic Law Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, wrote in 2008, "the Chinese people have indeed stood up, and...China is a force to reckon with. It has joined the [international] club" and "as a full member of the club, we have a stake in maintaining stability and order, but we will also have our say in designing and amending the rules." Such statements stand in stark contrast to the China of just 30 or 40 years ago when Chinese officials argued that China would always belong to the Third World and could not afford to become involved in international affairs. For example, in 1974, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping railed against the idea that China would ever become a superpower, saying:

China is not a superpower, nor will it ever seek to be one. If one day China should change its color and turn into a superpower, if it too should play the tyrant in the world, and everywhere subject others to its bullying, aggression

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1 Search by author in Lexis Nexis Academic of newspapers from March 16, 2013 to March 17, 2014.
and exploitation, the people of the world should . . . expose it, oppose it and work together with the Chinese people to overthrow it.

As recently as 30 years ago, China was a relatively isolated country, with a largely passive foreign policy. In 1988, British historian Paul Kennedy wrote that China was "simultaneously the poorest of the major powers and probably the least well placed strategically."4 By the 2000s, however, China had transformed itself from an impoverished, isolated nation to the world's second largest economy and a major world power, perhaps second only to the United States (U.S.) in its global influence.5 Despite Deng's 1974 statement, that China would never become a superpower, by the 2000s, Chinese officials openly referred to the country as a "great power" and discussed how they planned to surpass the U.S. in both economic and military strength by the middle of the 21st century. Accompanying this dramatic change in China's economic power and international standing, was a significant change in the way Chinese officials viewed foreign policy. While these documents lag behind the shifts that happened within Chinese society and among most Chinese officials by several years, the dramatic changes in the focus and complexity of China's foreign policy can nevertheless be clearly seen in the content of the white papers the PRC put out every two years on "China's National Defense." In these policy papers there is a clear shift from the late 1990s and early 2000s when the papers are primarily focused on protecting China's sovereignty, to the mid to

late 2000s when Chinese officials became less worried about external challenges to their rule, and more focused on expanding China’s influence around the world. The 1998 and 2000 versions of the White Papers on China’s National Defense read very similarly to PRC policy statements from the 1980s and earlier. They are highly focused on protecting China’s sovereignty, with the word “sovereign” or a variation appearing frequently. This was a typical concern among CPC officials, who were often fearful that outside powers were seeking to undermine the CPC’s rule, a fear which dated back to the events surrounding the PRC’s founding in 1949. By 2002, however, the word “sovereign” appeared far less frequently in that year’s and later years’ official Defense White Papers. By 2005, rather than focusing on threats to its own sovereignty, Chinese officials were more focused on ensuring that other nations did not view China’s growing power as a threat. In 2005, the PRC put out a white paper on “China’s Peaceful Development Road” which only included the word “sovereign” once. These white papers reflected a newly confident China who rather than playing defense guarding against possible foreign

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challenges to its rule, was more focused on expanding its influence around the globe.

This paper will examine how Chinese foreign policy has changed from 1949 to the early 2000s as well as some of the reasons for those changes. This paper will primarily focus on the changes in Chinese foreign policy since the reform era which began in the late 1970s. It will argue that under Mao Zedong, founder of the CPC and leader of the PRC from 1949 to 1976, Chinese foreign policy was primarily driven by ideology; during Mao's successor Deng Xiaoping's reign, Chinese foreign policy was driven by a fear of being pulled into international conflict which would distract from internal development; that under Jiang Zemin, the head of the third generation of leadership of the PRC, that Chinese foreign policy was primarily driven by Chinese officials' desire to avoid the isolation China experienced following the PRC's harsh crackdown on protesters in Tiananmen Square in 1989, and the related desire to gain the U.S.' acceptance for the PRC's continued rule in a new uni-polar international system; and finally that under Hu Jintao, the head of the fourth generation of leadership of the PRC, Chinese foreign policy was driven by the need to ensure access to overseas natural resources which had become vital to China's growing economy, and by a new sense among Chinese officials and average citizens that China needed to do more on the world stage to ensure other nations did not attempt to limit China's development.

In order to understand the historical context for China's foreign policy from the 1970s to the 2000s, this paper will look briefly at the beginnings of the PRC's foreign policy under Mao Zedong, and how events during Mao's rule affected later generations. This paper will primarily focus, however, on how China went from a largely passive foreign policy under Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s and 1980s, to the more active and
increasingly engaged foreign policy of China under Jiang Zemin in the 1990s, and then finally to a burgeoning superpower with a new global strategy under Hu Jintao in the early 2000s. This paper will also take a closer look at how a confluence of factors during the late 1980s through the early 2000s, including generational shifts, increasing Chinese nationalism, a changing international environment, and an increased need to acquire energy and natural resources from overseas, helped encourage Chinese officials to formulate a more active and sophisticated foreign policy by the early part of the 21st century.

The differences in the ideology and leadership of Mao and Deng obviously had a huge impact on the shifts in Chinese foreign policy from the 1950s and 60s to the 1970s and 80s. However, during the third and fourth generations of Chinese leadership, headed by Jiang and Hu respectively, a single leader’s personal views on foreign policy likely mattered less. While Jiang and Hu each had their own theories on how China should conduct its foreign policy, neither Jiang nor Hu had the same cult of personality as Mao and Deng. Chinese leadership transformed from being centered around a single strongman in the first and second generations, to a more collective leadership model in the third and fourth generations. The shifts that occurred during Jiang’s and Hu’s time in office were more likely due to a combination of factors rather than simply their own ideologies and leadership styles.

As will be detailed further below, there were important generational shifts in the 1990s and 2000s which affected both the Chinese populace and Chinese leadership. In the 1990s a new generation of CPC officials began to take over positions of power within the PRC. While the first and second generations of Chinese leadership were largely
composed of military leaders who had personally taken part in the Communist Revolution in China, the third and fourth generations were composed largely of individuals trained as engineers who then became bureaucrats or politicians, often referred to as "technocrats." These new generations were generally far more educated than their predecessors and had more exposure to the outside world. They had also witnessed the failure of Mao’s radical policies and therefore were less ideological and approached policies, including foreign policy, from a more pragmatic perspective. These new generations of Chinese officials also began to see how China could use foreign policy to advance its development.

Shifts in Chinese society also helped push Chinese officials to adopt a more aggressive foreign policy. Just as a new generation of Chinese leadership was taking over in the 1990s and 2000s, nationalist sentiment within China was rising, particularly among younger segments of Chinese society. Faith in communism as an ideology had been waning in China for some time. The CPC, therefore, began to encourage a more forceful Chinese nationalism as an alternate unifying ideology. While, the youth of the 1980s had personally witnessed the trauma and failure of Mao’s policies and thus were more liberal and distrustful of the Chinese government, the youth of the 1990s and 2000s had grown up in a China dominated by rapid economic growth, and a sense (fostered by the Chinese government) that China was on the rise. In contrast to their more liberal predecessors, Chinese youth from the 1990s and 2000s often argued for a stronger central government and more aggressive Chinese foreign policies.

As China’s economy continued to grow in the 1990s and 2000s, it also became increasingly dependent on importing overseas sources of energy and other natural
resources. Whereas, during the 1980s and early 1990s, China was actually a net exporter of oil, natural gas, and coal, by the mid 1990s China had become a net importer of oil and by the mid to late 2000s China had become a net importer of natural gas and coal.\textsuperscript{9} Thus, securing access to these resources became a top priority for CPC officials during the 1990s and 2000s.

The changing international environment also played a significant role in convincing Chinese officials to change how China approached foreign policy. During the post-World War II period, as decolonization took place, revolutionary and liberation movements spread across the Third World (also referred to as the developing world). Having just completed their own revolution, it was somewhat logical that Mao and the CPC would support like-minded groups in other countries fighting against imperialism or capitalism. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union dominated international relations and there was the persistent fear that the Cold War could turn “hot” at any minute, leading to massive armed conflict. Given this context and Deng’s belief that China would need several decades to recover and focus on its internal development, Deng’s passive, almost isolationist foreign policy makes sense. With such daunting economic challenges to address, China simply could not afford to be entangled in foreign affairs.

The late 1980s and early 1990s, however, brought about several drastic changes in the international arena, including the fall of the Soviet Union, the emergence of the U.S.

as the world’s sole superpower, and large-scale protests in Tiananmen Square. Following
the harsh crackdown by the Chinese government on the protesters in Tiananmen, Western
powers shunned China, imposing sanctions or cutting off relations entirely. In the context
of this isolation and the recent fall of the Soviet Union, it therefore is not surprising that
Chinese officials in the early 1990s initially turned their focus to rebuilding ties with the
U.S. and the West in order to gain acceptance for CPC rule. During this time, and
partially in reaction to the West’s isolation of China following Tiananmen, Chinese
officials also began to formulate a new foreign policy strategy which would allow China
to maintain access to vital natural resources and overseas markets even if the U.S. or
West attempted to isolate China again.

Despite all the changes highlighted above, since Deng’s reforms, Chinese foreign
policy’s main goal has broadly always been to ensure China’s continued development.
Under the circumstances of the 1970s and 1980s, Deng felt that a passive foreign policy
would serve China’s development needs best. In the early 1990s, with the U.S. as the
world’s only superpower, Jiang assessed that improving relations with the U.S. was
essential for China to continue to develop. During the late 1990s and 2000s, under Jiang
and later Hu, Chinese officials realized that in order for China to continue to grow
economically, they would need to ensure China had access to more and more overseas
natural resources. During this same time period, Chinese elites also began to realize that
in order for China to continue to develop Chinese officials would need to convince the
rest of the world that they had nothing to fear from China’s growing power. Chinese
officials and scholars therefore began to develop a series of new strategies with the dual
goals of improving relations with countries with large supplies of natural resources and
winning the rest of the world’s acceptance for China’s rise. Thus while Chinese officials’
practice and understanding of foreign policy changed drastically from the 1970s to the
2000s, the underlying goal of Chinese foreign policy always remained ensuring China’s
continued economic development. The story of the drastic shift in Chinese foreign policy
during the past 40 years therefore is not one of changing motives, but of changing
circumstances and of Chinese officials’ changing understanding of how foreign policy
could aid China’s own internal development.
2. Mao Zedong: Ideology in the Lead

On October 1, 1949 at the creation of the PRC, Mao Zedong, declared that “the Chinese people have stood up.”\(^{10}\) Unfortunately for the Chinese people, while Mao had been able to rally and lead Chinese communist forces in battle, he would prove unable to lead China to prosperity. Over the next 30 years Mao implemented numerous disastrous policies which left China in many ways even poorer and more isolated by the time of his death in 1976 than it had been in 1949. As Lau Nai-keung noted in 2008, in retrospect Mao’s 1949 declaration that the Chinese people had stood up “sounded somewhat hollow, like a statement of intent.”\(^{11}\) Indeed throughout Mao’s reign, China remained comparatively weak as an international power.

Mao was the head of the first generation of CPC leadership, or as they are sometimes called the “Long March Veterans,” survivors of the long military conflict from 1927 through 1949 between the Chinese Communists led by Mao and the Chinese Nationalists, also referred to as Kuomintang (KMT), led by Chiang Kai Shek. Mao was one of the founders of both the CPC and the PRC and served as Chairman of the CPC from 1945 till his death in 1976. He was also the leader of the PRC from its founding in 1949 until his death in 1976, although there were challenges to his leadership in between.

Chinese foreign policy under Mao, like most CPC policies at the time, was largely ideologically driven, fueled by the revolutionary zeal of the recently victorious CPC. During this first generation of PRC leadership, almost all Chinese officials were veterans

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\(^{11}\) Lau Nai-keung, “The Chinese People Have Truly Stood Up.”
of the Chinese Civil War and World War II. Having defeated both the Japanese and the Kuomintang in China, Mao and other CPC members sought to spread their revolution across the globe. As journalist and China scholar Joshua Kurlantzick stated, Mao sought to “not only create a revolutionary society at home, but also to foment armed revolution around the world, helping nations rid themselves of colonial masters and capitalist systems.” During Mao’s rule, China’s foreign policy consisted largely of supporting various foreign communist or revolutionary causes and insurgencies as what Mao called “righteous struggles.” In his 1956 address to the opening session of the Eighth Congress of the CPC, Mao told his fellow CPC members “we must give active support to the national independence and liberation movements in countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.” At Mao’s direction, China provided support to a communist insurgency in Burma, the Khmer Rouge group in Cambodia, revolutionary movements in Latin America, anti-government guerillas in Africa, and communist insurgencies in Yemen and Oman. Unlike the China of the 1990s and 2000s, where the focus was primarily on economic growth and ideology was generally a secondary consideration, under Mao political and ideological concerns outweighed economic ones, including in the realm of foreign policy. As Chinese foreign policy expert Jianwei Wang put it, “Maoist diplomacy in the Third World in general and African countries in particularly [sic] was largely sustained by the ideological doctrine of supporting the movement of national liberation and promoting world revolution.” As part of this policy, Mao portrayed

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16 Jianwei Wang, “China’s New Frontier Diplomacy,” in “Harmonious World” and China’s New Foreign
China as a leader of the Third World, leading the fight against colonial capitalist powers. In 1955, for example, a delegation of several senior Chinese officials, including Chinese Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai, attended the Bandung Conference in Indonesia, a meeting of newly independent African and Asian nations organized by South East Asian states, and often credited for bringing about the Non-Alignment movement. While Zhou generally struck a moderate tone, the Chinese delegation used the conference to emphasize China’s and the other nations’ common colonial pasts as part of an effort to portray China as a leader of the Third World.\textsuperscript{17}

Despite Mao’s vision of supporting “righteous struggles” against colonial and capitalist powers around the world, by the middle of the 1970s most of the communist revolutions or insurgencies which Mao had supported had failed and China’s support for these groups had angered many foreign governments and alienated China from an entire generation of foreign officials. China became somewhat of a pariah in international relations as leaders in Asia, Africa, and Latin America severed ties with the PRC, drew closer to the U. S., and created regional organizations to counter China.\textsuperscript{18} Throughout the 1970s and even some of the 1980s, China was largely isolated, and Chinese diplomats were generally inexperienced at dealing with other nations. During Mao’s rule, Chinese diplomats, like most Chinese, were also fearful that any deviation from the party line would result in harsh consequences and therefore stuck to reading pre-written statements and were largely ineffective at communicating with the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{19} As Kurlantzick put it, “the public face Beijing presented to the world was blunt and gray, just

\textsuperscript{17} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 12-13.
\textsuperscript{18} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 14.
\textsuperscript{19} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 15.
monotone statements from official spokesmen who understood nothing about the modern media.\textsuperscript{20}

CPC officials’ memories of Western support for groups opposing the CPC prior to 1949, combined with the radical communist ideology which dominated China under Mao, as well as continuing conflicts between China and the West, also led Chinese officials to be suspicious of foreign nations’ intentions and of the Western-dominated international system. Prior to the founding of the PRC, during World War II, the U.S. had supported the Kuomintang as the recognized government within China. The U.S.’ goal in China during World War II had primarily been to support Chinese forces against invading Japanese forces. While the U.S. was suspicious of the CPC, the official U.S. policy at the time was non-intervention in the Chinese Civil War. It encouraged both the Kuomintang and the CPC to form a coalition government and even helped negotiate a temporary cease-fire between the two groups in 1946. However, the Kuomintang was able to use U.S. loans as well as U.S. supplied ammunition and weaponry against the CPC in the ongoing fighting between the two sides from 1946 to 1949. Further adding to CPC officials’ distrust of Western powers and the international system, in the 1950s the United Nations (UN) supported military intervention against Chinese-supported forces in the Korean War and until 1971 the exiled Chinese Nationalist government in Taiwan, the Republic of China (ROC), rather than the PRC, still represented China at the UN. As a result, under Mao, Chinese officials generally rejected the current world order, and were skeptical of international and multilateral organizations, suspecting these organizations were a tool of Western powers designed to undermine the CPC. Up until 1971 China refused to join any international organization, and only joined the UN that year because

\textsuperscript{20} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 15.
Chinese officials believed it would help maintain “China’s self-independence and integrity of sovereignty.”\(^1\) As Zhongqi Pan, a Chinese academic, stated, China’s engagement with the rest of the world under Mao was largely “passive, negative, and defiant.”\(^2\) As noted above, most Chinese officials under Mao were military veterans of the Chinese Civil War and of World War II and had directly experienced fighting against foreign influence in China; either in the form of the invading Japanese or the U.S.-supported Kuomintang. Therefore, when it came to foreign policy during the 1950s and 1960s, most CPC officials were primarily concerned with protecting China’s sovereignty. Most Chinese officials during this period also had little to no experience in international diplomacy or dealing with foreign nations other than in combat. As a result they were more likely to advocate military solutions to foreign policy issues than diplomatic ones. Not surprisingly then, according to a study of the PRC’s changing engagement with the rest of the world by Zhongqi Pan, most armed conflicts involving the PRC took place in this initial period of interaction with the international system under Mao and this first generation of CPC officials.\(^3\)

Meanwhile, Mao’s misguided economic and cultural policies wreaked havoc on the Chinese economy and society, leaving China poor and its population traumatized. In 1958, Mao launched the Great Leap Forward, an economic campaign which attempted to catapult China from an agrarian economy to a modern communist society, in effect skipping the industrialization stage deemed necessary for the development of a communist society under Marxist theory. Mao attempted to accomplish this through

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\(^2\) Zhongqi Pan, 49.

\(^3\) Zhongqi Pan, 46.
rapid industrialization and collectivization. Under these policies Chinese citizens were not allowed to operate private farms and many were forced to use furnaces in their backyards to make steel (which Mao had decided was a pillar of a modern industrial economy) from scrap metal. These efforts were disastrous and resulted in negative growth and insufficient grain production, leading to massive famines. Between 18 and 45 million people died as a result of famines during the Great Leap Forward. By 1962 the effort had been exposed as an unmitigated disaster and Mao began to lose some of his power within the CPC.

In May 1966, Mao launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution partially as an attempt to reassert his power following his failed economic policies in the Great Leap Forward. The stated purpose of the Cultural Revolution was to eliminate Western and capitalist influences and institute “continuous revolution.” Students and young people were encouraged to take an active role in the revolution and to form groups to destroy Western and capitalist influences. Many prominent Chinese were labeled as “counter-revolutionaries” and arrested, put to hard labor, imprisoned, or even executed. Eventually the movement spiraled completely out of control, and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) had to step in to restore national order.

As Chinese citizens grew tired of the revolutionary excesses of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, they also grew weary of supporting overseas revolutionary efforts, especially when so much of China’s own society and economy had been devastated by Mao’s excesses. Unlike the 2000s when many countries would look at China as a model of economic success, under Mao, China was a prime example of how not to run an economy. As Kurlantzick noted, in terms of Chinese foreign policy options
under Mao, “apart from trying to export revolution, China’s other tools of influence remained weak...[and] as an example of economic success, China seemed a model few countries would want to follow.” The result was a China which was both impoverished at home and isolated internationally. Chow Chung-yan, the news editor at the *South China Morning Post* put it bluntly: “in the 1960s and early 1970s, China was on a worse footing diplomatically and strategically than any other country in the world.”

There was one important exception to China’s isolation under Mao’s rule. In the 1970s, China sought to improve, and ultimately reestablish, relations with the U.S. in what became known as “rapprochement.” As *The Economist* noted, despite Mao’s mistrust of outside powers’ intentions, “political rapprochement with the West--a key part of [China’s later] ‘opening’--began several years before Mao’s death, driven by a shared dislike of the Soviet Union.” In the wake of major Sino-Soviet border clashes in 1969, Chinese leaders began to consider improving relations with the U.S. In 1971, U.S. National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger made two trips (the first was initially secret) to China to meet with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai to discuss reestablishing relations between the U.S. and China. These visits paved the way for U.S. President Richard Nixon’s famous 1972 trip to China and the eventual normalizing of U.S.-China relations in 1979 under U.S. President Jimmy Carter. Despite Mao’s failures in most other aspects of foreign policy, these meetings between U.S. and Chinese leaders were a major turning point for China’s relations with the U.S. and served as the foundation for Deng’s later “opening up” strategy, which encouraged even more relations with the West.

3. Deng Xiaoping: Focus Inward and Keep a Low Profile

Following Mao’s death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping, a former colleague of Mao who had previously held high level positions within the PRC, but had been banished to the countryside and forced into hard labor in the late 1960s during the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, was “rehabilitated” and in a stunning series of political maneuvers was able to gradually take hold of power inside the CPC. Deng is considered the leader of the second generation of PRC leadership and was the effective leader of the CPC and the PRC from 1978 until the early 1990s. Deng is also generally regarded as the father of the more moderate policies of the PRC and the economic reforms that China adopted in the post-Mao era. He is widely credited as the leader who put China on a path to economic development and an “opening up” policy which allowed, among other things, greater foreign investment in China, while maintaining strict political control. These economic reforms helped lead to over thirty years of unprecedented economic growth. Between 1978 and 2005 the Chinese economy grew at an average rate of 9.5 percent per year – “making it by far the world’s best performer” and eventually bringing “staggering changes to China’s international standing.”

While Mao’s disastrous policies had left China poor and isolated, their excesses and total failure actually made Deng’s rise, and the subsequent reforms he instituted, possible. After all, “the pragmatic Deng had seen the excesses and chaos of the Chairman’s policies firsthand,” particularly when Deng himself was sent to the countryside for hard labor. Although Deng was also a Long March veteran and believed strongly in the

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27 Chow Chung-yan.
28 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 16.
CPC’s ultimate authority, having personally experienced the turmoil and suffering which characterized Mao’s rule, he was determined to put China on a more stable path of development. Most Chinese welcomed Deng’s less ideological stance and more moderate policies after the trauma of Mao’s chaotic reign. As Kurlantzick put it

Deng’s pragmatism resonated with a society recovering from Mao. The chaos of the Cultural Revolution, when hundreds of thousands of people were purged to the countryside or killed, and teachers and other intellectuals were terrorized by waves of ideological Red Guards, had shocked the Chinese population. Average Chinese had seen power and ideology wielded by the state bring nothing but misery to average people; now they remained weary from decades of this internal turmoil.29

Given their experience with this turmoil and suffering under Mao, many Chinese (including many CPC officials) were willing to reevaluate China’s domestic and foreign policy following Mao’s passing. As Chow Chung-yan put it “when Deng Xiaoping came back to power from political exile after Mao’s death in 1976, Beijing was ready to reassess the global situation and redraw its grand strategy.”30

Deng recognized that Mao’s policies had not only created turmoil at home, but that his support for communist insurgencies around the world had isolated China abroad and drained its treasury.31 As Kurlantzick noted, “Deng understood how Maoism had alienated China’s neighbors, created instability on China’s borders, and impoverished China itself.”32 Deng ended Mao’s policies of supporting foreign communist revolutionary forces and insurgencies and sought to improve relations with many of the countries these groups had targeted.33 Deng also sought to continue to improve relations with the U.S. Aside from the benefits of not having an adversarial relationship with one

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29 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 17.
30 Chow Chung-yan.
31 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 17.
32 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 16.
33 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 17.
of the world’s superpowers, Deng believed that in order to jumpstart its own internal development China would need to be able to import technology from more advanced countries such as the U.S. Thus under Deng, the U.S. became an important source of technology for China, a key component of Deng’s plans to develop and modernize the Chinese economy.34

Deng took a long view of China’s situation and believed the nation would need several decades to recover from the trauma of Mao’s policies and to develop economically. International conflict, however, was always a looming threat during the Cold War, and Deng believed that if such a conflict broke out, China would likely become embroiled in the crisis and that this would distract China from its need to focus on economic development. He therefore argued that China’s primary foreign policy goal should be to advocate for a peaceful and stable international environment, which in turn would allow China to focus inward on its own internal economic development. Deng often publicly repeated this message of his desire for a stable and peaceful international environment so China could focus on its own development. On February 22, 1984, in Beijing, while speaking to a delegation from the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Georgetown University, Deng told the group “we need at least twenty years of peace to concentrate on our domestic development.”35 When the President of Brazil visited Beijing in May 1984, Deng further emphasized these views saying, “we are now devoting ourselves wholeheartedly to the modernization of our country, and therefore we

34 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 17.
35 Deng Xiaoping, “A New Approach Towards Stabilizing the World Situation” (discussions with a delegation from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Georgetown University, in Beijing, China, February 22, 1984), as recorded in Fundamental Issues in Present-Day China (Beijing, China: Foreign Languages Press, 1987), 42.
sincerely hope that no war will break out and that peace will be long-lasting.”

Similarly on October 26, 1984, when the President of the Maldives visited China, Deng stated “we need a peaceful international environment to ensure our development.”

Deng also realized that China was far behind developed nations in terms of both available capital and technology. He recognized that by isolating itself from the West and the rest of the world, China had fallen behind economically. Deng therefore argued that in order for China to recover and to develop it would need foreign investment and technology. As Kurlantzick notes, Deng not only believed that “China would need decades to recover, and would require a peaceful external environment” but that it would also require “massive inflows of foreign investment and technology to become strong.”

Beginning in 1978 Deng opened China up to joint foreign ventures and allowed the creation of special economic zones (SEZs) in order to encourage an injection of foreign capital into the Chinese economy. SEZs were regions with more liberal and open economic policies intended to encourage foreign investment and international trade. These regions had less restrictive economic and tax policies than other regions of China and were generally more open to foreign companies and capitalist market forces, with the goal of attracting foreign businesses to invest and create jobs in China. During a symposium on China’s economic co-operation with foreign countries in October 1984, Deng explained his rationale behind opening China up to foreign investment and trade:

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36 Deng Xiaoping, “Safeguard World Peace and Ensure Domestic Development” (talk with President Joao Baptista de Oliveira Figueiredo of Brazil, in Beijing, China, May 29, 1984), as recorded in Fundamenta1 Issues in Present-Day China (Beijing, China: Foreign Languages Press, 1987), 47.
37 Deng Xiaoping, “We Should Follow Our Own Road Both in Revolution and in Economic Development” (speech with President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom of the Republic of Maldives, in Beijing, China, October 26, 1984), as recorded in Fundamenta1 Issues in Present-Day China (Beijing, China: Foreign Languages Press, 1987), 84.
38 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 16.
39 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 16.
While invigorating the domestic economy, we have also formulated a policy of opening up to the outside world. Reviewing our history, we have concluded that one of the most important reasons for China's long years of stagnation and backwardness was its policy of closing the country to outside contact. Our experience shows that China cannot rebuild itself with its doors closed to the outside and that it cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world.⁴⁰

Deng believed that foreign investment and the ability to import foreign technology would be essential to a more rapid Chinese recovery. An unstable international environment or conflict would therefore not only hurt China by distracting it from its own economic development, but would also limit vital foreign investment in China and hamper China’s ability to import technology, further delaying China’s modernization efforts.

Overall, Deng believed that China was currently too poor and weak to focus on international affairs. Given the enormity of the task of China’s own internal economic development, Deng believed China could not afford to focus on external matters. As Chow Chung-yan stated, “Deng knew China had to marshal all of its resources to lift the nation out of poverty and this dictated that the nation must keep peace with all its neighbours.”⁴¹ Taking a more active role on the world stage would consume energy and resources which China could not afford to spare at this point in its history. This was a shift from Mao, who had sought to play up China’s memory of being subjugated and portrayed China as leading the fight against Western and capitalist powers. While some Chinese still wished for China to act more forcefully, Deng advised restraint. As Kurlantzick noted,

Deng counseled his proud countrymen, heirs to a Chinese kingdom that once

⁴⁰ Deng Xiaoping, “The Magnificent Goal of Our Four Modernizations, and our Basic Policies” (interview with Chinese and foreign delegates to a symposium on China’s economic co-operation with foreign countries, October 6, 1984), as recorded in Fundamental Issues in Present-Day China (Beijing, China: Foreign Languages Press, 1987), 69.

⁴¹ Chow Chung-yan.
called itself the center of the world, to bide their time. China should ‘keep a low profile’ and never take the lead on global issues, Deng warned—Beijing wasn’t strong enough to expose itself to a world leadership role.  

In the late 1980s, Deng began to formulate what would become known as his “tao guang yang hui,” or “lay-low approach,” which as Chow Chung-yan noted as recently as 2008 “would become the [primary] guiding principle for China’s foreign policy to this day.”

In the early 1990s, Deng’s theories on Chinese foreign policy gradually evolved into what became known as the “24 Character Strategy,” which would stand as “the guiding maxim” for China’s approach to international affairs. The “24 Character Strategy” can be translated as

Observe calmly; secure our position; cope with affairs calmly; hide our capacities and bide our time; be good at maintaining a low profile; and never claim leadership.

As the architect of the reforms which saved China following the disaster of Mao’s policies, Deng’s guidance had a profound impact on multiple generations of Chinese officials from the late 1970s to today. Following Deng’s advice, from the late 1970s up until even the early 1990s China generally played a passive role in the international system. As C. Fred Bergsten, former Assistant Secretary for International Affairs at the U.S. Treasury Department and a China expert, noted, during Deng’s rule Chinese officials “commonly demurred that [China] did not seek international or regional leadership and simply sought to focus on its own internal development over the next generation or

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42 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 16.
43 Chow Chung-yan.
more.” Kurlantzick and David Lampton, the Director of China Studies at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), argued that, in the realm of foreign affairs, under Deng, China “played defense, reacting when threatened but generally avoiding most global issues.” Chow Chung-yan similarly summarized Deng’s foreign policy as “avoid engaging in controversial issues, develop good-neighbourly relationships and focus on nurturing strength through trade and foreign investment.”

Although Deng advised opening China up more to the West, Chinese officials, including Deng, were still largely skeptical of political and security multilateral organizations. As Kai He, an expert on Chinese foreign policy and engagement with multilateral institutions, noted, “China’s [late 20th century] diplomatic history suggests that [prior to the 1990s] China was largely a target of multilateral security institutions led by the two superpowers” and as a result “China’s policy toward multilateral institutions,” much like its foreign policy in general, “was passive and reluctant during the Cold War.” China’s reluctance to become involved in multilateral organizations also reflected Deng’s concern that these organizations could entangle China in conflicts which would distract from its internal development. Nevertheless, China gradually joined more multilateral organizations under Deng than it had under Mao, largely as a means to further China’s economic development. In 1971, China only belonged to one intergovernmental organization (IGO), the UN. By 1976 this number had risen to 21, and

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45 Bergsten et al., 209.
47 Chow Chung-yan
by 1989 China belonged to 37 IGOs. Under Deng China primarily joined multilateral organizations which Chinese officials believed would aid China’s economic development. For example, in 1980 China joined both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Likewise in 1986 China joined the Asian Development Bank and applied to rejoin the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as a founding member.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, however, Chinese officials still did not take part in many political or security multilateral organizations, other than attending UN sessions, where Chinese officials often abstained from voting. Unlike the 2000s when China would not be afraid to oppose Western sponsored actions, under Deng in the 1980s and early 1990s Chinese diplomats at the UN rarely voiced any opinion. This was partly due to China’s general policy of non-interference or non-intervention, which argued that no country should interfere in the internal affairs of another country. China proclaimed non-interference as its policy (in words if not always in actions) as far back as late 1953 when Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, proposed the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” during negotiations between China and India. The “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” were: “mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.” China’s non-interference policy served several purposes. First it served as a principled defensive policy, arguing against any potential attempts by foreign powers to interfere inside China. The policy also, however,

49 Zhongqi Pan, 47.
50 Zhongqi Pan, 48.
51 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 17.
52 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 17.
helped Chinese officials argue that China was not a threat to other countries, and would not seek to interfere in their affairs, a common concern among foreign officials following Mao’s initial support for communist revolutionary groups and insurgencies around the world. Under Deng, China’s non-interference policy also provided China with an ideological reason to avoid becoming involved in most international issues. During a visit with the Prime Minister of Canada in July 1990, Deng explicitly reiterated both the internal and international aspects of this policy saying “China will never accept interference by other countries in its internal affairs...The key principle governing the new international order should be noninterference in other countries' internal affairs and social systems.”

Deng’s guidance that China should keep a low profile and Chinese officials’ general reluctance to voice opinions on international political or security matters during the 1970s and 1980s should also be understood in the context of the international environment at the time. During this time period most international relations were dominated by the Cold War in which two superpowers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, often battled one another through surrogates and attempted to amass expanding spheres of influence across the globe. Chinese officials, including Deng, in the 1970s and 1980s painted China as a neutral party unaligned with either the U.S. or the Soviet Union. The Chinese historical memory of what Chinese refer to as the “Century of Humiliation” featured prominently in Chinese officials’ thinking. The “Century of Humiliation” was a concept popularized by both the Kuomintang and the CPC which referred to the period of

roughly 1839 to 1949 during which time China lost its sovereignty to various foreign powers (Western colonial powers, the Japanese, etc.). The “Century of Humiliation’s” start is usually placed at the beginning of the First Opium War in 1839. Over the next 100 years China lost numerous battles to a variety of foreign powers (for example: the Second Opium War, the Sino-French War, the First Sino-Japanese War), and was forced to give major concessions to outside powers in subsequent treaties, sometimes referred to as the “Unequal Treaties.” Chinese communist forces in the 1940s played up this historical memory, arguing that the CPC was fighting to break China free from foreign influence. CPC officials further argued that the Communist Revolution in 1949 had finally achieved true independence and sovereignty for the Chinese people after a century of subjugation to outside powers. Many members of the second generation of PRC leadership like Deng grew up during the “Century of Humiliation” and personally remembered that sense of being subject to outside powers. As such, Deng and other CPC officials wanted to avoid what they viewed as a similar subservient relationship to either the U.S. or the Soviet Union. Throughout his rule, Deng repeatedly spoke of China’s opposition to hegemony, a thinly veiled critique of the system of the two superpowers.\(^\text{54}\) While much of this opposition of “hegemony” was driven by Chinese officials’ fears that the U.S. or the Soviet Union would seek to interfere in what the CPC considered China’s internal affairs, as noted above Chinese officials also feared that the Cold War could turn “hot” at any moment and thus embroil the world in another world war. Given that Deng believed that China needed several decades of peace and a stable international environment to develop, he viewed the threat of such a conflict between the two

superpowers as a not just a threat to international stability but also to China's economic development. Deng therefore argued that the very existence of superpowers in the international system was dangerous. In a speech to the UN General Assembly in April 1974, Deng made clear his dislike of the concept of superpowers and, as noted in the introduction, explicitly stated that "China is not a superpower, nor will it ever seek to be one" and that if China ever did become a superpower "the people of the world should...expose it, oppose it and work together with the Chinese people to overthrow it."55

Although Deng departed from most of Mao's policies, as part of Deng's opposition to the system of the two superpowers he did continue to portray China as a leading member of the Third World (in contrast to the First World or the Western World, and the Second World or the Soviet Union). During the President of Brazil's May 1984 visit to Beijing, Deng articulated his views on the goals and practice of China's foreign policy, emphasizing China's place in the Third World:

> The foreign policy which China has been pursuing in the 1980s and will continue to pursue in the 1990s and into the twenty-first century can be summed up in two sentences: First, we oppose hegemony in order to safeguard world peace. Second, China will always belong to the Third World, and this position is a foundation of our foreign policy. It means that China, being a poor country, belongs to the Third World as a matter of course, that it shares a common destiny with all Third World countries and that it will remain one of them even when it becomes prosperous and powerful, because China will never seek hegemony or bully others, but will always side with the Third World.56

During his meetings with the President of the Maldives in 1984, Deng again argued that

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56 Deng Xiaoping, "Safeguard World Peace and Ensure Domestic Development" FundamentaI Issues in Present-Day China, 46.
China was part of the Third World and repeated his assurance that China would never become a superpower saying, “we have said more than once that China belongs to the Third World. It will still belong to the Third World even in the future, after it is developed. China will never become a superpower.”

Partially because of Deng’s more moderate policies and focus on “opening up,” the 1970s and 1980s were generally a positive time for China’s relations with the rest of the world. During this period China was able to take over the seat on the UN Security Council from the exiled Chinese Nationalist ROC government in Taiwan and normalized relations with the U.S. and several other countries. Western nations were also increasingly curious about China and hopeful that Deng’s reforms would lead to improved relations. Compared to the ideological and revolutionary Mao, the pragmatic and reform-minded Deng seemed like a leader Western nations might be able to work with. U.S. President Gerald Ford followed former President Nixon’s example and visited China in 1975, and due to Mao’s failing health, Ford primarily met with then Vice Premier Deng. Deng’s policies of opening China to foreign investment also appeared to be providing rapid results when in 1978 Coca Cola announced their plans to open a factory in Shanghai and Boeing announced their plans to sell 747 aircraft to Chinese airlines. In 1979 Deng made an official visit to the U.S. where he met with U.S. President Carter, former President Nixon, and several U.S. congressmen. During this trip Deng also emphasized the importance of opening China up to foreign investment and technology, visiting the Johnson Space Center in Houston, the Coca-Cola Company headquarters in Atlanta, and the Boeing headquarters in Seattle. Meanwhile, back in

57 Deng Xiaoping, “We Should Follow Our Own Road Both in Revolution and in Economic Development” *Fundamental Issues in Present-Day China*, 83.
China Deng's reforms continued to expand the Chinese economy and attract foreign investment. In 1984 U.S. President Ronald Reagan visited China, where Reagan and Deng agreed to more scientific and cultural changes, increased trade, and a nuclear cooperation agreement. In the early to mid 1980s China also had two diplomatic breakthroughs with the West regarding territorial claims. In 1984 China signed a joint declaration with Great Britain in which the British agreed to transfer sovereignty of Hong Kong to the Chinese in 1997, and in 1987 Chinese officials reached an agreement with Portugal to transfer sovereignty of Macao to China in 1999.\(^{58}\) In February 1989 U.S. President George H. W. Bush, who had been the Chief of the US Liaison Office in the PRC under former U.S. President Ford, made a “working visit” to China, and generally advocated for closer relations between China and the U.S. However, despite all of these positive developments and the general warming of relations between China and the West, as Chow Chung-yan noted, “China’s honeymoon with the West was soon to end.”\(^{59}\)

\(^{58}\) Chow Chung-yan.

\(^{59}\) Chow Chung-yan.

In the spring and summer of 1989 a series of protests by students, intellectuals, and laborers, all arguing for increased political reforms, occurred in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. As the protests escalated the CPC used the PLA to brutally crackdown on the participants. According to many reports the PLA opened fire on unarmed protesters and in the ensuing violence between 200 and 2,000 protesters were killed and many others were injured or arrested. The PLA’s harsh response to the protests at Tiananmen Square showed that there was a limit to the reforms Deng was willing to implement. While Deng had advocated economic reforms and opening China up to the rest of the world to attract foreign investment, political reform was another issue. The CPC remained the sole power in China and any challenge to that authority would not be tolerated.

The Chinese government’s harsh reaction to potential challenges to CPC authority also led to a purge of some more liberal CPC officials. Zhao Ziyang, General Secretary of the CPC, had advocated a softer response to the Tiananmen Square protests and later made conciliatory statements to students about the government’s actions. Following these statements, he was removed from his position of General Secretary and placed under house arrest. As scholar Bruce Gilley pointed out, in the tense political climate after Tiananmen Square, it became clear that the new General Secretary would have to be someone in a central government or party department who had played no role in the Beijing crackdown, or a local leader whose handling of the students was deemed
Jiang Zemin fit the bill on both counts. During the tumultuous events of Tiananmen, according to Gilley, "Jiang remained out of sight...[and] in the end, his caution was well rewarded." He had been largely absent during the PLA's crackdown on the Tiananmen Square protests, and he had been "distinguished by his attempts at moderation in handling" student protests in Shanghai in 1986 and 1989 when he was the mayor of Shanghai and the CPC Party Chief in Shanghai. Jiang was named the new General Secretary of the CPC on June 24, 1989, becoming the center of the third generation of PRC leadership, and almost immediately had to face the international fallout following Tiananmen Square.

The PRC's harsh and violent response to the Tiananmen Square protests was greeted with almost universal international condemnation and led to a nearly global embargo. Many Western nations, including the U.S., curtailed interactions with China and/or implemented sanctions. Prior to the Tiananmen Square protests, U.S. President George H. W. Bush had been pushing for a closer relationship between the U.S. and China. Following the PLA's crackdown on the protestors, however, Bush suspended all military and high-level contacts between the U.S. and China and said that he would pressure the World Bank to suspend new loans to China. In addition all Chinese students were allowed to extend their U.S. visas indefinitely.

The same year as the events at Tiananmen, 1989, the Berlin Wall fell and a series

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61 Gilley, 126.
62 Gilley, 132.
63 Chow Chung-yen.
64 Gilley, 154.
of revolutions against communist governments spread across Eastern Europe, eventually leading to the disintegration of the Soviet Union by 1991. Mikhail Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the Soviet Union, had attempted to enact a series of economic and political reforms, and as a result opened the floodgates to change. The events of 1989, 1990, and 1991 had a profound impact upon an entire generation of Chinese leaders including Jiang. Having just experienced their own popular protests, Chinese officials were shaken by the subsequent collapse of communist governments throughout Eastern Europe. The fall of the Soviet Union sparked fierce debate among Chinese leaders over how the PRC could avoid a similar fate. Jiang viewed the developments in the Soviet Union with great trepidation, and in Gilley’s view, was determined not to be “China's Gorbachev.” After Tiananmen, Jiang and many other Chinese leaders adhered to a “philosophy of combining political control with economic freedom” as they sought to avoid the mistakes they thought the Soviets had made. Following Deng’s example, the third generation of PRC leadership continued to reform and open up China’s economy but resisted any attempts at political reform.

The fall of the Soviet Union also left the U.S. as the world’s only remaining superpower. As the Soviet Union’s collapse came right on the heels of Western outrage and the nearly global embargo of China over Tiananmen, Chinese officials worried that with communism defeated in Europe and Russia, the U.S. and its allies would turn their attention towards China, the last major communist power, which had just brutally suppressed its own people. Chinese officials had witnessed how the U.S. and its Western allies had earlier used alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to

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66 Gilley, 177.
67 Gilley, 177.
isolate the Soviet Union, ultimately contributing to its collapse. Chinese officials worried that the U.S. and its Western allies would create similar alliance structures around China and seek to isolate and eventually dismantle the PRC. The first Gulf War against Iraq in 1990 and 1991 also made a strong impression on Chinese officials. Chinese leaders and scholars saw how the U.S. and its allies were able to form an international coalition to take on Iraq and were surprised by how easily the U.S. was able to defeat Saddam Hussein's forces. As a result, many Chinese officials realized that despite the past decade of relatively sustained economic development, there was still no way China could compete with the high-tech weaponry in the U.S. arsenal. As Former *Time* magazine foreign editor and China expert Joshua Cooper Ramo noted:

starting with the first Gulf War, Beijing's military and international affairs establishment began to be quite nervous about the problem of Chinese security. It was clear that China had emerged from the Cold War with a military apparatus vastly inferior to that of the United States. The kinds of high-tech combined-arms tactics the Chinese saw on CNN in the early 1990s were both mystifying and not a little worrisome. Some of the ideas contained in U.S. battle doctrine did not even have descriptions in the Chinese language.\[^{68}\]

Chinese officials, already historically fearful of foreign interference in China, became even more concerned that the U.S. might turn its attention to China next. As Ramo stated, for Chinese leaders "the implicit message of Gulf I and later the U.S.-led Balkans wars was that military intervention in the internal affairs of other countries was one of the dividends [for the U.S.] of a world without a dynamic superpower balance."\[^{69}\] Ramo further argued that Chinese leaders believed that the U.S.' technological advantage had made "power-projection easier than in the past" and that the U.S.'s new ability to

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\[^{69}\] Ramo, 42-43.
intervene in conflicts around the world “was worrisome to Beijing.”70 The Gulf War and the realization that China was so technologically inferior to the U.S. “reflected CCP leaders’ worst fears about national defense and touched on the deepest strains of nationalism, a sensitivity to foreign military superiority that reached back to the Opium Wars.”71 Having seen the U.S.’ vast military and technological superiority, Chinese policy makers realized that China would “be unable to develop military resources to compete symmetrically with the United States for a long time, perhaps as long as 50 years.”72

All of these developments led to an extremely hostile international environment for China at the beginning of Jiang’s rule. As Chow Chung-yan noted, in 1989 and 1990 “China was isolated, feared and encircled diplomatically and strategically” and, according to China scholar Richard Hu, China’s relations with the West had “almost reversed to the Cultural Revolution period.”73 This isolation had a profound effect on new generations of Chinese leaders and officials. While, as a result of Deng’s reforms, the third and fourth generations of CPC officials were more likely to have been exposed to the West, they now had also experienced how “Western nations shun[ed] China after the Tiananmen crackdown.”74 This isolation came at a time when the Chinese economy was increasingly dependent on the West for investment and technology. Unlike under Mao, when China’s economy was isolated (although stagnant and even contracting), following Deng’s reforms China’s economy was more open to the world than ever before. Much of China’s recent economic growth had been the result of its ability to attract

70 Ramo, 42-43.
71 Ramo, 42-43.
72 Ramo, 48.
73 Chow Chung-yan.
74 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 29-30.
foreign investment, technology, and resources to China. Chinese officials further knew that as the Chinese economy continued to grow it could not rely on domestic natural resources for all its energy and production needs. China would increasingly need to import sources of energy and raw materials from around the world. At the same time, the Chinese economy was also increasingly dependent on the ability to sell Chinese goods in markets overseas. Without access to foreign markets, Chinese manufacturers would be unable to sell their goods and the Chinese economy would suffer. Prior to Tiananmen, relations with the Western world had been improving, and China’s economy was growing thanks in part to a new flood of Western investment and technology. After Tiananmen, however, Chinese officials realized that not only could the West stop providing this technology quickly, but that the U.S. and other Western nations dominated the international system and had created a series of alliances they could use to cut China off from natural resources and overseas markets. Chinese officials therefore viewed the isolation Western countries imposed on China after Tiananmen as a significant threat to China’s continued economic development and began to debate how China could avoid such isolation in the future. Zhang Xizhen, a professor of international relations at Beijing University, confirmed this saying:

Threatened and actual economic sanctions and international political isolation [after Tiananmen] jeopardized our opening up and reform process. [We had] to strengthen relations with our neighbors and break out of the Western blockade.75

Younger generations of Chinese officials began to understand that as a rising power, China’s fate was far more dependent upon its access to the international economy than

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ever before. These new generations of Chinese leaders realized that

China had pressing great-power needs—needs for oil, allies, markets, and security, among others. Yet the United States had built alliances around the world that could constrain China one day if Washington chose to contain Beijing the way it had tried to contain Moscow and if nations agreed to join in that effort.\textsuperscript{76}

In order to maintain access to oil and markets in the context of post-Tiananmen isolation by the West, Chinese officials and scholars argued that China would need to form better relations with developing nations so that China was not dependent solely on Western nations for trade, markets, and resources. Kurlantzick noted that Chinese officials explicitly told him that their experience after Tiananmen taught them that “Beijing could not rely on the United States but must develop its relations with its neighbors, with Africa, and with Latin America.”\textsuperscript{77} Argentina’s president, Carlos Menem, was the first Western leader to visit China in the aftermath of Tiananmen. Such outreach and solidarity from developing nations further helped convince Chinese officials that the developing world could provide a more stable counter to the sometimes tense relationships between China and the West.\textsuperscript{78}

The protests at Tiananmen had also showed Chinese officials that following the disaster of Mao’s communist revolutionary policies, and the success of Deng’s more moderate, even capitalist, economic reforms, that communism held declining value in China as a unifying ideology. As China continued to reform its economy and move more towards a state-directed capitalist society, Chinese officials began to realize that increasingly the CPC’s own internal political survival depended largely on its ability to deliver sustained economic growth. Thus Chinese officials had an even greater incentive

\textsuperscript{76} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 32.
\textsuperscript{77} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 29-30.
\textsuperscript{78} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 29-30.
to develop a new foreign policy which would help China avoid or lessen the impact of potential future attempts to isolate the country and thus damage its economy.
5. Jiang Zemin: Repairing Relations with the U.S. Post-Tiananmen

While Chinese officials began to debate how China could side-step potential attempts by the U.S. and Western allies to isolate China, they still recognized that good relations with the U.S (now the world’s sole superpower and previously a growing source of technology and investment for China) would be vital to improving China’s international standing and regaining access to world markets and resources, particularly in the near-term. Jiang and other Chinese officials believed that in order for China to continue to grow in power and stature, they would need the U.S. to accept the CPC’s power in China, or at least not actively work to overthrow or constrain it. Therefore, as Jianwei Wang stated, “during the Jiang era, Beijing’s diplomacy was pretty much America-centered” and Jiang “following Deng Xiaoping’s advice...regarded China’s relations with the United States as a ‘priority within priority’.” In 1990, soon after his elevation to General Secretary, Jiang conducted a series of interviews with various U.S. media outlets as part of an effort to convey a more amicable image of China to counter the negative attention surrounding Tiananmen. China’s relations with the U.S. were strained again, however, in 1992 when newly elected U.S. President Bill Clinton (who had accused, the previous U.S. President, George H.W. Bush, of “coddling the dictators in Beijing” during the U.S. presidential campaign) sought to take a tougher stance on China. Clinton wanted to link Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) status for China to verifiable improvements on human rights. MFN status historically has referred to a trade agreement in which a nation will get the same concessions that any other nation is able to

79 Jianwei Wang, 26.
80 Jianwei Wang, 26.
81 Gilley, 156.
obtain in a trade agreement with a single given nation. More recently, in the U. S., MFN status has also been called “normal trade relations” (NTR) or “permanent normal trade relations” (PNTR). Under MFN or PNTR the U. S. grants its normal preferential trade treatment to a nation. For many years the U. S. had to annually renew China’s MFN status and tied its renewal to the freedom of emigration from China according to the Jackson-Vanik provision of the Trade Act of 1974. In the early 1990s, however, many U.S. officials, including several members of the U.S. Congress and officials in the new Clinton administration, also wanted to tie MFN renewal for China to progress on various human rights issues. In May 1993 Clinton signed an executive order officially linking the U.S.’s renewal of China’s MFN status to human rights progress. Predictably, Chinese officials strongly opposed this policy. Chinese leaders bristled at what they viewed as U.S interference in internal/domestic Chinese affairs. According to Xiaoxiong Yi, an expert on Chinese politics and foreign policy, from Beijing’s perspective, by attempting to link MFN to human rights, the U.S. had “abused interdependence and turned it against China’s independence.”

As China’s economy continued to grow, Chinese officials had gained confidence in China’s status in the world, and began to believe that China, as a rising “great power” must “insist on being treated with due respect.” Jiang himself, as a new Chinese leader who was still coming out of Deng’s shadow, was in no position to compromise with American wishes in the MFN dispute, as “no Chinese leader could hope to succeed Deng Xiaoping after acquiescing to what would be seen as humiliating and intrusive demands by a foreign power.”

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83 Xiaoxiong Yi, 678.
84 Xiaoxiong Yi, 678.
needed to continue to improve relations with the U.S. Jiang therefore attempted to continue his U.S. public relations offensive and took his case directly to the U.S. media.

As Gilley noted,

In interviews with the U.S. media in early 1993, Jiang made it clear that the statements [regarding MFN status] had raised hackles in Beijing. ‘We favor dialogue and oppose the use of pressure in resolving bilateral differences over things like human rights,’ he told *U.S. News & World Report* in February. ‘We disapprove of exploiting the human rights issue to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.’

Jiang similarly told CNN in May 1993, “our differences can be settled through dialogue.” Ultimately, Jiang and Chinese officials decided to make a number of trade, weapons proliferation, and human rights concessions, including releasing several prominent political dissidents and agreeing to discontinue jamming transmission of the U.S. radio program “Voice of America” (VOA) into China, in order to convince the Clinton administration to abandon its efforts to link China’s MFN status to human rights in China.

Faced with these concessions and mounting pressure within the American business community, in 1994 President Clinton was forced to sign another executive order decoupling China’s MFN status from verifiable human rights progress in China.

Tensions between the U.S. and China continued during the early 1990s, however. In 1993 U.S. military forces boarded a Chinese cargo ship heading to Iran declaring they suspected the ship was carrying precursors for chemical weapons. No such chemicals were found, but the U.S. claimed it acted in good faith. In 1992 and 1993 China also made a bid to host the 2000 Olympics, which the U.S. Congress vehemently opposed. When the 2000 Olympics were ultimately awarded to Australia later in 1993, many

85 Gilley, 209.
87 Xiaoxiong Yi, 677.
Chinese blamed the U.S. for leading the vote against China. Perhaps as a sign of the
tensions between the U.S. and China, during this same time period Jiang articulated a
new Chinese policy on relations with the U.S. In a 1993 meeting of Chinese military
leaders Jiang listed what would become known as the “Four Noes” or “sibu fangzhen”
policy. The basic tenets of the “Four Noes” were:

- China does not want confrontation with the United States;
- China will not provoke confrontation with the United States;
- China will not avoid confrontation with the United States if the latter wants
  it;
- and China does not fear confrontation with the United States.\(^88\)

While these events and the articulation of the “Four Noes” seemed to point towards
increased tensions and even possible conflict between the U.S. and China, a breakthrough
in U.S.-China relations was about to occur.

On November 19, 1993, Jiang Zemin and Bill Clinton met in a private meeting at
the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Seattle, the first meeting of
heads of state from China and the U.S. since Tiananmen. While this was a historic
gathering at that time, little was accomplished at the meeting itself. Back in China,
however, the meeting was deemed “a roaring success” and was a triumph for Jiang.\(^89\) As
Gilley noted, Jiang “had just presided over the official end of the post-Tiananmen freeze
in Sino-U.S. relations” and laid the foundation for future summits between the U.S. and
China.\(^90\) Jiang and Clinton met again in 1994 at the next APEC forum in Jakarta and
agreed to “‘a new constructive relationship’ that would include high-level visits.”\(^91\) Soon
after the 1994 APEC forum, however, U.S.-China relations deteriorated again over

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\(^88\) Xiaoxiong Yi, 688.
\(^89\) Gilley, 212.
\(^90\) Gilley, 213.
\(^91\) Gilley, 250.
disagreements on Taiwan policy. A planned state visit by Jiang to New York on the 50th anniversary of the UN in October 1995 was scaled back to a private meeting between Clinton and Jiang. Following tense conflicts with the U.S. over Taiwan in 1995 and 1996, many observers did not have high hopes for China’s relations with the U.S. and the West.

Somewhat surprisingly though, 1997 proved to be a good year for Jiang as he oversaw the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty from the British on June 30, 1997. Later that same year, on October 29, 1997 Jiang and Clinton held a historic summit in Washington D.C. As Chow Chung-yan stated, Jiang’s 1997 official “visit to the U.S. marked the full restoration of ties with western powers” and the end of China’s isolation following the Tiananmen Square crackdown. The visit was not without controversy, however. While in Washington, Jiang was greeted with protests over China’s handling of Tibet and China’s suppression of the spiritual/religious group Falun Gong. Falun Gong had grown rapidly in China since the early 1990s and had clashed with the CPC. Later, in April 1999, thousands of Falun Gong followers gathered at the CPC headquarters in Zhongnanhai to protest reported beatings and arrests of fellow members who had been protesting articles critical of the movement. In 1999 Jiang and the PRC leadership banned Falun Gong, issuing a statement calling it illegal and accusing it of inciting social unrest. Despite the protests in Washington in 1997 over Chinese policies towards Tibet and Falun Gong, in Gilley’s view, just attending the summit in Washington was “a personal triumph” for Jiang. During the summit and the maneuvering leading up to it China agreed to a number of provisions intended to bring it

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92 Chow Chung-yan.
93 Gilley, 325.
more in line with international norms and the international community. Before the summit China had agreed to sign the UN covenant on economic, social, and cultural rights, and invited religious representatives from the U.S. to visit China for talks on increased religious freedom. At the summit Jiang agreed to “resume a human rights dialogue with Washington.” The two nations agreed on a variety of economic exchanges, limited tariffs on certain exports, and lifting the ban of the export of certain technologies to China. At the summit Clinton and Jiang also agreed upon a “constructive strategic partnership for the twenty-first century.” As Avery Goldstein, an expert on Chinese politics and international relations, explained, the term “constructive strategic partnership” was chosen to indicate that the countries would work together to solve problems threatening peace and stability (thus, a partnership); underscore the significance of this bilateral relationship for broader regional and international security (thus, strategic); and distinguish it from the closer ties already in place with Russia (thus, the need to work on making strained bilateral relations more constructive).

While the results of the summit on the U.S. side were difficult to assess, in China it was deemed an unabashed success. Jiang felt vindicated in his handling of U.S.-China relations post-Tiananmen and he “basked in the glory of being received as China’s top leader in the world’s most powerful country.” He emerged from the trip with “his personal stature and his diplomatic role...enhanced.” While Clinton was not overly impressed with the 1997 summit, he did make his first presidential visit to China the following year in 1998. Soon after Jiang’s and Clinton’s official visits in 1997 and 1998,

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94 Gilley, 325.
96 Gilley, 328.
97 Gilley, 328.
in April 1999 Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji made a trip to Washington D.C. where he pressed the issue of China’s accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and what Chinese officials saw as the U. S.’ role in delaying that process. Despite such disagreements, the very ability of Chinese leaders to travel to the U.S. and American leaders to travel to China showed that Jiang had overseen the restoration of relations between China and the U.S. after the tensions following Tiananmen.

Despite Jiang’s attempts to improve relations with the U.S., Chinese officials were still quite fearful that the U.S. would use its critiques of China’s human rights record as justification to intervene in what Chinese officials viewed as China’s internal affairs. As noted above, the first Gulf War and other Western interventions throughout the 1990s added to these fears. As a result during Jiang’s time as leader of the PRC, Chinese officials routinely spoke of their opposition to a uni-polar international system, a thinly veiled critique of the post Cold War system during the 1990s and early 2000s in which the U.S. was the world’s sole superpower. Jiang, himself, often emphasized the “building multipolar world’ (duoji shijie) concept” which was intended “to multipolarize or counterbalance the U.S.-centric international system.” In many ways this was similar to Deng’s earlier opposition to hegemony and the role of superpowers during the Cold War. However, while China had previously opposed the superpower status of both the Soviet Union and the U.S., Chinese officials now feared that without the Soviet Union to counterbalance the U.S., America would increase its efforts to democratize and liberalize countries like China.

Partly as a result of Chinese officials’ fear of a uni-polar international system,

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during Jiang’s time as the leader of the PRC, China showed an increased willingness to enter into multilateral and international institutions as a means for conducting foreign policy. While Chinese officials had previously viewed multilateral institutions with suspicion, worrying that they would undermine China’s sovereignty, in the 1990s Chinese officials began to realize that they could use these organizations to actually protect China’s sovereignty and to counterbalance the U.S.’ power. Building on Deng’s “opening up” policy, Chinese officials began to see how participation in multilateral institutions like the WTO could foster China’s economic growth and development. Given Chinese officials’ previous beliefs that most multilateral institutions and international agreements were threats to China’s sovereignty, many Western observers were surprised by China’s agreement to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1996 and by the concessions China made in 1999 as part of its bid to join the WTO.99 In November 2001, China was finally granted admission to the WTO after more than 15 years of negotiation. During Jiang’s time in power China also agreed to work with Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in an organization known as the “Group of Five” or the “Shanghai Five,” which would later become the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2001 with the addition of Uzbekistan, to settle boundary disputes and work together on other issues.100 Under Jiang, China also became more involved in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum and in negotiations over North Korea's nuclear program.101 There was not, however, multilateral agreement on all issues, as

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100 Bachman, 96.
101 Bachman, 96.
disagreements persisted over disputed territories in the South China Sea.  

While the primary focus of China’s foreign policy under Jiang was major power diplomacy, with a particular focus on improving relations with the U.S., China also began to re-engage developing countries under Jiang. Jianwei Wang noted while Jiang “was particularly enthusiastic about establishing ‘strategic partnerships’ with major powers such as the United States, Russia, France, and UK,” it was under Jiang that China began to expand its outreach to its neighbors and to developing countries around the world. The efforts put in place under Jiang to re-build relationships with African and Latin American countries, which China had largely ignored since Mao’s policies of supporting revolutionary movements in these countries, laid the groundwork for the greater expansion of China’s outreach to developing countries under Jiang’s successor, Hu Jintao.

Jiang visited at least ten Latin American countries between 1993 and 2001, as part of efforts to improve ties. In 1996 Jiang visited Africa to “forge a China-African relationship of ‘all-out cooperation and long-term stability towards the 21st century.’” In 2000, Jiang also launched the “going out” strategy in which the CPC encouraged and helped Chinese firms to invest overseas. This policy not only helped Chinese companies start competing in foreign markets, but it also helped to spread Chinese influence abroad and to promote China’s larger economic interests. China’s renewed engagement with developing countries was not just limited to Africa and Latin America, but included attempts to promote a more favorable image among its neighbors. For example, China’s

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102 Goldstein, 841.
103 Jianwei Wang, 21-22.
104 Jianwei Wang, 21-22.
offer of economic assistance to neighboring countries during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis was an important turning point in China’s formulation of a more active foreign policy, as “for the first time in decades China had taken a stance on a major international issue,” rather than simply lying low as Deng had previously recommended, “and had banked credit as a benign force in global affairs.”^106

^106 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 36.

While a changing international system and an increasingly interconnected global economy obviously played a large role in encouraging Chinese officials to pursue a more active and eventually a more aggressive foreign policy, generational shifts within China and Chinese leadership during the 1990s and 2000s were also a significant factor. Cheng Li, an expert on the transformation of political leaders and generational change in China, has argued that "the Chinese political process, including the making of foreign policy," is "highly personalized" and therefore changes in leadership or generations of leaders has a profound impact upon Chinese foreign policy.\textsuperscript{107} While causation is always difficult to determine, the shift from the second to the third and from the third to the fourth, generations of Chinese leadership undoubtedly played a significant role in China’s transition to a more active foreign policy. According to Cheng Li, the history of the PRC “indicates that changes in the composition of the political elite often reflect—and sometimes herald—broad social, economic and political changes in the country at large.”\textsuperscript{108} This is true in terms of Chinese officials’ views on foreign policy as well. As Kurlantzick highlights, “until the mid-1990s, the generation that had grown up around Mao—including Deng Xiaoping himself—still dominated China’s inner circle”\textsuperscript{109} Beginning in the early 1990s, however, members of the second generation began to either pass away or were forced to retire.\textsuperscript{110} This opened the door for the third generation of Chinese leadership to assume more prominent roles. The resulting turnover in Chinese

\textsuperscript{109} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 29.
\textsuperscript{110} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 29.
leadership positions was dramatic and rapid. A study of Chinese leaders in 2001 found that

of the twenty-four officials who became full or alternate members of the Politburo at the Fifteenth National Congress in September 1997, only six had served in the Party leadership before 1992, and most were at least ten years younger than the men they’d replaced.1

Cheng Li defines the third generation of PRC leadership as CPC officials who started their careers during “the socialist transformation of the 1950s” while the fourth generation of leaders “had their formative years during the Cultural Revolution” between roughly 1966 and 1976.112 As members of both the third and fourth generations began to assume leadership roles, Chinese attitudes towards foreign policy began to shift. While most members of the third and fourth generations had experienced the trauma of the Cultural Revolution like their predecessors, they had also seen how far China had come since Deng first began reforms in 1979. Moreover, as Kurlantzick notes, “many of these new leaders hailed from China’s urbane eastern provinces, which had benefited the most from economic reforms and which were most open to external influence,” possibly making these new Chinese officials more likely to advocate for continuing economic reforms and greater engagement with the rest of the world.113 The younger generations of Chinese leadership had witnessed the enormous strides that China had made since Deng’s reforms and had more exposure to the outside world than their predecessors. They therefore were also increasingly confident and, like much of the younger Chinese populace, believed that China could begin to take a larger, more proactive, role in the


112 Cheng Li, China’s Leaders: The New Generation, 80.
113 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 29-30.
international system to secure China’s interests. Another key difference between the first and second generations and the third and fourth generations of Chinese leadership was their backgrounds and education. The first and second generations of Chinese leadership were dominated by “revolutionary ideologues” with personal military experience in the Communist revolution. In contrast, the third and fourth generations were made almost entirely of CPC members who were trained as engineers or what Cheng Li labeled “technocrats” or “the technocrat-manager.” Technocrats approached governance, including foreign policy, from a more pragmatic and scientific perspective than their revolutionary predecessors, what Cheng Li labeled as “technocratic thinking.” While revolutionaries like Deng dominated the CPC as late as the 1990s, by 2001, Cheng Li was able to observe “today’s China is largely run by technocrats, engineers turned politicians.” The shift from revolutionaries to technocratic engineers in the CPC was “not only the largest peaceful elite turnover in Chinese history, but...probably the most massive, rapid change of elites within any regime in human history.” From 1949 to roughly the 1980s, Chinese officials advanced in the CPC based on their “seniority in joining the Party and the revolution,” “ideological commitment,” “political loyalty and activism in the class struggle,” and “class background from a ‘proletarian family.’” After Deng became the leader of the CPC, however, he “constantly argued that intellectuals, as a social stratum, should not be treated as an ‘alien force’ (yiji), as had happened during the Mao era, but should be respected as the ‘core (gugan) of the

114 Cheng Li, China’s Leaders: The New Generation, 26 and 80.
117 Cheng Li, China’s Leaders: The New Generation, 34.
This focus on expertise in Chinese officials was continued through the third and fourth generations. As Cheng Li, noted, the head of the fourth generation of leadership, Hu Jintao, while CPC General Secretary, argued that “the Party should oppose the tendency to divorce its own leadership from expertise and should no longer oppose experts. Instead, he said, the Party should establish the concept that all leaders must be trained specialists.” There was even a proposal that all Chinese officials must have at least an MA or a PhD.

Indeed, the third and fourth generations of Chinese leaders (including those in mid-level positions) were generally better educated than their predecessors. While only 20 percent of China’s provincial leaders in 1982 had attended college, by 2002 98 percent of them had college degrees. Moreover, two-thirds of fourth generation officials born after 1953 held postgraduate degrees. In his detailed study on the third and fourth generations of leaders, Cheng Li observed that more leaders in the fourth generation attended graduate school than even their predecessors in the third generation who generally only had undergraduate degrees or attended two-year colleges or polytechnics. The number of leaders trained in economics and finance also rose sharply. In 2001, Cheng Li calculated that three times as many CPC leaders were trained in economics, management, finance, accounting, and statistics, than were in the Fourteenth Central Committee of the CPC which was in session from 1992 to 1997. Further, while in the 1990s most of the important financial posts in China were held by third

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120 Cheng Li, China's Leaders: The New Generation, 34.
121 Cheng Li, China's Leaders: The New Generation, 37.
122 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 29-30.
123 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 31.
124 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 31.
125 Cheng Li, China's Leaders: The New Generation, 75.
generation leaders who were trained as engineers, by the 2000s, these posts were increasingly held by younger CPC officials with actual financial or economic education.\textsuperscript{126} Officials who had a background in finance rather than engineering were more likely to understand the global economy and how China’s own economy depended on access to overseas markets and foreign sources of raw materials and energy. Some members of the fourth generation studied in Western countries, in contrast to those in the third generation, who were predominantly trained in the Soviet Union or other Eastern European countries.\textsuperscript{127} No leaders from the fourth generation studied in the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe because of the decline of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{128} Rather, many fourth generation Chinese officials studied at elite schools inside China such as Qinghua University.\textsuperscript{129} China did not begin sending large numbers of students abroad until after Deng’s reforms in the late 1970s. However, following Deng’s reforms, China sent thousands of students to the U.S., so their full impact has likely not yet been fully felt.\textsuperscript{130}

The increasing education standards among Chinese leaders meant that Chinese officials were increasingly more knowledgeable about world events and willing to engage in discussions on foreign policy. As one example of the change in Chinese officials’ understanding and conduct of foreign policy, former US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Susan Shirk stated that even as late as 1993 it was “easier to persuade the North Koreans to come [to an informal diplomatic meeting] than it was the Chinese,” since the

\textsuperscript{126} Cheng Li, \textit{China’s Leaders: The New Generation}, 75.
\textsuperscript{128} Cheng Li, \textit{China’s Leaders: The New Generation}, 77 and 140-144.
\textsuperscript{130} Cheng Li, \textit{China’s Leaders: The New Generation}, 78 and 80.
Chinese were so isolated and distrustful."\textsuperscript{131} By the mid-2000s, in contrast, some U.S.
diplomats "marveled" at Chinese diplomats' knowledge of internal American political
debates such as the American neo-conservative movement of the early 2000s.\textsuperscript{132} Younger
Chinese officials who had visited or studied in the West also learned how think tanks,
academics, and public opinion polls influenced the creation of Western policies, including
foreign policy. While most Chinese officials still did not advocate a multi-party system
or drastic liberal political reforms within China, they nonetheless were more willing to
take part in internal CPC debates on foreign policy issues, to hear from Chinese scholars,
and, to a degree, even the Chinese public. During the 1990s and 2000s Chinese leaders
increasingly supported Chinese think tanks, and the Chinese foreign ministry created an
internal agency focused on long-term planning.\textsuperscript{133} Third and fourth generations of
Chinese leadership were also far more open about their views and policies than previous
generations, partially because, unlike the earlier strongmen Mao and Deng who
-dominated almost every aspect of PRC rule, leaders from the subsequent generations
were "not able to [completely] control the mass media or the intellectual community."\textsuperscript{134}

Despite their differences in education, one area where the second, third, and
fourth generations of Chinese leadership were largely similar was their emphasis on the
importance of stability inside China. Several scholars have commented on the traumatic
impact that the Cultural Revolution had both on Chinese society and multiple generations
of Chinese leadership.\textsuperscript{135} As a result of the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, Chinese
leaders throughout the third, fourth, and fifth generations, along with a majority of the

\textsuperscript{131} Cited in Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 31.
\textsuperscript{132} Cited in Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 31.
\textsuperscript{133} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 30-31.
Chinese public, placed a very high value on stability, as reflected in opinion polls conducted during the early-to-mid 2000s.\textsuperscript{136} Fourth generation Chinese leaders were both “more aware of the need for political reform than their predecessors” but also mindful of the need to “‘manage’ political reform in a controlled way.”\textsuperscript{137}

In general, Chinese officials who experienced the Cultural Revolution during their formative years were “politically sophisticated but ideologically disillusioned,” “their idealism was shattered, their energy wasted, their education lost, and their careers interrupted.”\textsuperscript{138} As a result, the third and fourth generations of Chinese leadership were less ideological and more pragmatic than their predecessors and more likely to independently evaluate policies based on their effects on China’s national interests, allowing them to reconsider and reformulate China’s foreign policy.\textsuperscript{139} Strict adherence to communist ideology mattered far less to the newer generation of Chinese leaders when making policy decisions than it had to past generations. Foreign partners were no longer deemed off-limits by ideological concerns, and Chinese leaders could now deal with a variety of states for pragmatic ends.\textsuperscript{140} To emphasize how much Chinese foreign policy had shifted away from ideology by the 1990s and 2000s when compared to the Mao era, in the early 2000s, China actually mediated between the Philippine government and communist insurgents ultimately leading the insurgents to threaten Chinese investors in the Philippines. Similarly, the PRC supported the Nepalese monarchy against a Maoist rebel group.\textsuperscript{141} Notwithstanding their supposed ideological similarity, China sided

\textsuperscript{136} Bergsten et al., 68.
\textsuperscript{137} Cheng Li, China's Leaders: The New Generation, 206.
\textsuperscript{138} Cheng Li, China's Leaders: The New Generation, 5, 12.
\textsuperscript{139} Cheng Li, China's Leaders: The New Generation, 206.
\textsuperscript{140} Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 45.
\textsuperscript{141} Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 45.
against the communist/Maoist forces in both cases because Chinese officials assessed that supporting the existing governments in these countries was in China’s economic interest.
7. Waning Faith in Communism, Increasing Chinese Nationalism, Shifts in Youth Attitudes, and Growing Chinese Confidence

With rapid economic growth in China also came a corresponding sense of pride among many Chinese people. Kurlantzick has argued that "in the years after Tiananmen, both the Chinese public and the Chinese leadership gained vital confidence—confidence that China had a right to become a global power."\(^{142}\) China after all had experienced stunning economic growth since Deng Xiaoping began enacting reforms in the late 1970s. Between 1979 and the late 2000s, China, it has been argued, raised 200 million of its people out of poverty, perhaps more than any other society in such a short period of time.\(^{143}\) From 1979 to 2007, China’s trade with other nations grew eight times faster than overall world trade, allowing China to build trade surpluses of more than $100 billion annually. It amassed the largest currency reserves in the world, and “became Asia’s largest recipient of foreign direct investment, receiving more than $60 billion in investment in 2005.”\(^{144}\) As of 2007, China was the world’s second-largest economy when measured by purchasing power parity, and was on track to become the overall second largest economy in 2025.\(^{145}\)

However, even as China’s economy continued to rapidly expand and Chinese citizens were becoming more confident in their country, Chinese officials were concerned that with all the market reforms and capitalistic growth, faith in the ideology of communism was waning. Rana Mitter, an expert on Chinese nationalism, noted in 2009

today’s economic growth brings prosperity and comfort, but it has failed to bring the Chinese people values that they can believe in. And the events that inspired a previous generation, such as Mao’s Cultural Revolution, have been exposed as disasters.\footnote{Rana Mitter, “Past, Present and Future,” \textit{Times of India}, October 1, 2009, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/opinion/edit-page/Past-Present-And-Future/articleshow/5072931.cms.}

Far earlier, in the 1980s and the 1990s as the Chinese political and economic system transitioned into more of a state-led capitalist society, Chinese officials began to realize that Maoism and communism no longer functioned as unifying ideologies in China.\footnote{Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 23.}


They therefore began to increasingly foster and encourage a new form of Chinese nationalism. As Joseph Cheng Yu-shek, an expert on Chinese foreign policy, noted, “in the beginning of China’s economic reforms and opening to the external world, leaders tried to use nationalism to fill the ideological void created by the crisis because of the loss of faith in socialism.”\footnote{Joseph Cheng Yu-shek, “Flag of Convenience,” \textit{South China Morning Post}, May 14, 2008, http://www.scmp.com/article/637459/flag-convenience.} In the place of communism and socialism, Chinese officials encouraged what has been called “a kind of updated nationalism.” This new form of Chinese nationalism emphasized China’s victimization by Western powers in the 18th and 19th century, contrasting this with China’s bright future and great economic strength.

Chinese officials also began to embrace the idea that China was a rising power and
capitalized on popular suspicions that outside powers were trying to keep China weak.\textsuperscript{150} In 2008, journalist Steven Erlanger argued that "China's fierce pride also covers a deeper defensiveness, a sense that China's rise has made it the target for the hypocritical anger of a wounded West, especially the United States and Europe, that resents such a successful new rival for global trade and influence."\textsuperscript{151} This new Chinese nationalism quickly gained popularity, arguably a new "state religion" whose god was "economic development."\textsuperscript{152} New children's school textbooks stressed China's former victimization at the hands of foreign powers and contrasted it with China's current growing place in the world. Meanwhile, the PRC also played up Chinese nationalism by using large projects like the Chinese space program to rally national support.\textsuperscript{153}

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, Chinese youth in particular began to question why China was not acting more forcefully to defend what they saw as China's national interests. Younger Chinese did not remember the famines of the Great Leap Forward or "the terror" of the Cultural Revolution.\textsuperscript{154} As a result, younger Chinese during the 1990s and 2000s were generally less wary of a strong Chinese central government than previous generations and more likely to advocate for more aggressive policies. Such attitudes contrasted markedly with the youth and academia of the 1980s who were both far more politically liberal and distrustful of the Chinese central government. After Tiananmen, many liberal intellectuals fled the country, leaving the more conservative nationalists as the primary voices in China. By the 1990s, some prominent Chinese intellectuals were

\begin{itemize}
\item Steven Erlanger, "For the West, Many Tough Calls on China," \textit{The New York Times}, April 13, 2008.
\end{itemize}
actually calling for a stronger role for the Chinese government. The shift in youth attitudes shocked many older intellectuals and academics:

'Today, my students don't care about political science,' complained one politics professor at Fudan University in Shanghai, a man who had been a young academic during Tiananmen. 'They want to take business, or computer science, or something else that will get them a good job... They think [the Chinese leadership] is too weak, and should be harder on the U.S.' He paused, looked befuddled. 'I don't know how to talk to them.'

One reason for this shift was that the economic status of many young urban Chinese in the 1990s and 2000s was far better than it had been for youth of the 1980s. Following Tiananmen, the CPC had made a concerted effort to effectively co-opt youth and academics by providing them with opportunities for advancement as well as other perks in exchange for continuing support for CPC rule. While earlier Chinese youth were told of capitalism's evils, many of the Chinese youth from the 1990s and 2000s had been bombarded with the idea that they should strive to become rich. In contrast with the youth at Tiananmen in 1989 who had been angry at their meager salaries, young Chinese of the 1990s and 2000s had often turned away from liberal arts subjects to study business or computer science and technology with the goals of getting high paying jobs.

The 1990s and 2000s also saw a sharp increase in the number of Chinese tourists traveling abroad, rising from 4.5 million in 1995 to more than 30 million in 2005. As more and more Chinese were allowed to travel abroad, many also came back with less than favorable opinions of the West. Where in past years, Western countries might have been far off, even idealized, foreign lands, with increased mobility and the prevalence of international news coverage, many Chinese began to see the problems that existed in

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Western society. As more Chinese traveled overseas, they saw that the U.S. and Europe also had challenges and poverty, and thus many Chinese youth "may have lost some of their awe for America and Europe."\(^{159}\) Chinese travelers abroad also saw that Chinese cities like Shanghai were increasingly as cosmopolitan as many Western cities. Suisheng Zhao, an expert on Chinese nationalism and politics, has termed this process the "demythification" of the West in China.\(^{160}\)

At the same time, the notion of China as a rising power had begun to displace the old images of an isolated or weak China both inside China and in the West. The CPC promoted the image of an advancing and increasingly powerful China, partially as a means to rally national support for the CPC's continued rule.\(^{161}\) Some younger Chinese intellectuals began to argue that the Chinese government should adopt more hardline policies, and increasingly questioned why China was taking what they viewed as a conciliatory stance on the world stage, particularly towards the U.S. In the 1990s and 2000s younger Chinese wrote nationalistic books and participated in online chats arguing that the Chinese government was too soft and needed to stand up to the U.S. more. During this same time period, several books came out emphasizing China's strength and the need for China to take its rightful place in the world. Several of these books advanced the idea that Western powers, particularly the U.S., were seeking to purposefully keep China weak. Ying Ma, an expert on "Chinese domestic attitudes," noted in 2007 that "Chinese increasingly view America today as a bully who...attempts to

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\(^{159}\) Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 23.

\(^{160}\) Cited in Bergsten et al., 47.

thwart the rise of their country's international influence."\textsuperscript{162} Similarly, in 2009, John Lee, an expert on Chinese foreign policy, noted

Many influential thinkers in China hold lofty, impatient ambitions for their country. Several months ago, for instance, a group of state-sponsored Chinese scholars released a bestselling book titled \textit{Unhappy China: The Great Time, Grand Vision, and Our Challenges}. It argued that, given China's growth, it should put prudence aside, break away from Western influence, and come to recognize that it has the power to lead in Asia.\textsuperscript{163}

During the late 1990s and 2000s there was an active debate within Chinese society about the kinds of changes China should make to its foreign policy. As Chinese foreign policy expert William A. Callahan noted in 2010, "there is growing debate inside the People's Republic of China about the country's proper strategic goals. Many intellectuals and policy-makers are asking how China can convert its new economic power into enduring political and cultural influence around the globe."\textsuperscript{164} The sides in this debate could roughly be divided "into those who argue[d for] the need for China to pursue its interests more assertively and unilaterally and those who argue[d] a rising China's interests [were] best served through further steady and peaceful integration within the international system."\textsuperscript{165} As Bergsten and his co-authors noted, "those who advocate[d] a more assertive, 'nationalist' approach believe[d] China must more consciously marshal its growing resources to realize the country's interests, which for too long have been suppressed by foreign forces intent on keeping China down."\textsuperscript{166} This new more aggressive nationalism fed upon the deeply ingrained fear of control by outside powers,

\textsuperscript{165} Bergsten et al., 46.
\textsuperscript{166} Bergsten et al., 46.
which had been a part of the Chinese consciousness since the Opium Wars and the “Century of Humiliation”:

this viewpoint had a deep history in Chinese thinking—drawing strength from the view that from the mid-19th to mid-20th century, China was devastatingly humiliated at the hands of foreign powers—but in recent years has seen resurgence as China’s development and popular confidence levels have steeply risen.167

As noted above, Deng and other members of the second generation of Chinese leadership had also been affected by the memory of the “Century of Humiliation” and the fear of control by outside powers. However, Deng had argued that China should avoid becoming involved in most foreign policy issues in order to avoid such a subservient relationship in the future. Now younger Chinese were arguing the opposite, that China should act more forcefully in the international arena in order to protect China’s interests. The fear of outside influence was a strong current throughout Chinese society, and even today Chinese commemorate “National Humiliation Day” every year on September 18 as a reminder of the “Century of Humiliation.” Ramo noted in 2004 that “Chinese strategists and officials will often tell you in conversation that the heart of all Chinese strategic thinking, and even Chinese development goals, is rooted in the humiliation of the Opium Wars, when China found itself helpless in front of British battleships.”168

Regardless of how CPC officials felt China should proceed with its new foreign policy, many Chinese scholars and leaders began to refer to China as a “daguo” or a great power and suggested that China should “adopt the mentality of a daguo.”169

167 Bergsten et al., 46.
168 Ramo, 43.
169 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 36.
8. Emergence of the “China Threat” Theory

Chinese citizens and officials were not the only ones to debate China’s rise and the potential foreign policy strategies it might pursue. Western officials and scholars had been nervously watching as China grew in both economic and military strength, with the harsh crackdown at Tiananmen Square and the Cold War fresh in their minds. During the 1990s and the 2000s many Western officials and scholars began to debate what became known as the “China threat” theory. This theory argued that as China continued to grow in economic power it would gain confidence, seek to expand its military, and eventually become more aggressive, potentially leading to armed struggle. Scholars pointed to the previous examples of Japan and Germany during the early to mid 20th century, noting that both countries, like China, rapidly went from relatively poor nations, to economic powerhouses. Japan and Germany, however, then went on in the mid 20th century to become aggressive and militaristic societies which invaded their neighbors. Western scholars actively debated how to deal with a rising China, and how the potential “China threat” could be contained.

Whether the “China threat” theory was an accurate assessment by Western observers is difficult to assess. Even today, foreign policy scholars are still actively debating whether China’s increasing power and more active and, at times, aggressive foreign policy poses a threat to Western interests and the international system. It is clear, however, that at least some Chinese officials have become far more comfortable than their predecessors in aggressively pursuing what they see as China’s interests, even when their words or actions cause conflict with other countries. One recent example of China’s
increased willingness to act more aggressively is the November 23, 2013 declaration by Chinese officials of an “Air Defense Identification Zone” (ADIZ) in the East China Sea. This new Chinese ADIZ included airspace over and around islands disputed by Japan and China, which are believed to be located in an area of seabed rich in oil, natural gas, and other natural resources. The new Chinese ADIZ also included airspace previously claimed by South Korea and Taiwan.\(^{170}\)

China’s declaration of this new ADIZ was met with condemnation from the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. The Washington Times quoted U.S. White House officials as saying the declaration was “unacceptable” and Reuters described White House spokesman Jay Carney as saying it was a “dangerous and provocative’ move that increased the risk of stumbling into a crisis and …was not consistent with the behavior of a major power.”\(^{171}\) Deputy White House spokesman Josh Earnest said that China’s creation of the ADIZ was “unnecessarily inflammatory and has a destabilizing impact on the region,” and U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki accused Chinese officials of trying to “unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea.”\(^{172}\) U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel meanwhile warned that China’s “unilateral action…increases the risk of misunderstanding and miscalculations” and the U.S. chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey indicated that U.S. officials were making it clear to China that “territorial disputes should not be resolved ‘unilaterally and through

\(^{172}\) Taylor.
Three days after China announced the creation of the ADIZ, on November 26, 2013, the U.S. flew two U.S. B-52 bombers over the islands contested between Japan and China without alerting Chinese officials (as the Chinese had announced would now be required). The move was intended as a show of force by the U.S., support for the U.S.' ally Japan, and a sign that the U.S. did not accept China's unilateral declaration of the ADIZ. The flight of the bombers was also meant to discourage China from unilaterally declaring additional ADIZs in other areas such as the South China Sea, where China is also attempting to exert its control over contested islands. In the days following China's declaration of the ADIZ, military aircraft from Japan and South Korea also purposefully transited this airspace without informing Chinese officials. On December 08, 2013, in response to the Chinese ADIZ declaration, South Korea announced it was expanding the airspace it claimed to encompass islands disputed between South Korea and Japan and airspace overlapping with parts of the new Chinese ADIZ and previously declared Japanese airspace.

Tensions in the region remained high as Chinese officials warned that China "would take unspecified 'emergency defensive measures' if aircraft did not comply" with

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173 Taylor. Spetalnick.
174 Taylor.
176 Spetalnick.
the new ADIZ requirements. On November 29, 2013, China sent fighter jets to “investigate” U.S. and Japanese planes that were traveling through the ADIZ. Even if Chinese officials later attempt to moderate their stance, the public announcement of the ADIZ will lead more nationalistic Chinese factions to pressure Chinese officials to enforce the airspace claims. Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, Asia-Pacific director at the US Institute of Peace, commented on the internal pressures within China that the announcement of the ADIZ had created, saying

> the danger in the announcement is that it empowers the People’s Liberation Army, maritime agencies and netizens [internet users] to hold the government to account. Now people are transgressing the zone, they have to make it look to the domestic audience like they are serious. They have given birth to internal pressures.

The *New York Times* wrote that China’s move also put U.S. President Barack Obama in a “delicate position…drawn into a geopolitical dispute that will test how far he is willing to go to contain China’s rising regional ambitions.” Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg and foreign policy expert Michael E. O’Hanlon wrote that China’s declaration of the ADIZ had “unleashed a storm of concern among China’s neighbors” and U.S. officials. Steinberg and O’Hanlon further argued that “China’s action reflects the deeper challenge now posed by its growing military capability and international activism,” perhaps granting credence to the “China threat” theory. They also argued that “the unilateral and assertive nature of the new Chinese effort increases the risk of

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179 Branigan and Pilkington.

180 Branigan and Pilkington.

181 Baker and Perlez.


183 Steinberg and O’Hanlon.
conflict” and highlighted how China did not consult with other countries before establishing the ADIZ, did not explain how China planned to implement and enforce the ADIZ, and did not clarify whether the ADIZ was a precursor to territorial claims of the islands which fell within it. Steinberg and O’Hanlon argued, therefore that “by failing to provide reassurance, China has given other nations justification to draw less benign conclusions” for example leading to South Korea expanding its own ADIZ in response to China’s actions. Steinberg and O’Hanlon further noted that other countries in the region could easily view China’s actions “as the latest chapter in Beijing’s attempt to unilaterally alter the status quo in connection with its local territorial disputes” and argued that “in doing so, China has prompted its neighbors to respond in ways that heighten the risk of conflict, such as instructing civilian aircraft not to comply.” Steinberg and O’Hanlon concluded their article by stating that due to “growing tensions from China’s ascendance in international power and stature,” the international community was “likely to confront many more crises like this — or worse — in the years and decades ahead.” Peter Dutton, the director of the China Maritime Studies Institute at the United States Naval War College, went even further when commenting on the new Chinese ADIZ arguing that “it is clear that the Chinese do not seek regional stability on any level... They intend to be disruptive in order to remake the Asian regional system in accordance with their preferences.”

It is hard to image China under Deng making such a declaration as the new ADIZ, in effect openly challenging the U.S. and its allies in East Asia. Some scholars therefore

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184 Steinberg and O’Hanlon.
185 Steinberg and O’Hanlon. Peralta.
186 Steinberg and O’Hanlon.
187 Steinberg and O’Hanlon.
188 Baker and Perlez.
will point to these and other actions like them, as evidence that the “China threat” is real and that China has become far more aggressive in the past 20 years. Chinese officials and other scholars, however, will likely argue that other nations have ADIZs and that China is only acting to protect its interests in the same way other nations do and that this is a normal transition for a rising power. Still, yet others may argue that this either was the action of an aggressive minority within China or was an action meant to appease an aggressive minority in China. Either way, it is clear that China’s rise has not been without conflict and at times difficult adjustments for other nations. While large-scale armed conflict has not broken out between China and other nations, China’s rise in power has been at the very least somewhat destabilizing to the status quo in international relations. Whether this transforms into an outright threat to the West and to China’s neighbors remains to be seen. Arguments can, and have been, made both that China’s rise has been good for the region and the world overall through the benefits that have accompanied its economic growth, and conversely that China’s rise has created uncertainty and turmoil for other countries, particularly those in East Asia. Both assessments are probably true to certain degrees.

While it is unclear whether the “China threat” theory will ultimately turn out to be justified, it is clear that Chinese officials were (and still are) actively concerned by the theory and how to best to effectively respond it. By simply raising this theory, Western scholars undoubtedly forced some Chinese officials to moderate their actions, for fear that if they acted too aggressively, the “China threat” theory would gain credence and Western powers would work to constrain China. As detailed further below, countering the “China threat” theory became a major priority for Chinese officials during the 1990s
and 2000s. If nothing else, the emergence of the “China threat” theory forced Chinese officials to become more aware of how their actions were being perceived abroad, and of the concerns other nations had regarding China’s rise.

Around the turn of the century, two international events involving China and the U.S. sparked a broad discussion among Chinese officials and intellectuals about China’s place in the world and China-U.S. relations. In May 1999, U.S. and NATO forces accidentally bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade as part of operations against the former Yugoslavia in the conflict over Kosovo, killing three Chinese journalists. Following the bombing there were massive student protests in Beijing where thousands of Chinese denounced the U.S., surrounded the American embassy, threw stones and bottles, and trapped the U.S. ambassador to China inside for four days. Many Chinese also boycotted American products, and some even called for a Chinese military response against the U.S. Western officials were surprised by the ferocity of the demonstrations, and the stark contrast between these protests and the pro-American sentiments that had been expressed during the Tiananmen demonstrations just a decade earlier. Xiaoming Huang, an expert on East Asian politics, commented that many Chinese believed that the bombing was a “symbol of a perceived hidden agenda in how the U.S. was handling relations with China,” and was part of a U.S. plot to keep China from becoming more powerful in the world. Jiang Zemin made a point of expressing strong public protest over the bombing, but he and most of the Chinese leadership also did not want to endanger the still crucial and relatively newly repaired relationship with the U.S. Chinese officials therefore pursued a dual path of allowing mass demonstrations against

the U.S. while at the same time working to keep the fundamental aspects of the bilateral relationship alive.

Although U.S.-China relations were able to recover from the Belgrade bombing, the U.S.-China relationship was soon tested again. On April 1, 2001, a Chinese fighter jet collided with a U.S. reconnaissance plane, causing the death of one Chinese pilot. The U.S. plane was forced to land on a small Chinese island (Hainan) and a brief diplomatic standoff ensued over the fate of the American crew and the plane itself. The cause of the collision was disputed. The U.S. claimed the incident had taken place in international airspace and that the Chinese pilot had been acting aggressively, while the Chinese claimed the U.S. plane had entered Chinese airspace. Ten days after the incident, China released the 24 man crew after the U.S. sent a “two sorries” letter apologizing for the death of the Chinese pilot and for entering Chinese airspace and landing on the island. The U.S. plane itself was not released by the Chinese until July. As a result of the incident and the ensuing standoff, the Pentagon initiated “a case-by-case review of all military-to-military contacts with China and drastically reduced such contacts.” While the collision and standoff proved to be an extremely tense time in U.S.-China relations, officials on both sides remained relatively calm. Neither party seemed to want to risk disturbing the underlying currents of the overall bilateral relationship. Despite the desire of Chinese leadership to move past the Hainan Island incident (also known as the EP-3 incident), for many Chinese nationalists and youth it served as yet another example that the U.S. was seeking to prevent China from becoming more powerful and a sign that the U.S. was no longer the beacon of liberty it had represented to young Chinese during

Tiananmen but was now a “potential enemy.” Both of these international incidents caused many Chinese to re-examine Deng’s previous guidance that China should “lay low,” and led them to ask whether China needed to adopt “a more aggressive foreign policy” to defend its interests. At the same time, advances in information technology in China, such as the proliferation of television and the internet, brought international news to many Chinese who had never had access to it before, and stoked broader interest in international affairs.

10. China’s Growing Need for Natural Resources Pushes Expansion of Foreign Relations

China's growing need for energy and raw materials was also a major factor driving China's transition to a more active foreign policy. As China's economy continued to expand during the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, Chinese industries required more energy and raw materials, many of which could not be found in large enough quantities inside China. Between 1978 and 2000 China's demand for energy grew by roughly four percent each year and between 1980 and 2002, China’s demand for oil grew on average roughly six percent per year. In 2003, Chinese demand for oil rose nine percent, and in 2004 it rose another 17 percent. In 1985 Chinese demand for oil was 1,842.4 kilobarrels a day; by 1995 it had risen to 3,289.8 kilobarrels a day. Between 1995 and 2005, Chinese demand for oil more than doubled to 6,730.2 kilobarrels a day. Similarly between 2000 and 2009, China’s demand for oil almost doubled from roughly 4,600 kilobarrels a day in 2000 to over 8,000 kilobarrels a day in 2009. Chinese domestic energy production could not keep up with this growing demand. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, China actually remained a net oil exporter. However, despite steadily rising domestic oil production, with the Chinese economy continuing to develop so rapidly and requiring more and more energy, by 1993 China had become a net oil importer, and by 1996 China

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194 Bergsten et al., 137 and 151.
195 Bergsten et al., 151.
was also a net crude oil importer. Between 1995 and 2005 the amount of oil China was importing had increased more than 10 fold from 280.6 kilobarrels a day to 3093.3 kilobarrels a day. By 2009, Chinese oil imports had grown by over 37 percent, compared to 2005, to 4245.7 kilobarrels a day. In 1995 China was importing 8.5 percent of the oil it consumed. By 2000, this amount had more than tripled to 29.3 percent of China’s oil consumption; by 2005 it had risen even further to 46 percent and by 2009, China was importing over half the oil it consumed (52.8 percent). Between 2002 and 2006, China accounted for 26 percent of the growth in global oil demand. By 2008, China had become the world’s second largest oil importer. While heavy industry was the primary driver of China’s growing energy needs, as of 2008 there were also 1,100 new cars on the streets of Beijing every day, further contributing to China’s surging demand for oil.

Between 2001 and 2006, electricity consumption also doubled in China as new industries opened across the country. Between 2004 and 2008 China increased its power generation capacity by 70 percent and in 2006 and 2007 China added 200 gigawatts of new power generation capacity to its system, more than the entire capacity of Germany and Italy combined. While China had previously been able to rely on domestic sources of coal for much of its electricity generation, due to issues with internal production, congested railways, a fragmented electrical system, and soaring demand,

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201 Bergsten et al., 151.
202 Blanchard, "Harmonious World and China’s Foreign Economic Policy, 125.
203 Bergsten et al., 1.
204 Bergsten et al., 150.
205 Bergsten et al., 151.
China was forced to import more coal.\(^{206}\) China's demand for coal increased by 66 percent between 2000 and 2005, and as of 2005, China consumed more than 2 billion tons of coal, almost twice the level of consumption of the U.S. at that time.\(^{207}\) In 2012, despite being the world's largest producer of coal at 3,549 million tons, China was actually a net importer of coal, in fact the world's largest importer of coal, importing 278 million tons a year.\(^{208}\) Similarly, according to the IEA, China's demand for natural gas increased by over 500 percent between 2000 and 2011 "from 24.5 bcm (67 mcm/d) in 2000 to around 130 bcm (356 mcm/d) in 2011."\(^{209}\) Despite greatly increasing their internal natural gas production capacity, by 2007 China had also become a net importer of natural gas.\(^{210}\) By 2009 China was the world's second largest energy consumer and was a net importer of oil, coal, and natural gas.\(^{211}\) Similarly, by the 2000s China had also become one of the world's biggest consumers of copper, iron ore, aluminum, platinum, and timber.\(^{212}\)

As noted by Kurlantzick and Erica Downs, an energy analyst at the Brookings Institution, China did not have a sizeable strategic oil reserve like the U.S., and as of 2007, China's domestic oil and gas production was declining and the amount of oil, coal, and natural gas China needed to import continued to rise.\(^{213}\) Energy security, therefore, became an increasingly important issue for Chinese policy makers throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Ensuring there was a stable international environment, according to Deng's

\(^{206}\) Bergsten et al., 151.
\(^{207}\) Bergsten et al., 111-112.
\(^{211}\) Bergsten et al., 137 and 160.
\(^{212}\) Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 41.
\(^{213}\) Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 41.
guidance, would help China to be able to obtain more of these resources from abroad.

However, mindful of continuing tensions with the U.S. and remembering the isolation China experienced following Tiananmen, Chinese officials were concerned that if a new conflict broke out between the U.S. and China, the U.S. might attempt to prevent China from obtaining the resources its economy needed. Chinese officials increasingly believed that they could not

trust the world markets for long-term supplies of oil, gas, minerals, and other commodities, since the United States control[ed] the global sea lanes and ha[d] long-standing relationships with key oil suppliers like Saudi Arabia.

Chinese leaders therefore began a conscious effort to form better relations with countries rich in natural resources and to encourage Chinese energy firms to invest abroad in order to secure access to foreign supplies of energy. While under Deng, China had been hesitant to act on the world stage, by the time the fourth generation of Chinese leadership came to power, China had
cast off that reticence. Starved of natural resources to power its turbocharged economy, China desperately need[ed] oil, gas, metals and other commodities, and China’s large, state-linked natural resources firms…prospect[ed] for deals across the globe.

In the 1990s and 2000s Chinese companies, encouraged by the Chinese government, went on a “frantic shopping spree” purchasing the rights to, or investing in, energy fields and companies in Venezuela, Peru, Sudan, Nigeria, Iran, Kazakhstan, Burma, and several other countries. China’s efforts to diversify its foreign sources of oil were already

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214 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 41.
215 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 41.
217 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 90-91.
showing results by the early to mid 2000s. For example, in 1995 China obtained more than half its crude oil from Indonesia and Oman. By 2003, China had greatly diversified its foreign sources of oil, importing 16.8 percent of its oil from Saudi Arabia, 13.8 percent from Iran, and 10.3 percent from Oman.\textsuperscript{218} As of 2007, about 14 percent of the oil imported by China came from Iran.\textsuperscript{219} By 2009 the Middle East provided about half of China’s oil imports and Africa provided about one-third.\textsuperscript{220} Similarly, according to the IEA, in 2011, over 50 percent of the 5,000+ kilobarrels a day of crude oil China imported came from Middle Eastern countries and roughly 24 percent came from African countries.\textsuperscript{221} By 2011, 20 percent of the crude oil China imported came from Saudi Arabia, 12 percent from Angola, 11 percent from Iran, 7 percent from Oman, 7 percent from Russia, 5 percent from Sudan, and 5 percent from Iraq.\textsuperscript{222} By the late 2000s China had become one of the largest investors in Angola’s oil industry and was possibly lending more money to Africa than the World Bank, largely to “facilitate” access to oil and natural gas.\textsuperscript{223} Similarly, by the late 2000s, much of Australia’s economy, which was based on mineral extraction, had become almost entirely dependent on selling minerals to China given the Chinese economy’s voracious appetite for such natural resources.\textsuperscript{224}

\textsuperscript{218} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 138.
\textsuperscript{219} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 220.
\textsuperscript{220} Bergsten et al., 222.
\textsuperscript{223} Kurlantzick, “China a Global Power at Last.”
\textsuperscript{224} Kurlantzick, “China a Global Power at Last.”
The 2000s brought about the official shift from the third generation of Chinese leadership under Jiang Zemin, to the fourth generation of leadership under Hu Jintao. In May 2002, Hu, who it was already apparent would succeed Jiang, made a visit to Washington, D.C. and later in November that same year Jiang stepped down from the Politburo Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China and Hu became the party’s General Secretary. In 2003, Hu Jintao officially became president of the PRC after Jiang resigned from that position. In 2004, Jiang resigned his last major position, the chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) and Hu assumed the chairmanship of the CMC.

As noted above, Hu came to power just as a new generation of Chinese officials and the Chinese populace were ready for China to begin taking a larger role on the world stage. As Ramo noted in 2004,

Chinese strategists now feel some kind of strategic leverage is a must for their continued development. Unlike Deng-era foreign policy, which was guided by the idea that China should ‘hide its brightness’, Hu-era policy is already defined by an awareness of China’s place in the world.225

Chinese officials had crafted a new foreign policy strategy for a newly powerful China, which Kurlantzick termed the “charm offensive.”226 The strategy was both a recognition of China’s growing power and a reaction to the growing prevalence of the “China threat” theory. As part of this strategy, China would portray itself as a benign power and a friend to all nations, with the goal of convincing other nations that they had nothing to fear from

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225 Ramo, 38-39.
226 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 36.
China, and that what was good for China was good for the rest of the world. Chinese officials openly discussed how their new policies were designed to counter the ideas put forward by the “China threat” theory. Former Chinese foreign minister Qian Qichen reportedly stated in an interview in the early 2000s “that in ten years’ time, when China is more developed, there will be no market for this [‘China threat’] theory.” In order to help allay fears that China might cause the kinds of disruptions and conflicts that had accompanied the rise of earlier powers like Germany and Japan, Chinese scholars and officials developed the term “heping jueqi”, or “Peaceful Rise.” Zheng Bijian, a senior adviser to President Hu Jintao, coined the term at the Boao Forum for Asia in November 2003. As Ramo noted,

Chinese officials’ interest in the country’s Peaceful Rise is rooted in their worry that China’s current acceleration to international power may shake the world too much, undermining the country’s ability to grow and to maintain a stable internal and external balance."

In 2004, Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao explicitly addressed other nations’ concerns about China’s increasing power at a press conference, saying China’s rise “will not come at the cost of any other country, will not stand in the way of any other country, nor pose a threat to any other country.” Eventually Chinese officials began using the term “Peaceful Development Theory” or “Peaceful Development” rather than “Peaceful Rise” because of concerns the word “rise” sounded “too aggressive.” In the fall of 2004, the CPC commissioned a study to look at the “rise and fall of great powers over the last 500

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227 Ramo, 53.
228 Bergsten et al., xvii. Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 37-38.
229 Ramo, 12.
231 Chow Chung-yan.
years” and this study concluded that much like Deng had prescribed “the best way to ensure a continued rise is a peaceful international environment.”\textsuperscript{232} As Ramo noted at the time, without “security guarantees, a peaceful rise would be difficult….China needs a stable local environment for growth, and this can only be achieved through engagement.”\textsuperscript{233} In September 2005, Hu gave a speech at the UN’s 60\textsuperscript{th} anniversary summit, in which according to the official Chinese news agency, he argued that “the Chinese nation loves peace, and China’s development will not hurt or threaten anyone, but serve peace, stability and common prosperity in the world.”\textsuperscript{234} In December 2005, the CPC released a white paper policy statement entitled “China's Peaceful Development Road” as part of its effort to counter the spread of the “China threat” theory. The white paper attempted to convince other countries that they had nothing to fear from an increasingly powerful China and argued that “to achieve peaceful development is a sincere hope and unremitting pursuit of the Chinese people.”\textsuperscript{235}

Despite their concern over the “China threat” theory, throughout the 2000s Chinese officials became increasingly confident on the world stage and began to articulate new Chinese views on foreign policy. These new theories built upon previous staples of Chinese foreign policy such as non-interference and maintaining a peaceful international environment, but nevertheless represented China reaching out to the world

\textsuperscript{232} Ramo, 39-40.
\textsuperscript{233} Ramo, 39-40.
in ways it had not before. Chinese officials and scholars offered what they viewed as alternatives to Western democratic and liberal social and economic models and argued that unlike Western powers in the past, China would not seek to exploit other countries. Instead Chinese officials spoke of how China and countries throughout the developing world could form “win-win relationships” supposedly in contrast to previous relationships with Western powers which had not benefitted developing countries.

**New Frontier Diplomacy**

As noted above, in the 2000s Chinese leadership under Hu placed great importance on improving and expanding relationships with developing countries, many of which were rich in natural resources. This policy was eventually termed “New Frontier” diplomacy or the “New Frontier” policy by Chinese officials. As Kurlantzick noted, “in statements and speeches, Chinese leaders began to enunciate a doctrine of ‘win-win’ relations” claiming that both China and nations in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia could benefit from closer relationships. While China had courted developing countries under Mao, and Deng had repeatedly expressed China’s place in the Third World, this new outreach under Hu was a far more expansive effort to engage Third World and developing countries. As Jianwei Wang noted,

on the surface, China’s ‘new frontier’ diplomacy is a kind of repetition of its foreign policy practice during the Mao era in which according to Mao’s theory of ‘three worlds,’ the Third World countries are the true allies of China in international affairs and China should always stand on the side of the Third World to engage in the struggle against the two superpowers.

As part of “New Frontier” diplomacy Chinese officials did play up their shared history of

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236 Jianwei Wang, 34.
237 Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 43-44.
238 Jianwei Wang, 27.
suffering under Western colonialism and continued to portray China as the representative or protector of developing world interests against the dominant Western world, particularly the U.S. Echoing Deng’s earlier statements from 1984 that China would “always belong to the Third World”, in a 2004 speech in Brazil, Hu declared “that China would always ‘stay on the side of developing countries.” In December 2005, Cheng Siwei, the Vice Chairman of the Chinese National People’s Congress, said in a speech to the China-Latin America Friendship Association, that “both [China and Latin America] belong to the developing world and have identical or similar views on many issues.” Cheng Siwei also frequently referenced China’s and Latin America’s shared experiences with colonialism, telling one audience “I think we have very good feelings toward each other because we both have a history of being invaded by colonialists.”

Notwithstanding similarities between Deng’s and Hu’s rhetoric on Third World or developing world ties, the real level of China’s engagement with the developing world increased dramatically under Hu in the early 2000s. Beijing’s increasingly pro-active diplomacy in Latin America and Africa was an especially stark example, with an

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241 Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 52. According to Kurlantzick this was said by Chang Siwei at a speech to a conference of Latin American business executives, however, Kurlantzick withheld the specific name of this event by request.
unusually high number of high-level visits to the regions.°°° Latin American and African leaders also visited Beijing more frequently. For example, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez visited China four times between 1999 and 2008. In 2006, the PRC also for the first time released an official white paper on China’s Africa Policy, signaling the increased importance Chinese leadership placed on Sino-African relations. As China increased its outreach to Latin America and Africa it did cause some alarm among scholars and officials in West. In keeping with Deng’s general guidance to avoid conflicts and to “hide capabilities,” Chinese officials tended to downplay China’s expanded interests in the developing world.°°°

The initial results of China’s expanded outreach to Latin America and Africa, however, were hard to ignore. While trade between Latin America and China was only $200 million in 1975 and roughly $2 billion in the early 1990s, by 2003 it had grown more than tenfold to $26.8 billion, and then continued to grow roughly $10 billion each year for the next three years reaching at least $60 billion by 2006.°°°° Hu set a goal of reaching $100 billion in trade between China and Latin America (and Africa) by 2010, but according to Chinese officials trade had already exceeded this level three years ahead of schedule in 2007, largely because of Latin American countries increasing exports of raw materials to China.°°°°° Likewise, China’s outreach to Venezuela convinced Venezuelan President Chavez to pledge to direct more of Venezuela’s large oil industry towards China instead of the U.S.°°°°°° In the 2000s Chinese and Latin American officials also signed numerous agreements covering a wide variety of topics including

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°°° Jianwei Wang, 21-22.
°°°°° Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 94. Jianwei Wang, 22.
°°°°°° Jianwei Wang, 22. Bergsten et al., 222.
°°°°°°° Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 9-10.
transportation, judicial, economic, and political issues, as well as technology transfers. In 2004, during Hu's visit to Brazil, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva announced that Brazil would send advisers to Beijing to study the Chinese economic system. In 2005, Chile became the first Latin American country to sign a free trade agreement with China and that same year China and Caribbean countries held the first meeting of the China-Caribbean Forum. By 2006, China had gained “standing observer status” to both the Organization of American States and the Latin American Parliament. The Chinese government also drastically increased the amount of aid it provided to Latin America, from basically nothing in the mid-1990s to at least $700 million by 2004. In 2004, Hu visited Latin America and pledged that China planned to invest $100 billion in the region over the next ten years. As of 2004, China had already invested roughly $1.76 billion in Latin America.

China’s trade, investment, and interaction with Africa expanded dramatically as well. China’s trade with Africa grew from roughly $820 million in 1979 to over $10 billion in 2000, to $39.5 billion in 2005, and over $50 billion by 2006. Similarly, trade between China and sub-Saharan African nations increased by over 250 percent between 2001 and 2005. By 2007 China had become the third largest trading partner with Africa after the U.S. and France and had passed the World Bank to become the largest

248 Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 121.
249 Jianwei Wang, 22, 28.
250 Jianwei Wang, 28.
251 Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 98.
253 Jianwei Wang, 23.
254 Jianwei Wang, 22.
255 Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 94.
provider of loans to Africa.\textsuperscript{256} China’s aid to Africa similarly rose from about only $100 million in the mid-1990s to about $2.7 billion in 2004.\textsuperscript{257} Chinese officials also created a development fund with reportedly $5 billion to help Chinese firms invest in African countries.\textsuperscript{258} By 2006, China was investing roughly a total of $6.64 billion across almost 50 different African countries.\textsuperscript{259}

The major difference between the Maoist era outreach to Africa and Latin America and the “New Frontier” diplomacy under Hu was that now “political considerations [were] overshadowed by economic rationales.”\textsuperscript{260} According to Chinese officials’ new theories on China’s foreign relations “diplomacy should be used to promote economic relations with these [developing world] countries instead of the other way around.”\textsuperscript{261} This new policy was in many ways a natural outgrowth of China’s almost singular focus on economic growth since Deng’s reforms. The policy of placing economic relations above political relations also comported well with China’s longstanding policy of non-interference in other nations’ affairs. Most importantly, however, this policy of placing “economics in command” allowed China to “unapologetically concentrate its economic diplomacy on those African, Latin American, and Middle Eastern countries rich in oil and other natural resources.”\textsuperscript{262} China was also able to use its “New Frontier” diplomacy to target countries in Africa and Latin America which still had diplomatic relations with Taiwan, and was able in many cases to entice

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 98.
\item Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 87-88.
\item Jianwei Wang, 23.
\item Jianwei Wang, 27.
\item Jianwei Wang, 27.
\item Jianwei Wang, 27-28.
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these nations to switch their recognition to Beijing.\textsuperscript{263}

The Beijing Consensus

Part of the reason that China’s outreach to developing countries in the late 1990s and 2000s was so successful was that leaders in these countries were eager to attempt to replicate China’s stunning economic growth. By now, China’s decades of consistent economic growth were known throughout the world, and elites in many developing nations viewed China as a model of development. They saw China as a kindred spirit, a former weak developing nation, which had suffered under colonialism, not unlike their own countries. Now, however, China was a world renowned economic powerhouse, which commanded the attention and respect of Western nations. Moreover, China had done all this without accepting Western style democratic political reforms or relinquishing state control of much of its economy. Western officials and organizations had generally argued to developing nations that the key to development and economic success was democratization of the political system and liberalization of the economy. This package of policy recommendations was known as the “Washington Consensus” and had emerged in the initial years following the end of the Cold War. The Washington Consensus “stressed rapid-free market reforms as a path to prosperity” and linked economic development and economic liberalization with political liberalization.\textsuperscript{264} Elites in developing nations, however, had watched the experience of nations in Eastern Europe many of whom, after the fall of the Soviet Union, had embraced the Washington Consensus and democratized and liberalized rapidly. The results had been less than


\textsuperscript{264} Kurlantzick, \textit{Charm Offensive}, 56.
encouraging, with many of these Eastern European countries experiencing great political and economic turmoil. As Ramo wrote in 2004, China’s new model of development

replaces the widely-discredited Washington Consensus, an economic theory made famous in the 1990s for its prescriptive, Washington-knows-best approach to telling other nations how to run themselves. The Washington Consensus...left a trail of destroyed economies and bad feelings around the globe.”265

In contrast, officials in developing countries were impressed that China had able to make such large economic gains on their own without following the Western liberal democratic model. Chinese officials played up the idea of China being a model of development “for social and economic success” for developing nations, and increasingly attempted to sell the China model in speeches to developing-world audiences.266 This marked an important transition for Chinese officials and was evidence that they were now confident enough in China’s development and their place in the world to attempt to export China’s model of development overseas.267 Ramo is credited with labeling China’s model for development the “Beijing Consensus.”268 Gradually other scholars also began to refer to China’s blend of authoritarianism and state-led capitalism by this name.269 In contrast to the Washington Consensus the Beijing Consensus promoted state lead capitalism, and limited political reform. The Beijing Consensus argued that countries could achieve economic growth by having the state continue to direct some of a country’s economic development while maintaining political control and slowly opening the economy up to market reforms. These policies in turn would allow developing countries a way to avoid the major dislocations that come from rapid economic liberalization, “thus allowing a

265 Ramo, 4.
266 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 56.
267 Ramo, 5.
269 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 56.
nation to build its economic strength.” The Beijing Consensus challenged Western economic and development models and stood “in direct contrast to democratic liberalism.” Minxin Pei, a China expert, called the China model “gradualist reform dictated by authoritarian politics.” The CPC had implemented economic reforms slowly, keeping a large role for the state in the economy and many state-owned enterprises, and doing “whatever was necessary to ensure the Party’s survival.” Throughout the 2000s Chinese officials promoted China’s “socioeconomic model” in speeches abroad, arguing that developing nations should adopt their model of “top-down control of development and poverty reduction in which political reform is sidelined for economic reform.” Chinese publications and “government-linked think tanks” adopted the phrase “Beijing Consensus” and “contrasted it with the Washington Consensus.” With China’s economy still booming it was hard to argue with the China model. Indian sociologist Ramgopal Agarwala stated in 2002, that “China’s successful experiment should be the most admired in human history. Other countries should respect and learn from her.” Similarly, in 2003, WTO Director General Supachai Panitchpakdi stated in a speech that “China’s robust economic performance… should be a source of inspiration for other developing countries”

China’s unique blend of authoritarianism and state directed capitalism held

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270 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 56.
271 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 56-57.
272 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 56. The original cite in Kurlantzick is Minxin Pei, China’s Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 30-32.
273 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 56-57.
274 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 56-57.
enormous appeal for rulers and elites in non-democratic developing countries who feared that instituting Western style democratic or liberal reforms would threaten their hold on power. As Kurlantzick noted, for officials in authoritarian nations “the proof cannot be ignored: China has liberalized much of its economy, yet the Communist Party still rules the country.” As part of China’s increased outreach to developing nations, Chinese officials also emphasized China’s longstanding policy of non-interference, which again held strong appeal for authoritarian regimes concerned that the West might attempt to remove them from power. Spreading China’s principle of non-interference to other authoritarian regimes benefited both these regimes and China, by serving to undermine the philosophical legitimacy of any future Western attempt to intervene in a nation. Chinese officials therefore continued to preach the non-interference doctrine to developing nations, particularly those which the West had isolated (normally for various human rights abuses), and China looked to build “a ring of allies who share[d] Beijing’s suspicion of nations intervening in other countries’ affairs.”

**China Embraces Multilateral Organizations**

As Chinese officials embarked on their new global strategy they also dramatically increased China’s interactions with multilateral organizations. Chinese officials in the third and fourth generations had drastically different opinions on how China should deal with multilateral organizations compared to their predecessors and as a result China went from avoiding these organizations to using them as a key part of Chinese foreign policy. Kai He went so far to say that “after the Cold War, the most stunning foreign policy

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277 Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 57-58.
278 Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 41-42.
change by China is its gradual embrace of multilateral institutions." As Kurlantzick notes, “older Chinese leaders had seen [multilateral organizations] as constraints on China’s power and venues for other nations to criticize China.” Similarly, Kai He argued that even as late as the early 1990s “Chinese leaders still lived in the ‘high church of realpolitik,’ and multilateral institutions were an alien concept for policy makers in Beijing.” Ramo further noted in 2004 that China’s increasing willingness to embrace numerous regional multilateral organizations in Asia “comparis strikingly with Beijing’s distrust, as recently as 10 years ago, of multilateral organizations.” In 2007 the official People’s Daily proclaimed that “the upholding of multilateralism has been the striking feature of China’s diplomacy over the past few years, as [China has] engaged more with international and regional organizations.” The next year in 2008, Chinese foreign policy expert Jean-Marc F. Blanchard cited this same article as evidence that “China afford[ed] multilateralism strong rhetorical support.” Kai He also noted in 2008 that “compared to its initial reluctance and suspicion about multilateral institutions, China has gradually set multilateral diplomacy through institutions as one of the cornerstones of Chinese foreign policy after the Cold War.” The shift in Chinese officials’ attitudes and embrace of multilateral organizations was so dramatic that in 2004, Susan Shirk referred to China as a “born-again regional multilateralist.”

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279 Kai He, 65.
280 Kurlantzick, Charm Offensive, 50-51.
281 Kai He, 67.
282 Ramo, 52-53.
285 Kai He, 65.
As noted above, between 1948 and 1971, China belonged to only one intergovernmental organization (IGO), the UN. This number rose to 21 by 1976, 37 by 1989, and by 2005 China belonged to over 50 IGOs "encompassing the political, economic, social, scientific, technological, and even security realms." By 2008, China had become a signatory to more than 250 multilateral treaties and by its own accounting belonged to more than 130 international organizations. Zhongqi Pan commented on this drastic change in 2008 saying the "China which had isolated itself through much of the three decades prior to 1979, is now fully engaged internationally through its memberships in the majority of IGOs." China was even instrumental in the creation of the first multilateral organization in the 21st century, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001.

Part of the reason for this about face was Chinese officials' increasing concern about the "China threat" mentality and the prospect that other nations would work to constrain China's rise. Chinese officials began to realize that by avoiding participating in multilateral institutions China had actually been giving other countries further reason to be worried that an increasingly powerful China would act against other nations' interests. As Kurlantzick noted, Chinese officials "realized that by avoiding multilateral organizations in the past, [China] had only stoked [other countries'] fears of Beijing, since other countries had less interaction with Chinese diplomats and few forums to

Professor of Political Science, Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, San Diego. Susan Shirk: *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 118.

287 Zhongqi Pan, 47.
288 Zhongqi Pan, 47. Bergsten et al., 223.
289 Zhongqi Pan, 47.
290 Zhongqi Pan, 48.
discuss issues of concern with Chinese leaders.”291 By joining and becoming more active in multilateral organizations, Chinese officials hoped to prove that China was a responsible nation, which wished to work with other countries rather than disrupt or dominate the international system. The official *People's Daily* noted that part of this strategy was laid out in the report of the 16th National Congress of the CPC in 2002, and indicated the report argued that, “China will take an active part in multilateral activities, and play a constructive role within international and regional frameworks.”292 As Kurlantzick noted, “by working with multilateral organizations” China could “signal to other countries that it can play by international rules and be a responsible power” thus gaining greater acceptance from other nations for China’s rise.293 Most importantly, Chinese officials wanted to convince other nations that they did not need to balance or work against China and attempt to limit its rise. Chinese officials believed that by engaging in multilateral institutions, China might be able to avoid the disruptions and counter-balancing that had accompanied the rise of previous growing world powers. As Chow Chung-yan noted, the “Peaceful Rise” and “Peaceful Development” theories actually discuss how “China can avoid the historical problems associated with rising powers [partially] through active participation in international organisations and institutions.”294

While China’s increased engagement with multilateral organizations was new, it in some ways was a just a different method to pursue Deng’s main foreign policy goal of ensuring that China had a peaceful and stable international environment to develop in.

292 “Harmonious World: China's Ancient Philosophy for New International Order.”
293 Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 50-51.
294 Chow Chung-yan.
With the prevalence of the “China threat” theory increasing, and China increasingly relying on foreign sources of energy (normally delivered via international shipping lanes) to power its economy, Chinese officials believed they needed to become more involved in the multilateral organizations which helped shape the international environment in order to ensure these organizations were not used to constrain China. Yu Sui, a researcher at the Beijing-based China Research Center of Contemporary World Studies, commented on China’s “increasing willingness to engage [in] multilateral activities” and argued that this was partially a result of Chinese officials’ realization that participating in more multilateral organizations could contribute to China’s longstanding goal of ensuring a “peaceful, stable and friendly international and surrounding environment.”

Likewise, Blanchard argued that Chinese leaders increased their interaction with multilateral organizations because they realized they could be used to help promote China’s security, political, and economic interests. Chinese leaders also began to realize that China could use multilateral institutions as a way to balance against U.S. power (which they feared would be used to prevent China’s rise) without directly confronting the U.S. This served both China’s longstanding goal of avoiding confrontation with major powers, particularly the U.S., as well as China’s goal of moving away from a uni-polar world which could potentially threaten China’s development.

China’s new embrace of multilateral institutions also extended to its “New Frontier” diplomacy. As Jianwei noted, Chinese officials realized that multilateral organizations could be used to achieve results which were “not always attainable in traditional bilateral diplomacy” particularly in its efforts to improve relations with

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developing countries. One of the primary examples of China's increasing use of multilateral institutions to advance its goals in the developing world is Chinese officials' creation of the Forum on China-African Cooperation (FOCAC). In October 2000 China held the first ministerial conference of FOCAC in Beijing. Ministers from 44 countries and 17 international and regional organizations attended the conference which passed the "Beijing Declaration of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development." The second FOCAC ministerial conference was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in December 2003, the third in Beijing in November 2006, and the fourth in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt in November 2009. At the November 2006 FOCAC summit, China adopted the "Beijing Declaration and Action Plan" which elevated China-Africa relations to the new level of "strategic partnership." In the lexicon of Chinese foreign policy there are two types of relationships between China and other countries: "cooperative partner" and "strategic partner." By raising China-Africa relations to the "strategic partner" level, Chinese officials were signaling the prominent role that African countries now played in China's diplomatic strategy and priorities. At the 2006 FOCAC conference Hu also announced that China would provide $5 billion worth of loans to Africa and that China was creating the "China-Africa Development Fund" which would initially have $1 billion to encourage Chinese investment in Africa.

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297 Jianwei Wang, 28.
298 Jianwei Wang, 28.
299 Jianwei Wang, 28.
Backlash Against China’s “New Frontier” Policy; Reconsidering Non-Interference

Although China largely benefited from its new outreach to African and Latin American countries, critics in these countries and the West argued that rather than truly pursuing “win-win” relationships, China was actually practicing “neo-colonialism” by exploiting developing countries to gain access to their natural resources, much like former colonial powers had done.\(^{300}\) As Jianwei noted in 2008,

China’s aggressive efforts of securing the supply of oil and other natural resources directly from African and Latin American countries bypassing the world market and ‘locking up’ monopoly rights to explore oil, natural gas and other minerals in those countries convinced many Westerners that China is pursuing a strategy of ‘robbing’ natural resources in the [sp] Third World countries.\(^{301}\)

Activists from developing countries also argued that China’s poor labor and environmental standards were hurting local populations and that the flood of cheap Chinese goods was hurting local producers. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, there were several anti-Chinese riots and protests in countries in the developing world, and many developing countries enacted tariffs as a way to counter the flood of cheap Chinese goods.\(^{302}\)

Western countries were also wary that China’s expansion into Africa and Latin America was a precursor of a more aggressive China, fitting the “China threat” theories. Western nations criticized China’s policy of providing loans or other support to countries regardless of the other country’s governments political or human rights record. Chinese officials argued that this was a logical extension of China’s long-standing non-

\(^{300}\) Jianwei Wang, 31.
\(^{301}\) Jianwei Wang, 31.
\(^{302}\) Jianwei Wang, 31.
interference policy.\textsuperscript{303} However, since the “New Frontier” policy was a new endeavor, Chinese officials were caught somewhat off guard by the negative reaction to their efforts. As Jianwei noted in 2008, “as a whole, Beijing is ill-prepared for dealing with the global repercussion of its ‘new frontier’ diplomacy. Very often Beijing failed to foresee such consequences and was slow in reacting and taking effective measures to address the problems.”\textsuperscript{304}

Another consequence of the success of China’s expanded outreach to Latin American, African, and other developing countries, was that it increased China’s interests in these countries. As a result, internal events in these countries increasingly had the potential to negatively impact Chinese economic interests such as access to oil and natural gas fields. This forced Chinese officials to re-examine China’s long standing non-interference policy. With China’s economy increasingly dependent on foreign supplies of natural resources and energy, Chinese officials could no longer always ignore internal events in other countries. Moreover, because of China’s willingness to deal with any nation and provide aid with no strings attached, regardless of the country’s political structure or human rights record, many of the developing countries China had embraced were unstable and/or led by authoritarian regimes. Whereas Chinese officials had originally been willing to take the risk to invest in sometimes unstable developing countries, eventually Chinese leaders realized that such instability “constitute[d] a major obstacle in deepening China’s relations with” these countries and often threatened Chinese access to natural resources.\textsuperscript{305} As Jianwei noted in 2008, with China’s economic stakes in African and Latin American countries

\textsuperscript{303} Jianwei Wang, 29-30.  
\textsuperscript{304} Jianwei Wang, 29.  
\textsuperscript{305} Jianwei Wang, 30.
getting higher, Beijing is forced to modify its adherence to the ‘non-intervention’ principle. In other words, China can no longer take an indifferent attitude towards the domestic development in developing countries as such development could have an adverse impact on China’s interest.306

In fact, while China claimed to want peace and stability as a principle, its focus on stability (above all else, including human rights) in Africa and other areas of the world was undoubtedly also because China’s economic investments required such stability. In this sense China’s focus on stability in Latin America and Africa also represented a logical extension of Deng’s guidance that China required a stable and peaceful international environment in order to focus on economic development. During the 2006 FOCAC conference, Hu told African leaders in effect that peace and stability were “the preconditions for Africa’s development and prosperity and China will spare no effort to support the course of peace and stability in Africa.”307 Scholars have also argued that Chinese officials’ concern that instability would negatively affect Chinese investments explains why China was willing to send peacekeeping troops to Africa during the 1990s and 2000s, something which was likely unimaginable in the 1970s and 1980s.308 Jianwei calculated that between 1990 and 2008 China sent more than 3,000 peacekeeping troops to Africa for twelve different peacekeeping operations.309 Hu meanwhile claimed in 2008 that China had “sent more than 10,000 peacekeepers to 22 UN peacekeeping operations” around the world.310

One particular example of China’s changing stance on non-interference is China’s

306 Jianwei Wang, 30.
308 Jianwei Wang, 30.
309 Jianwei Wang, 23.
310 Klaudia Lee, “Peaceful Path the Best Way to Go, says Hu; President Assures Neighbours Over China's Rise,” South China Morning Post, April 13, 2008.
shift in polices towards Sudan in the 2000s in regards to the conflict in Darfur. Despite many claims that genocide was occurring in Darfur in 2003 and 2004, China initially stood by its non-interference policy and argued “that pressure or intervention [would] not produce desired results.” Chinese officials stated that the international community should respect Sudan’s sovereignty and only send peacekeeping troops in with the consent of the Sudanese government. Chinese officials were eventually forced to alter this policy, however, as China’s support for the Sudanese regime began to attract more and more negative attention and threatened to hamper China’s relations with other countries. The negative press particularly threatened to tarnish the 2008 Beijing Olympics which were supposed to be China’s moment to “come out” on the world stage as a major 21st century power. As Jianwei noted, “Beijing suddenly realized that the domestic development in Sudan could jeopardize broader foreign policy interest[s]” and eventually was forced to “compromise its stand on ‘non-intervention’ to control the damage.” Hu appointed a special envoy for the Darfur issue and began to pressure the Sudanese President to work with the UN. China’s changing calculations regarding the Darfur crisis and the costs and benefits of non-interference thus exemplify how as China became more engaged throughout the world, it was forced to modify and even at times abandon, to a degree, its non-interference policy. As Jianwei noted, China’s experience with Sudan “certainly taught Chinese leaders a lesson: as an emerging world power, China can no longer just do business as usual with African countries while totally

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311 Jianwei Wang, 31.
312 Jianwei Wang, 31.
313 Jianwei Wang, 31.
314 Jianwei Wang, 31.
ignoring the domestic situation in those countries.”\textsuperscript{315} Issues which China had previously considered to be another nations’ “internal” or “domestic” business could now negatively impact China’s own economic and foreign policy interests.\textsuperscript{316} While China generally still espoused its policy of non-interference under Hu, Chinese officials could sometimes be persuaded to support intervention or to take action regarding another country if they believed that China’s interests were threatened.\textsuperscript{317}

\textbf{“Harmonious World”}

By the mid 2000s Hu had begun to incorporate many of the new tenants of Chinese foreign policy into what would become known as the “Harmonious World” (hexie shijie) concept. The official Chinese news agency argued in 2005 that the two primary aspects of the “Harmonious World” proposal were creating “a new concept of security featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation” and the assertion that “every country has the right to independently choose its own social system and path of development.”\textsuperscript{318} According to the official \textit{People’s Daily}, Hu first used the phrase “harmonious world” in a May 2003 speech at the Moscow Institute of International Relations, when he stated “in order to achieve lasting peace and universal prosperity, the international community should cooperate fully with unremitting efforts, so as to build a harmonious world.”\textsuperscript{319} Many scholars argue, however, that Hu really introduced the “Harmonious World” concept in April 2005 at the Asia-Africa summit in

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\textsuperscript{315} Jianwei Wang, 31. \\
\textsuperscript{316} Jianwei Wang, 31. \\
\textsuperscript{317} Jianwei Wang, 31. \\
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Jakarta when he argued that the countries represented at the conference should “promote friendly coexistence, equality-based dialogues, and common development and prosperity of different civilizations, in order to create a harmonious world.”  

Hu further detailed the “Harmonious World” concept at the UN’s 60th anniversary summit in September 2005. “Harmonious World” argued that although countries had different economic, political, and social systems they should still work together on issues of mutual concern and form “win-win” solutions while respecting one another’s differences. According to the “Harmonious World” theory “all countries have the right to independently choose their own social systems and paths of development and this right should be respected.”

Rather than all attempting to pursue one single model of development, countries should learn from the “strong points” of other nations, increase dialogue, learn from one another’s cultures, and “develop together by seeking common ground while putting aside differences.” As part of a “Harmonious World” countries should also work “to preserve the diversity of civilizations..., make international relations more democratic and jointly build a harmonious world where all civilizations coexist and accommodate each other.” Keeping with China’s new focus on using multilateral organizations the “Harmonious World” concept also emphasized multilateralism as the key to “realiz[ing] common security.” Echoing Chinese officials’ comments on pursuing “win-win” solutions as part of “New Frontier” diplomacy, Hu argued under the “Harmonious World”

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322 “Hu Makes 4-point Proposal for Building Harmonious World.”
323 “Hu Makes 4-point Proposal for Building Harmonious World.”
324 “Hu Makes 4-point Proposal for Building Harmonious World.”
325 “Hu Makes 4-point Proposal for Building Harmonious World.”
theory that globalization had made countries’ economic fates more “intertwined” than ever before and therefore countries should participate in “mutually beneficial cooperation…to achieve common prosperity.”

China’s increasing reliance on selling goods overseas and obtaining energy sources from abroad, also likely figured prominently in the motivations for formulating the “Harmonious World” concept. According to Hu, as part of efforts to achieve a harmonious world, countries should work to “establish and improve a multilateral trading system that is open, fair and non-discriminatory,” and increase cooperation on energy matters to ensure “energy security and energy market stability.”

Although the term “Harmonious World” was new, it built upon several long-standing concepts in Chinese foreign policy, such as China’s non-interference policy. When outlining the “Harmonious World” concept, Hu reiterated China’s advocacy for non-interference, arguing that “we should all oppose acts of encroachment on other countries’ sovereignty, forceful interference in a country’s internal affairs, and willful use or threat of military force.” The “Harmonious World” concept also continued Chinese officials’ efforts (dating back to Mao and Deng) to portray China as the protector or leader of developing countries by arguing for a larger role for developing, small, and medium-sized countries in international decision making and more consensus-driven decisions at the UN (an implicit argument that the U.S. and other major powers too often acted without the consent or agreement of developing countries). Perhaps most importantly, “Harmonious World” built on Deng’s guidance to seek a stable international

326 “Hu Makes 4-point Proposal for Building Harmonious World.”
327 “Hu Makes 4-point Proposal for Building Harmonious World.”
328 “Hu Makes 4-point Proposal for Building Harmonious World.”
329 “Hu Makes 4-point Proposal for Building Harmonious World.”
system so that China could focus on its own development. Like Deng’s previous guidance, “Harmonious World” continued to argue that,

China’s interests are best served through a foreign policy that seeks a peaceful external environment so that the country can devote its energies principally to domestic economic development, reassure neighbors and key partners about China’s benign intentions, and avoid confrontation with other major powers, especially the United States.  

An international system which acted in accordance with the “Harmonious World” philosophy would allow for China’s peaceful development without other nations feeling threatened by China’s rise. The official People’s Daily noted that at the August 2006 Central Foreign Affairs Conference, “the [Chinese] government vowed to create a sound international environment and favorable external conditions for the country’s development and to contribute to the construction of a harmonious world” echoing both Deng’s and Hu’s key foreign policy statements.  

In 2007, the official People’s Daily also stressed how the “Harmonious World” concept was consistent with Zhou Enlai’s “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” from 1954, Deng Xiaoping’s “Independent Foreign Policy of Peace” from the 1980s, and the “Path of Peaceful Development” from the early 2000s.  

Similarly, when commenting on the “Harmonious World” policy, Ruan Zongze, the deputy director of the China Institute of International Studies, argued that “the continuity in the strategies of different generations of Chinese leaders shows that China, facing a complex and changing world, has always regarded peace and harmony as a priority.”

Despite all these lofty statements, as Callahan noted “in practice, the official view

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330 Bergsten et al., 49.
331 “Harmonious World: China’s Ancient Philosophy for New International Order.”
332 “Harmonious World: China’s Ancient Philosophy for New International Order.”
333 “Harmonious World: China’s Ancient Philosophy for New International Order.”

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of ['Harmonious World'] lacks detail. The Beijing government tends to describe the policy in terms of vague platitudes,” making it difficult to link it to concrete actions. 334 The very global nature of the term “Harmonious World” and its accompanying suggestions for how international affairs should be conducted, however, were a recognition by Chinese officials that China was becoming a world power and that China had interests around the globe. Similar to their promotion of the Beijing Consensus, the “Harmonious World” concept represented an important transition for Chinese officials. It was a sign that Chinese officials were now confident enough to present their own views for how global affairs should operate, even if these views conflicted with Western models. As Blanchard and fellow China expert Sujian Guo argued, “Harmonious World” “gained traction” among Chinese officials “because China’s economic growth, diplomatic successes, and rising military capabilities, among other factors, ha[d] given Chinese political and intellectual elites the feeling that they [could] and should do more in world affairs.”335 In 2007, when commenting on the “Harmonious World” concept, Wu Jianmin, president of the Foreign Affairs University in China (also referred to as the China Foreign Affairs Institute), told the official People’s Daily that “China’s diplomacy has become more active and mature as the country’s national strength developed.”336 Similarly, Yuan Peng, a Chinese expert on international relations, noted in 2007 that “by applying this concept ['Harmonious World'], Chinese diplomacy has taken a new turn, pushing China into a new and powerful role in world affairs.”337

Although it was heavily influenced by previous Chinese concepts of foreign

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334 Callahan.
335 Blanchard and Guo. Introduction, 5.
336 “Harmonious World: China's Ancient Philosophy for New International Order.”
337 Yuan Peng.
policy, "Harmonious World" also grew out of Hu's earlier domestic policy efforts called "Harmonious Society." As the People's Daily noted in 2007 "the 'Harmonious Society' is a political catchphrase in China today, by which President Hu Jintao aims to lead the government in closing the wealth divide and easing growing social tensions. The concept of a 'Harmonious World' is an extension of Hu's domestic policy into the arena of foreign relations." Callahan similarly noted that "Chinese officials and scholars regularly proclaim 'Harmonious Society' - whose formal aim is to use state power to 'close the wealth divide and ease growing social tensions' - to be 'the model for the world.'" "Harmonious Society" was a reaction to criticisms that in the pursuit of continuous rapid economic development Chinese officials had subordinated all other concerns. While China's economy had experienced remarkable overall economic growth since Deng's reform, that rapid economic growth had not been equally distributed and had in many instances resulted in great instability. Most of the economic growth had occurred in the southern and eastern provinces of China, while large sections of the western and northern parts of China remained underdeveloped. Likewise, the push for economic growth at all costs had led to the dislocation of many Chinese as well as destruction of the environment in many areas. This resulted in increasing domestic protests throughout China and claims that the CPC's policies were only benefiting a small percentage of Chinese while the vast majority remained poor. Rampant corruption in the CPC and among local government officials only added to the sense of outrage among poorer Chinese. "Harmonious Society," therefore, looked to rebalance Chinese domestic economic policy and development. The broad goals of "Harmonious Society" were to

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338 "Harmonious World: China's Ancient Philosophy for New International Order."
339 Callahan.
balance China’s continuing need for economic growth with a greater appreciation for other concerns including more balanced development geographically, the effects of economic transformations on different populations in China, and the effects of new industries on the environment.

Hu and other Chinese officials attempted to link these domestic policies with China’s evolving foreign policy goals. As Deng had argued 30 years ago, in order for China to continue developing it would need stability and a peaceful environment, not only at home but also abroad. In the same manner, Chinese officials presented “Harmonious World” as a logical outgrowth of “Harmonious Society.” When Yuan Peng commented on “Harmonious World” and “Harmonious Society”, in 2007 he stated “the latter is the foundation of the former, and the former the guarantee of the latter. Domestic and international affairs should be seen as a whole.”

Likewise, Blanchard and Guo argued, “the concept of ‘Harmonious World’ is the extension of ‘Harmonious Society’ into the international arena and the other side of [the] coin in the Chinese leadership’s management of domestic and foreign policy issues.” Just as “Harmonious Society” promised to listen to the concerns of all Chinese and to balance their interests while still pursuing development, “Harmonious World” promised to listen to the concerns of all nations and to seek mutually beneficial solutions.

Both “Harmonious World” and “Harmonious Society” also built on traditional Confucian values which the Chinese government had begun to promote, along with Chinese nationalism, following the decline of the utility of communism as a unifying

340 Yuan Peng.
ideology. Chinese officials and scholars played up the idea that “Harmonious World” was a natural outgrowth of Chinese culture. In 2007, the official People’s Daily published an article entitled “Harmonious World: China’s Ancient Philosophy for New International Order” which argued that the focus on “harmony” was “not freshly coined political jargon, but a philosophical tradition” with a several thousand year history in China.343

The “Harmonious World” strategy was also developed partially in reaction to the “China threat” theory and the criticisms that as China expanded its relations with the developing world and its neighbors, it was exploiting other countries’ resources, encouraging rogue regimes, and in general not acting as a responsible major power. Through the “Harmonious World” philosophy Chinese officials hoped to show that rather than being a disruptive power which was destabilizing the international system, that China was in fact a responsible power which sought peaceful and “harmonious” relations between all nations of the world.344 In 2007, the official People’s Daily tried to emphasize that throughout its history China had been focused on harmony and peace and by its very nature was not a threat to other countries writing:

> Italian missionary Matteo Ricci, who came to China more than 400 years ago, wrote after studying Chinese history, and especially after comparing the Chinese and European history, that the Chinese were contented with the status quo and cherished harmony and peace. The Chinese nation by its nature had no ambition for overseas conquest, he concluded.345

The phrase “Harmonious World” was also “meant to contrast with previous Maoist ideas of ‘struggle’ and ‘revolution’” as part of Chinese officials’ efforts to convince other

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342 Blanchard and Guo. Introduction, 5-6.
344 Bergsten et al., 50.
345 “Harmonious World: China’s Ancient Philosophy for New International Order.”
nations that China’s rise did not pose a threat. As Bergsten and his co-authors noted in 2008,

China’s kinder, gentler approach has sought to make China’s rise in power more acceptable and perhaps legitimate in the eyes of the world, particularly along its periphery, which otherwise might view China’s emergence with alarm and coalesce to contain or balance against it.

PRC policymakers openly acknowledged that “the desire to counter the China threat perception” was a factor in “China’s championing of a ‘harmonious world.’” For example, in March 2006, Wu Jianmin said that “once China’s ideas on the concept of a ‘Harmonious Society’ and a ‘Harmonious World’ are better understood, fewer people will believe in the view of ‘China threat.’”

The “Harmonious World” policy was also formulated to attempt to convince the U.S. that China was not intent on challenging the U.S.’ role in the current international system. “Harmonious World” presented less of an outright challenge to the U.S. than some past Chinese foreign policy formulations, such as Jiang’s “‘building multipolar world’ (duoji shijie) concept, [which sought] to multipolarize or counterbalance the U.S.-centric international system.” However, while “Harmonious World” did not explicitly call for multi-polarization, it still clearly challenged some of the attributes of the Western and U.S. dominated international system. As Blanchard and Guo admitted, “it is fairly obvious that China’s call [in the ‘Harmonious World’ philosophy] for democratic international relations, tolerance of distinct social systems and paths to development,

346 Bergsten et al., 212-213.
347 Bergsten et al., 212-213.
351 Blanchard and Guo. Introduction, 5.
increased support for multilateralism, greater efforts to close the North-South gap, and open trade are directed, in part, at the U.S.”352

As Bergsten noted, while Chinese officials’ statements often focused on China’s promotion of lofty principles such as “Harmonious World” and “New Frontier” diplomacy, “in practice...China’s idealistic tenets have often fused seamlessly with its very practical national interests.”353 China’s advocacy for non-interference allowed China to express solidarity with developing nations against the West while preventing the establishment of precedents which could be used to intervene in China. Likewise China’s focus on dialogue was largely unassailable, even though in practice it allowed China (and other nations) to avoid taking action on difficult international issues. The focus on dialogue and non-interference also allowed China to continue to pursue its own national interests, which normally involved gaining access to energy reserves and other natural resources, in countries like Burma, Sudan, and Iran despite those regimes’ poor human rights records.354

Rising Chinese Nationalism Pressures Chinese Policymakers

As China expanded its foreign relations around the globe throughout the 2000s, the Chinese people became more used to China playing a global role, and Chinese confidence continued to rise. By the late 2000s it was hard to miss signs of China’s increasingly bold confidence and rising nationalist tendencies. According to one survey taken in 2008, 86 percent of Chinese were satisfied with their country’s direction, and most believed that China would “eventually replace the U.S. as the world's leading

353 C. Fred Bergsten et al., China's Rise, 213.
354 C. Fred Bergsten et al., China's Rise, 213.
That same year, Lau Nai-keung, wrote an article entitled, “The Chinese People Have Truly Stood Up,” in which (as noted earlier) he argued that China was now “a full member of the [international] club” and thus a true world power. According to Lau this new status as a “full member of the club” granted China a greater say in setting the rules for international relations particularly since previously “China had been on the receiving end of these rules, and it knows very well how unjust they are and how suffocating they can be to development.”

Lau further warned Western powers that they would need to adapt to China’s growing power saying:

How the world proceeds will depend on how China’s new position is received by the developed countries. Old attitudes and habits die hard. But China has changed; it is now up to the West to adjust its attitudes and modify its habits.

Similarly in 2009, Yu Sui, a researcher at the Beijing-based China Research Center of Contemporary World Studies, wrote in the China Daily that the world “cannot do without a powerful China.”

Daniel Lynch, an expert on Chinese foreign and domestic policy and Chinese elites, noted that what he called “particularly optimistic Chinese” were predicting “that their country will surpass the United States in ‘comprehensive national power’ — military, economic and cultural — by the late 2020s.” News articles both inside and outside China in the late 2000s highlighted the growing sense of confidence within China, with titles like “China Oozes Confidence About Future.” Hu himself proclaimed at the PRC’s 60th anniversary parade in 2009 that the Chinese people were

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357 Lau Nai-keung, “The Chinese People Have Truly Stood Up.”
358 Yu Sui.
"full of confidence" about the future.361

This increasing Chinese confidence and growing prevalence of a more aggressive Chinese nationalism can perhaps best be seen, however, in a 2008 article entitled “Proof That China Will No Longer Be Bullied,” again written by Lau Nai-keung.362 In this article, Lau boasts “I have stressed several times in this column this year that China will no longer be bullied; recent incidents have proved my point.”363 He then goes on to proudly cite China’s spurning of France (due to visits between French officials and the Dalai Lama), and China’s ignoring of Japanese protests regarding Chinese actions towards the contested Diaoyu Islands, as glowing examples of China’s new strength and unwillingness to be “bullied.”364 Lau’s article also serves as an example of the growing anti-foreign sentiments that were part of Chinese nationalism during the 2000s. Speaking of then French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s visit with the Dali Lama and Sarkozy’s criticism of China prior to the Beijing Olympics, Lau states “to most Chinese, Mr. Sarkozy is a slimy politician wanting to take advantage of China.”365 Exemplifying the increasingly hostile and aggressive sentiments of some strands of Chinese nationalism, Lau went so far as to threaten the French for crossing China, saying “the Chinese have a long memory. And, when the time comes, they will return a blow.”366

While such fiercely nationalist sentiments were becoming more common place within China, such “radical nationalistic behavior [was] not in China’s interests” as these kinds of statements reinforced the “China threat” theory that Chinese officials had

361 Calum MacLeod.
363 Lau Nai-keung, “Proof That China Will No Longer Be Bullied.”
364 Lau Nai-keung, “Proof That China Will No Longer Be Bullied.”
365 Lau Nai-keung, “Proof That China Will No Longer Be Bullied.”
366 Lau Nai-keung, “Proof That China Will No Longer Be Bullied.”
worked so hard to combat and undermined their attempts “to preach the ‘peaceful rise’ of China” and “Beijing’s claim to act as a responsible major power.” As Joseph Cheng Yu-shek argued, by the 2000s nationalism had “become a double-edged sword” for the Chinese government; stating that “if Chinese people can go and demonstrate in front of foreign embassies today, they may march against their own leaders tomorrow.”

Despite their role in encouraging this new more aggressive form of Chinese nationalism, in the 2000s Chinese officials found it increasingly difficult to control, and nationalistic sentiments had translated into new pressures on Chinese officials formulating foreign policy. During the late 1990s and early 2000s there were several instances where popular nationalistic outbursts actually worked against Chinese government policies. For example, Chinese authorities attempted to limit demonstrations following the accidental NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 for fear that the protests would negatively impact the U.S.-China relationship. Similarly, in 2005, the Chinese government eventually shut down anti-Japanese protests after they expanded and became violent for fear that they would cause too much damage to relations with Japan. As several scholars have noted, both of these incidents had an effect on the fourth generation of leadership, and from 2006 on, when formulating policies on controversial issues such as China’s Taiwan policy, Hu actually had to work to rein “in the more hawkish attitudes of other Chinese officials...and [keep] nationalist sentiment in check.”

commentators noted how some Chinese nationalists “sharply criticized” Hu for

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367 Joseph Cheng Yu-shek.
368 Joseph Cheng Yu-shek.
369 Bergsten et al., 46-51.
371 Edward Wong.
"conceding too much to China’s most reviled historical enemy" Japan. Lau himself, while expressing strongly nationalist sentiments, commented on the predicament Chinese officials faced in the 2000s, saying “there is tremendous internal pressure for Beijing to take action to defend the country’s vital national interests…. If it appears weak on territorial issues, it will have to face nationwide protests.” Indeed, during this time period Chinese leaders increasingly needed to take nationalist sentiments and reactions into account when crafting foreign policy. While Chinese officials may have been concerned by the ferocity of anti-U.S. and anti-Japanese protests in the 2000s, they “could not afford to show any sign of weakness” lest they be accused of not defending China’s interests. Such outbursts constrained Chinese officials in their policy options, and “under such circumstances [of popular nationalist outburst], flexibility in foreign policy became limited, and breakthroughs were impossible in the absence of give and take.” As Bergsten and his co-authors stated in 2008, even if Chinese leaders themselves wanted to play a more constructive role in the international system they had “to remain ever mindful of and at times accommodate the growing sense of confident nationalism” that was sweeping through China.

It is difficult to assess whether the increase in Chinese nationalism during the 1990s and 2000s was primarily a natural result of China’s rapid economic growth or whether it was more the result of efforts by Chinese officials to encourage it as substitute ideology for communism. Attributing some form of measurement to how much each factor mattered is inherently quite difficult, and likely outside the scope of this study.

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372 Edward Wong.
373 Lau Nai-keung, “Proof That China Will No Longer Be Bullied.”
375 Joseph Cheng Yu-shek.
376 Bergsten et al., 50.
Either way, both factors certainly contributed to the rise in nationalist sentiments and the increase in Chinese nationalism undoubtedly played a role in encouraging Chinese officials to pursue a more active, and eventually a more aggressive, foreign policy. Initially this rise in nationalism helped push Chinese officials to expand China’s diplomatic horizons and China’s influence around the world. As noted above though, by the late 2000s, Chinese officials had discovered that the nationalism which they themselves had helped encourage was not always compatible with their foreign policy goals and in fact sometimes constrained their foreign policy options.
12. Conclusion

From the 1970s to the 2000s, China went through several dramatic changes, including in its conduct of foreign policy. It went from a country whose leader said it would never become a superpower and that if it ever did the world should rise up against it, to a country which openly referred to itself as a "great power" and talked about surpassing the world's only superpower (the U.S.) in both economic and military power within twenty years. Likewise, China transformed from a country which generally avoided multilateral organizations, suspecting that they were tools of Western powers designed to undermine China, to a country which proclaimed the need to work more within multilateral organizations, and argued that rather than being tools of the West, multilateral organizations were actually a key way to limit Western powers. Perhaps most importantly, China transitioned from a country which played a passive role in the international system and focused almost entirely inwards, to a country which embarked on a global outreach to spread Chinese economic interests and influence around the world and preached a new model of development and a new concept of international relations.

Part of the reason for this dramatic shift is that each generation of Chinese leadership viewed China's foreign policy slightly different. Under Mao Zedong ideology was in the lead and China's foreign policy consisted largely of supporting communist and revolutionary causes around the world. Following the disaster of Mao's policies (at home and abroad) Deng Xiaoping, pulled China back from Mao's extreme policies, and focused on pragmatic economic reforms. He argued that China was too weak to focus on foreign policy and instead should devote all its energy and resources to internal development.
Deng cautioned his fellow Chinese to “lay low,” to avoid any international issue which might entangle China and distract from its internal development, and to avoid taking sides in the Cold War. According to Deng, China’s primary foreign policy goal should be ensuring a stable and peaceful international environment so that China could focus on its internal development. Jiang Zemin had to deal with the international fallout from the brutal Tiananmen Square crackdown, as well as the new reality of a uni-polar world following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Thus, Jiang focused most of his energy on repairing relations with the U.S. with the goal of discouraging the U.S. from attempting to prevent China’s rise. Finally, Hu Jintao oversaw the true emergence of the PRC onto the international stage as China embarked on a new global foreign policy strategy aimed at securing Chinese access to natural resources to continue to power its voracious economy. Hu and the fourth generation of leadership also sought to convince a wary international community that the rest of the world had nothing to fear from China’s rise, and sought to build a network of supportive countries which would help China’s economy survive any potential future conflict with the U.S. or the West.

While changes in the overall leader of the PRC undoubtedly were a factor in China’s evolving foreign policy (particularly in the transition from Mao to Deng), there were several other changes within Chinese society which helped encourage Chinese officials to formulate a more proactive and aggressive foreign policy. As noted above, during the 1990s there was a large turnover in Chinese leadership from older CPC revolutionaries who had personally taken part in the Chinese Civil War to new third and fourth generation leaders. These new CPC officials had more education than their predecessors and were overwhelming trained as engineers rather than being
revolutionaries who had personally taken part in the 1949 Communist revolution. The third and fourth generations of PRC leadership were also more pragmatic and had more exposure to the West. As a result they were more likely to better understand how the international system operated and thus more likely to advocate for a more sophisticated foreign policy.

During the 1990s there was also an important shift within Chinese youth and Chinese society. Whereas in the 1980s Chinese youths and academics were calling for more liberal reforms of the Chinese government, by the 1990s many young Chinese were actually calling for a stronger central government. Even more importantly for Chinese foreign policy, where the youth of the 1980s looked to America as an example and a beacon of liberty, by the 1990s and 2000s many Chinese youth viewed the U.S. as a “bully” who was purposefully attempting to thwart China’s rise. The youth and academics of the 1980s had witnessed the horrible results of an aggressive and powerful central Chinese government during the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and Tiananmen Square. The youth of the 1990s and 2000s in contrast generally had no experience with these events and only knew a China in which the economy was booming and individuals both inside and outside of China continually spoke of China’s inevitable rise.

The decline of communism as a functioning unifying ideology and the rise of Chinese nationalism also played a role in pushing both Chinese officials and Chinese youth to call for a more aggressive foreign policy. Following the exposure of Mao’s policies as disasters, and the subsequent success of Deng’s market-based economic reforms, many Chinese no longer had faith in communism. While the CPC still referred
to itself as a "communist" party, communist ideology factored very little into most of the CPC’s decisions; rather Chinese officials focused almost entirely on how to continue to develop China’s economy and protect the CPC’s power. Fearful that the decline in faith in communism might result in a lack of support for the CPC, the Chinese government began encouraging a new form of nationalism as a new unifying ideology. This nationalism built upon Chinese historical memories of being subjugated by outside powers and contrasted this with China’s expanding economy and bright future. As Chinese citizens and officials became more nationalistic, they began to advocate for a more forceful defense of China’s interests and thus for a more aggressive Chinese foreign policy.

A changing international environment and several key international events also had a profound impact on Chinese officials and their attitudes towards Chinese foreign policy. During the Cold War Chinese officials were fearful that conflict would break out between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. With Deng’s focus on internal economic development, Chinese officials tended to avoid engaging on most foreign policy issues, for fear of taking sides and potentially being dragged into a conflict. Likewise, the brutal crackdown at Tiananmen Square in 1989 and the ensuing Western condemnation and isolation of China had a large impact on both the third and fourth generations of PRC leadership. They saw that despite all the successes of Deng’s “opening up” strategy, the West, and the U.S. in particular, could effectively isolate China in a short period of time. The fall of the Soviet Union a year later only served to bolster Chinese leaders’ fears that the U.S. would turn its sights toward Beijing and seek to isolate the PRC. The ease with which the U.S. was able to form a coalition and defeat Saddam Hussein’s forces in the
first Gulf War that same year further increased Chinese officials’ concerns.

By the turn of the century, China had largely recovered from the isolation it experienced following Tiananmen, and relations with the U.S. had, for the most part, been restored. China’s economy was still expanding, and as noted above, Chinese youth were increasingly confident about China’s future. The accidental NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 and the collision between a Chinese fighter plane and a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft in 2001, however, encouraged the fourth generation of Chinese leaders as well as Chinese society to re-examine China’s foreign policy strategy.

To the increasingly nationalistic Chinese youth, both the NATO bombing and the collision between U.S. and Chinese planes were a sign that the U.S. was actively working to keep China from advancing and evidence that China needed to act more forcefully to defend its interests.

China’s increasing need for natural resources was also a major factor in driving Chinese officials to pursue a more aggressive foreign policy, which should not be underestimated. As China’s economy continued to expand, Chinese officials realized that domestic sources of energy and natural materials could not keep up with internal demand. China was forced to import ever increasing supplies of oil, coal, natural gas, and a variety of other raw materials. Following Tiananmen, however, Chinese leaders realized that the U.S. controlled many global shipping lanes and had alliances with many key oil producers. Chinese officials feared that should another dispute break out between the U.S. and China, the U.S. might attempt to cut China off from these resources. Chinese officials therefore embarked on a policy of directly engaging countries with large supplies of energy and raw materials across the developing world as a means to ensure
consistent Chinese access to these resources.

Finally, Chinese officials would later craft new strategies in foreign policy in response to foreign officials’ and commentators’ concerns over China’s increasing power. The emergence of the “China threat” theory, or the idea that as China’s economy continued to grow, and the country became increasingly powerful, it would inevitably become more aggressive, ultimately disrupting the international system, had a profound effect on the fourth generation of Chinese leadership. Chinese officials feared that if other countries believed the “China threat” theory, these countries would be less likely to work with China and allow it access to resources, or worse, might even form alliances designed to balance against it or seek to constrain it. Despite their newfound confidence, Chinese officials still strongly believed that China needed a stable and favorable international environment to continue to develop. They therefore set out to construct new foreign policies strategies and slogans which emphasized China’s supposedly peaceful intentions, such as “Peaceful Rise,” “Peaceful Development,” and “Harmonious World.”

Overall, when looking at Chinese foreign policy from Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao, much changed, and at the same time, much remained the same. Deng recommended “lying low” and generally not focusing on foreign policy. However, under Hu, China most certainly did not “lay low.” Throughout the 2000s, China embarked on an incredibly ambitious expansion of its foreign policy, spreading Chinese investments and Chinese interests all over the world. China also offered a new vision of international relations and openly discussed its rising strength. Despite all this, though, acting in accordance with Deng’s guidance, under Hu China still avoided taking a stance on most controversial issues and generally insisted it was advocating for peace and stability.
Whereas Deng recommended avoiding most multilateral organizations, under Hu, China joined the majority of international organizations and multilateral treaties. However, Chinese officials argued in the “Peaceful Development” and “Harmonious World” theories that China could use multilateral organizations to achieve Deng’s goal of ensuring a stable and peaceful international environment so that China could continue to develop. Likewise, while in the 2000s Chinese elites increasingly talked about China as a great power, Chinese officials such as Hu still repeatedly expressed solidarity with the Third World, echoing Deng’s statements decades earlier. China’s creation of new multilateral institutions to form better relations with the Third World, such as FOCAC, represented both a dramatic expansion of China’s outreach to these countries and a change in Chinese officials’ attitudes towards multilateral organizations. However, China’s goals in establishing groups such as FOCAC, in some ways matched well with Deng’s attempts to portray China as a leader of the Third World. Under Hu, Chinese officials also began to articulate and promote new theories of Chinese foreign policy such as “Harmonious World” which were striking in their scope and global ambitions, especially when contrasted with Deng’s guidance that China should not focus on foreign issues. At the same time, however, these new theories largely built upon pre-existing Chinese ideas regarding foreign policy that Deng himself had advocated such as non-interference, seeking a peaceful international environment, re-assuring other nations of China’s peaceful intentions, and avoiding confrontation with major powers.

In the 2000s China was forced on several occasions to reconsider its non-interference policy as Chinese officials realized that China’s investment in, and support for, authoritarian regimes could negatively affect other Chinese interests. As noted
above, throughout the 2000s, China even contributed peacekeeping forces to several
different international efforts, something that would have been almost unimaginable
under Deng. And yet, at the same time, Chinese officials continued to promote the
principle of non-interference including it as a tenant of the “Harmonious World” and New
Frontier” diplomacy theories. Chinese officials’ insistence that economic relations should
be prioritized over political concerns as part of “New Frontier” diplomacy was also
largely consistent with Deng’s own guidance for China to focus on economic reforms,
while limiting political reform. Likewise, while the 2000s saw a newly confident
Chinese public push Chinese officials to adopt a more aggressive foreign policy, the
Chinese nationalism that motivated many Chinese to argue for a stronger defense of
China’s interests was based on many of the same historical memories, such as the
“Century of Humiliation,” which had motivated Deng and members of the second
generation of Chinese leadership to argue against the concept of hegemony and China
becoming involved in most international affairs during the Cold War.

Despite all these similarities, there undoubtedly were dramatic changes in China’s
conduct of foreign policy from Deng to Hu. Deng’s guidance, however, still held
enormous sway among Chinese officials even as they jettisoned his preference for “lying
low” and stepped onto the world stage. At its core, China’s vastly more expansive
foreign policy in the 2000s was still motivated by the same goal that had led Deng to
recommend China largely avoid foreign policy in the 1970s and 1980s: ensuring China’s
economic development. While the increasingly active foreign policy of the third and
fourth generations of Chinese leadership differed drastically from Deng’s passive foreign
policy, they both focused on promoting China’s economic interests. Thus the history of
the shifts in Chinese foreign policy from the 1970s to the 2000s is not one of changing goals. The goal was broadly always to ensure China’s economic development. The history of the shifts in Chinese foreign policy from the 1970s to the 2000s rather is the story of how Chinese officials went from viewing foreign policy as a burden which would distract from China’s internal development to arguing that a pro-active foreign policy was actually essential to ensuring China’s development and continued economic growth.
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